



## POLICY COMMITTEES & COUNCILS

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**BUSINESS CLIMATE COMMITTEE** – *To get involved, contact Jason O'Rourke at [jorourke@gachamber.com](mailto:jorourke@gachamber.com).*

The Georgia Chamber's Business Climate Committee examines policies related to strengthening and expanding Georgia's business-friendly climate and competitive advantages. Areas of study include tax structure, tax incentives, immigration, and pro-business policies and regulations such

as maintaining right-to-work laws and fair unemployment, and workers' compensation systems.

The committee hosts meetings at businesses throughout Georgia including the Port of Savannah, food processing facilities, and advanced manufacturing centers.

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**ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE** – *To get involved, contact Cosby Johnson at [cjohnson@gachamber.com](mailto:cjohnson@gachamber.com).*

The Energy & Natural Resources Committee analyzes and advocates on federal and state energy, conservation, water, and natural resource management issues. Over the past few years, the committee has led development of the Comprehensive State-Wide Water Management Plan, and the state's Water Conservation Act.

This committee has also brokered agreements on solar energy, supported investors and members with Environmental Protection Division or Federal EPA needs, and has promoted general regulatory reform. The committee will continue promotion of Gopher Tortoise conservation, expand engagement on natural resource management and sustainability, as well as actively engage energy and water reform with the new federal EPA administration.

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**HEALTH & WELLNESS COMMITTEE** – *To get involved, contact Jason O'Rourke at [jorourke@gachamber.com](mailto:jorourke@gachamber.com).*

Healthcare is not only a concern for businesses, but it is increasingly an economic development issue for many communities. Businesses care about the bottom line cost of healthcare regulations and mandates, as well as ways that wellness programs can be implemented to try to improve health outcomes for employees.

The Health & Wellness Committee spent most of 2015 and 2016 developing a series of options for State & Federal policymakers to pursue expanded healthcare access through a Medicaid waiver. The committee will continue to explore ways Georgia can expand access to quality healthcare and reform the way healthcare is delivered. The committee will also promote wellness initiatives and highlight best practices that result in bottom line savings for businesses of all sizes. Lastly, the committee will continue to research ways for Georgia to grow Graduate Medical Education and incentivize healthcare providers to locate and practice in rural areas.

**INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE** – *To get involved, contact Jason O’Rouke at [jorouke@gachamber.com](mailto:jorouke@gachamber.com).*

The capacity to innovate is quickly becoming the most important determinant of economic growth. Innovation not only encompasses research and new ideas, but the development and effective implementation of the technology into competitive products and services.

The Innovation & Technology Committee explores policies that support emerging and innovative industries that have potential to grow jobs and economic prosperity. Main areas of focus include expanding innovation statewide, improving access to capital and venture funds, increasing intellectual property development at research universities, and monitoring the impacts of disruptive technologies.

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**LAW & JUDICIARY POLICY COMMITTEE** – *To get involved, contact Kade Cullefer at [kcullefer@gachamber.com](mailto:kcullefer@gachamber.com).*

Originally focused on tort reform and judicial nominations, in recent years the Law & Judiciary Committee has launched an aggressive and successful amicus brief program, engaged in judicial races (2010), worked closely with the Attorney General, and worked to promote fair legal policy in Georgia. Although the Chamber has launched a new affiliate, Georgians for Lawsuit Reform, the committee will continue to work on amicus briefs and improving statutes that are critical for the business climate of Georgia.

The committee will develop a series of subcommittees to improve the effectiveness of its efforts, leverage expertise amongst Chamber members, and expand the membership of the committee to include new perspectives. The committee will also pursue changes to the state’s e-discovery rules, as well as re-establishing the business judgment rule.

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**TALENT & LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE** – *To get involved, contact Jason O’Rouke at [jorouke@gachamber.com](mailto:jorouke@gachamber.com).*

For over 100 years, the Georgia Chamber has worked on issues related to education and workforce. Traditionally, those issues have focused on K-12, higher education, and policies that impact the brick and mortar schoolhouse. The Georgia Chamber’s partner in education policy, Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, has established a reputation for detailed analysis and recommendations on policies that impact public education and student achievement. However, as the economy and state rapidly change, the Georgia Chamber membership recognizes the need to focus on policies and efforts that address workforce challenges, and to explore innovative ways to address those issues.

