

2008 major victories



Successes help employers, jobs and the economy

CAPITOL WATCHDOG

Each year CalChamber tracks more than 3,000 legislative proposals on behalf of member businesses.

GRASSROOTS ACTION

Comments from employers yield results. See hot issues at www.calchambervotes.com.

ABOUT US

CalChamber is the largest, broad-based business advocate, working at the state and federal levels to influence government actions affecting all California business. As a not-for-profit, we leverage our front-line knowledge of laws and regulations to provide affordable and easy-to-use compliance products and services.

Fighting to Reduce Employer Costs and Strengthen the Economy

As the voice of business, the California Chamber of Commerce promotes cost-saving reforms and fights anti-business legislation. Each year, we track more than 3,000 legislative proposals on behalf of employers. Policymakers listen to CalChamber policy advocates because they know we speak for 16,000 member businesses that together employ a fourth of the state's private workforce—more than 3 million jobs reflecting the diversity of the California business community.

Adding further emphasis to our message are the thousands of individuals who use our web-based grassroots center to communicate directly with their elected representatives. At that grassroots center—www.calchambervotes.com—visitors can find easy-to-personalize letters to lawmakers on key issues for employers. More than 64,000 individuals used the website to generate more than 271,000 letters in 2008. In addition, during December 2008, local chambers of commerce sent the Governor more than 25,000 letters in support of fixing workplace issues, including meal/rest periods and flexible scheduling.

Below is a brief recap of how CalChamber advocacy in 2008 helped employers. See the *Advocacy Return on Investment* sheet for estimated cost savings for employers from some of these victories.

Promoting Economy: 'Job Creator' Bills Signed

- **Collaborated on shaping bipartisan, comprehensive reform** increasing public access for individuals with disabilities while reducing unwarranted litigation (SB 1608).
- **Spearheaded** effort to strengthen California's anti-counterfeiting laws (AB 1394).

Stopping 38 of 39 'Job Killer' Bills

Governor Vetoes 9 of 10 'Job Killers' that Pass Legislature

Strong advocacy by the CalChamber, in conjunction with other business groups, job-friendly legislators and the Governor's veto pen, stopped all but one "job killer" proposal. A sampling of the harm averted by stopping the "job killers" appears below. For more details, visit www.calchamber.com/jobkillers.

- **Helped limit further inflation of liability costs** by securing vetoes of proposals to remove limits on the statutes of limitation for lawsuits relating to employer decisions (AB 437); and to expand rewards to plaintiffs for costs of litigation from private attorney general actions (SB 1113).
- **Halted costly workplace mandates**, including legislation to create a multibillion-dollar, government-run socialized health care system (SB 840); mandate a specific paid sick leave policy (AB 2716); prohibit employers from refusing to hire an applicant or fire workers because they use medical marijuana (AB 2279); and eliminate secret-ballot elections for union representation among farm employees (AB 2386).

See other side for more CalChamber Major Victories.

2008 Major Victories for California Employers

- **Protected workers' compensation cost savings** by stopping a roll-back of reforms and the resulting doubling of permanent disability costs (SB 1717).
- **Prevented adoption of new barriers to economic development** by stopping a proposal severely limiting residential/commercial development in certain areas of California (AB 2447).
- **Stopped new tax on goods movement** by leading a coalition of associations and businesses that persuaded the Governor to veto a bill to increase the cost of shipping goods and make California less competitive by imposing an illegal per-container tax in the ports of Long Beach, Los Angeles and Oakland (SB 974).
- **Blocked new taxes on motor vehicles/vehicle fuel** by opposing legislation to impose the climate change tax in violation of the Constitution with a majority vote (AB 2558); or by authorizing regional transportation agencies to impose the tax (SB 445).

Battling Health Care Cost Inflation

Stopped mandates that would have increased health care premiums by establishing numerous health care coverage mandates (AB 54, AB 368, AB 1774, AB 1887, AB 1962, AB 2174, AB 2234, SB 1198, SB 1634).

Stopping New Internet Taxes

Blocked proposals imposing an expansive new tax on digital products, including software, e-books, music, videos, cell phone ring tones, cable television and movies on demand (AB 1956); and placing California companies that provide web services via servers at a competitive disadvantage with other states (AB 1840).

Preventing Gas Price Increase

Stopped passage of a billion-plus-dollar tax increase on California oil companies that would have resulted in higher gas prices for consumers, increased dependence on foreign oil and further damage to the economy (ABX3 9).

Preserving Competitive Fuel Standards

Helped secure amendments to prevent legislation from interfering with the development of a competitive alternative fuels market in California (SB 1240).

Protecting Employer Free Speech

Successfully brought an action that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court challenging a state statute restricting the employer's right to communicate with employees about unionization (*Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America v. Brown*).

Clarifying State Law for Employers

Presented to the California Supreme Court arguments supporting the court's decision that supervisors cannot be held personally liable for personnel actions alleged to be motivated by a desire to retaliate against the employee under the Fair Employment and Housing Act (*Jones v. The Lodge at Torrey Pines*).

Supporting Rigorous Education Standards

Joined the Governor and other business organizations in arguing in favor of the Algebra I test requirement for eighth graders, the highest mathematics education standard in the nation. Adoption of the standard by the state education board will maintain the state's competitiveness and appeal to world-class businesses with high-wage jobs.

Campaigning for Political Reform

Co-chaired the successful campaign to win voter support of a proposition changing the process for drawing political district boundaries so that elected officials will be accountable to voters (Proposition 11).

Nixing Expensive New Government Requirements/Programs

- Stopped enactment of bill to ban the manufacture/distribution of specified plastic packaging in California (SB 899).
- Blocked increase of business tax administrative burden by bill requiring companies to track state tax liability and collect taxes from outside companies and independent contractors (AB 1848).
- Defeated bill making it more costly and difficult for small and large retailers to offer in-store credit by eliminating refunds of sales taxes for credit accounts that become bad due to non-payment by the consumer (AB 1839).
- Advocated veto of plan to create new government program for climate change research and workforce development to be entirely funded by ratepayer money (SB 1762).