

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.

2010 Major Victories

Fighting for Jobs, Restoring California Economy

The California Chamber of Commerce is the voice of California business, expert at speaking for pro-job policies and advising employers on how state laws and regulations will affect the workplace. We track more than 3,000 legislative proposals every year, sounding the alarm when a bill will hurt employers and the economy, and working to win support for legislation that will help the jobs climate. Policymakers listen to CalChamber advocates, knowing that we speak for close to 15,000 member businesses employing a fourth of the state's private workforce and reflecting the diversity of the California business community.

Further emphasizing our message are the thousands of individuals who use our Web-based grassroots center, www.calchambervotes.com, to make their views known to their elected representatives. In 2010, these businesspeople sent nearly 202,000 letters about state and federal issues affecting business operations.

The following is a brief recap of how CalChamber advocacy in 2010 helped employers. See the *Advocacy Return on Investment* sheet for estimates of employer savings on some of these victories.

Stopping 41 of 43 'Job Killer' Bills

Strong CalChamber advocacy, helped by other business groups, pro-jobs legislators and the Governor's veto pen, stopped 41 of 43 "job killer" proposals. Below is a sampling of "job killers" that failed to become law. For details, visit www.calchamber.com/jobkillers.

- **Stopped costly workplace mandates**, such as proposals eroding the cost-saving workers' compensation reforms (SB 145), removing the overtime exemption for agricultural employees (SB 1121) and undermining the process that now guarantees, through secret-ballot elections, a fair vote and the expression of agricultural employees' true sentiments on the selection of a collective bargaining representative (SB 1474).
- **Prevented expansion of employer liability** by stopping restrictions on the ability of employers to base employment decisions on the evaluation of all legally available information, including consumer credit reports (AB 482) or a criminal conviction (AB 2727); and an attempt to potentially criminalize almost any legitimate wage dispute with a terminated employee that takes longer than 90 days to resolve (AB 2187).
- **Kept lid on inflated liability costs** by advocating vetoes of proposals invalidating certain arbitration agreements (AB 1680) and limiting judicial discretion to reduce or deny exorbitant legal fees in fair employment and housing cases (AB 2773).
- **Halted expensive, unnecessary regulatory burdens**, such as an expanded waste bureaucracy (AB 479, AB 737), mandates on California's food service industry (AB 2138) and inappropriate price controls (AB 2578).
- **Blocked new barriers to economic development**, such as tax hikes on companies that invest in property and jobs (AB 1935, SBX6 18), targeted tax increases (AB 2100, SB 1210, ACA 22), and proposals creating uncertainty about the future availability of investment-encouraging tax credits (AB 2171, AB 2641, ACA 6, SB 1272, SB 1391, SBX6 20).

Increasing Construction Jobs through Job Creator Bills

Supported four bills signed into law that will lead to increased construction jobs by streamlining the California Environmental Quality Act process for certain projects (AB 1846); authorizing use of design-build by the Riverside County Transportation Commission (AB 2098); creating construction jobs building travel infrastructure (SB 1192); and ensuring expedited permitting of environmentally sound solar thermal projects (SBX3 34).

Stopping Hidden Taxes

Sponsored the winning campaign for Proposition 26, clearly defining fees and taxes at the state and local levels so that governments can't pass real taxes with a simple majority vote.

Winning Voter Backing for Redistricting Reform

Backed the successful measure assigning the drawing of congressional district boundaries to the citizens commission (Proposition 20) and helped defeat the effort by incumbent politicians to eliminate the commission (Proposition 27).

Defeating Marijuana Initiative

Through its business political action committee, the CalChamber funded a statewide radio ad campaign that helped defeat Proposition 19, the marijuana initiative that not only would have legalized marijuana use in California, but also would have created a legal quagmire for employers, compromised workplace safety and established a new class of protected workers in the state.

Helping Pro-Jobs Legislators Win Election

Helped elect four pro-job candidates to the Senate (two Democrats and two Republicans), thereby preserving the pro-jobs balance in that house.

Increasing Voters' Right to Participate in Primary Elections

Supported successful initiative allowing all voters to choose any candidate regardless of the candidate's or voter's political party preference (Proposition 14).

Keeping California Moving Toward Water Reliability

Preserved ability for voters to consider in 2012 a legislative and bond package putting the state on a pathway to long-term water supply reliability and ensuring a safe drinking water supply (AB 1265).

Promoting Student Preparation for Workplace

Advocated passage of legislation that will help increase the number of students who go on to obtain a four-year degree by requiring California Community Colleges to offer an associate's degree for transfer (SB 1440); and bills putting California in the best position to meet requirements for federal grants for education (SBX5 4, SBX5 1).

Speeding Judicial Process

Supported an expedited alternative to full-length jury trials, allowing individuals and organizations to resolve disputes efficiently and effectively (AB 2284).

Simplifying Tax Code

Supported proposal reducing complexity and waste in tax reporting and administration by conforming many California tax provisions to recent changes in federal tax law, including a conformity provision giving financial relief to troubled borrowers by excluding debt forgiven by a lender from a borrower's taxable income (SB 401).

Lightening Threat of Disproportionate Penalties

- Led successful effort to defeat legislation automatically adjusting maximum and minimum penalties upward according to inflation and raising penalties even higher according to an arbitrary rounding scheme (AB 846).
- Sponsored legislation disallowing mandatory penalties for non-threatening violations, such as failing to report a facility had no discharge under its permit, unless the water board has given notice of the violation (SB 1284).

Preserving Viability of Gift Certificates

Worked to secure amendments to legislation that would have imposed burdensome and infeasible regulations on businesses that provide gift cards to consumers (SB 885).