The Talent & Leadership Committee will focus on partnerships between public, non-profit, and corporate members for training and re-training workers to fill vacant jobs. The committee will continue to build on the efforts of GeorgiaLEADS to develop skills-based programming for early career professionals to prepare them for leadership positions in business, government, civic groups, and community organizations. Finally, the committee will focus efforts on expanding and supporting the programs and partners who are training Georgians in foundational skills like reading, financial literacy, mathematics, and communications.

OPERATIONS & FINANCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE – *To get involved, contact Stephanie Martin at [smartin@gachamber.com](mailto:smartin@gachamber.com).*

The Operations & Financial Planning Committee provides strategic direction for investments, revenue, affinity programs, operating and financial reporting to ensure fiscal stewardship, responsibility, and management of the Chamber's resources.

It is made up of Chamber members who are interested in helping the Chamber maintain a position of financial strength. Members volunteer their own business experience and knowledge to help the Chamber navigate budgetary, human resources, insurance, investment, information technology and facilities decisions.

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AMBASSADOR COUNCIL – *To get involved, contact Ridge Cannon at [rcannon@gachamber.com](mailto:rcannon@gachamber.com).*

The annual campaign led by our ambassadors is critical for the Chamber's financial health, and serves as an outreach and engagement vehicle for our members and investors.

To ensure greater efficiency, effectiveness, and coordination of efforts,

the Chamber is creating a new Steering Council for annual oversight of its ambassador efforts. The Team Georgia Chamber Campaign is responsible for recruiting new investors, securing sponsorships, and renewing current members. The new Ambassador Council, led by our Chair & Vice-Chair, is critical for the Chamber's financial health and will ensure greater efficiency, participation, and production regarding the annual oversight of ambassador efforts.

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CREATIVE ECONOMY MUSIC COUNCIL – *To get involved, contact Keisha Hines at [khines@gachamber.com](mailto:khines@gachamber.com).*

The Creative Economy Music Council promotes the diverse, significant, and impactful music industry in Georgia by understanding the needs, nuances, and impacts of various sectors within Georgia's music industry.

CURRENT FOCUS:

- Explore an updated, more comprehensive, and inclusive study of the music industry in Georgia, considering continued changes in the industry (licensing, digitizing, IP, etc.).
  - Final product will include impact, future of music/opportunities for growth, areas within the industry for growth, and policy recommendations.
  - Promote coordination, collaboration, and cooperation among representatives from various sectors of the industry.
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CREATIVE ECONOMY FILM & DIGITAL MEDIA COUNCIL – *To get involved, contact Keisha Hines at [khines@gachamber.com](mailto:khines@gachamber.com).*

Georgia's film and digital entertainment industries are booming. Film and television's economic impact hit a record \$7 billion in fiscal year 2016, with \$2 billion of that representing direct spending from 245 feature film and TV productions shot in Georgia. Digital entertainment, which includes game developers and interactive companies, has an annual impact of \$550 million and creates 3,100 jobs, according to Georgia Council for the Arts.

The state's infrastructure, logistical advantages, business climate, and – most importantly – a growing creative and skilled workforce are all key elements to one of the most vibrant, diverse creative economies in the U.S. The Council focuses on growing and promoting these industries in Georgia.

**DIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT COUNCIL** – *To get involved, contact Keisha Hines at [khines@gachamber.com](mailto:khines@gachamber.com).*

The purpose of the Diversity Engagement Council is to improve and enhance an appreciation for understanding the value of diversity and inclusion as an essential business and organizational component of the Georgia Chamber.

This council is responsible for developing strategies to guide messaging, engagement, and outreach initiatives that have a direct impact on the Chamber's investor relations efforts, grassroots communications, political engagement, programs, initiatives, and events. This council will also serve as a resource and advocate on matters related to diversity of national origin, LGBTQ, gender, geographic location, age, and industry.

**CURRENT FOCUS:**

- Tell the story of Georgia's diverse business landscape.
  - Develop targeted messaging and inclusion strategies to improve the representation of women, minorities, LGBTQ, diverse industries, and locations throughout Georgia Chamber's statewide membership.
  - Ensure that diversity and inclusion initiatives, actions, and results are transparent to all key stakeholders.
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**FEDERATION COUNCIL** – *To get involved, contact Kelsey Moore at [kmoore@gachamber.com](mailto:kmoore@gachamber.com).*

One of the most important partnerships at the Georgia Chamber is the Federation partnership with our local and regional Chambers. Comprised of almost every chamber in the state, this coalition brings coordination and strength to the statewide Chamber network. The Federation Council is made up of chamber presidents that represent a cross section of the local chambers statewide.

This council guides the strategic direction of the Georgia Chamber Federation, and serves as the primary voice advising the Georgia Chamber on the issues, policies, and opportunities that will best serve Georgia's local chambers, their members, and their communities.

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**SMALL BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL** – *To get involved, contact Lauren Meeks at [lmeeks@gachamber.com](mailto:lmeeks@gachamber.com).*

Small businesses make up 80 percent of the Georgia Chamber's membership. For this reason, the Chamber has placed an expanded focus on providing additional tools and resources to help small businesses continue to thrive and grow. The Small Business Advisory Council (SBAC) was created to give a voice to Georgia's small business owners. The Chamber is committed to ensuring its advocacy efforts have a positive effect on the small business community.

The council has also been instrumental in expanding the Chamber's offerings to its small business members, including the creation of:

- A webinar series focused on small business education
  - Seven benefit programs offering cost savings and tools for growth
  - Tools and resources to better inform small businesses about key legislative issues
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**HUMAN RESOURCES COUNCIL** – *To get involved, contact Jason O'Rourke at [jorourke@gachamber.com](mailto:jorourke@gachamber.com).*

The Georgia Chamber Human Resources Council provides a forum for practitioners to exchange ideas, discuss employment-related topics, and educate the Chamber membership on changing legal requirements through webinars, seminars, and other HR related resources.

**MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL** – *To get involved, contact Keisha Hines at [khines@gachamber.com](mailto:khines@gachamber.com)*

The Marketing and Communications Council was created to support the Chamber's marketing and communications efforts. The council also assists staff with communicating the Chamber's message to its members and to the general public.

CURRENT PRIORITIES:

- Supporting the Chamber's Authentic Georgia marketing campaign through engaging current membership, as well as new and diverse audiences.
  - Identifying 5 strategic partnerships that support the Chamber's programs, initiatives, and events.
  - Leading efforts to develop a Chamber-wide influencer campaign amongst the membership.
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**POLITICAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL** – *To get involved, contact Chelsey Ruppensburg at [cruppensburg@gachamber.com](mailto:cruppensburg@gachamber.com)*

The Political Affairs Council was created in order to coordinate political strategies, fundraising, and campaign contributions from the Chamber Political Action Committee. It is made up of over 50 business leaders from companies of all sizes throughout the state of Georgia.

Among the business community, this council has an impressive track record of political involvement and success in state house, senate, and statewide races. Partnering with the U.S. Chamber, the council also engages in Federal races. The council recruits and engages with pro-business candidates who are interested in elected office. To ensure that Georgia remains a top business destination, the Political Affairs Council must continue their aggressive work on bipartisan support of pro-job candidates.

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**GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COUNCIL** – *To get involved, contact David Raynor at [draynor@gachamber.com](mailto:draynor@gachamber.com)*

The Government Affairs Council plays a vital role in achieving the Georgia Chamber's policy objectives and determining the organization's stance on specific pieces of legislation. Membership is comprised of roughly 400 government relations professionals representing the business community along with like-minded interests.

Among other things, members have the opportunity to network with other lobbyists at signature events and participate in a coalition dedicated to advancing pro-business principles in Georgia.

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**RURAL PROSPERITY COUNCIL** – *To get involved, contact Morgan Law at [mlaw@gachamber.com](mailto:mlaw@gachamber.com)*

For many of the state's counties, economic prosperity has dwindled and many communities are slowly dying. The Georgia Chamber recognized this opportunity and established the Rural Prosperity Council to champion the needs of rural Georgia across a spectrum of economic development and quality of life issues. Recent data clearly identified that over 1/3 of rural Georgia counties will lose population over the coming years. To reverse this trend, we must implement more aggressive ways to promote, educate, and advocate for rural communities and businesses.

This council will have four subcommittees: Rural Incentives, Defense Communities, Talent and Higher Education, and Homegrown Entrepreneurship. It will focus on continuing to expand economic development programming that highlights unique places in Georgia, and connects existing resources to coordinate efforts.