

2017 Public Policy SCORECARD



THE REGIONAL CHAMBER'S Public Policy Agenda identifies government affairs priorities that increase the bottom lines for our members and improve the quality of life in the Valley. Chamber staff and the Government Affairs Council push the agenda through advocacy meetings in the state and national capitals, via letters, by submitting written and live testimony and through coalitions, including many created by the Regional Chamber.

In 2017, Chamber staff, using the agenda as a guide, worked both independently and in unison with its many partners to successfully accomplish the following on behalf of Valley employers:

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- The Ohio General Assembly passed SB 3, a review of workforce development laws so that more focus can be placed on addressing the shortage of labor in certain in-demand professions.
- The Chamber secured a state grant to bring its renowned Community Connectors program to Austintown schools.

MILITARY AFFAIRS

- Congress passed the National Defense Authorization Act with language giving the Camp Ravenna Joint Military Training Center an opportunity to be named as the third site for the nation's missile defense shield.
- The Ohio General Assembly approved \$150,000 to help the Chamber's Eastern Ohio Military Affairs Commission advocate for the development of the \$4.5 billion missile defense system at Camp Ravenna.
- The Youngstown Air Reserve Station hosted the Ohio Aerospace and Technology Committee to educate members on the military facility and the value it provides to Ohio.
 - Chamber President & CEO James Dignan was named to the state's BRAC Task Force designed to protect military installations, including the Youngstown Air Reserve Station, from federal cuts.

TAXES

- The proposed state severance tax on the oil and gas industry was defeated.
- Proposed tax shifting was removed from the state operating budget.
- Congress passed a tax package that reduces taxes for most Chamber members and promotes reshoring of manufacturing jobs

ENERGY

- The Tri-State Shale Coalition released the results of a year-long study to advance the development of a \$10 billion ethane storage hub that would lead to more than 100,000 new jobs in plastics and petrochemicals by the middle of the next decade.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- State Issue 2, which would have triggered prescription drug price increases and reduced consumer choice for both employers and employees, was defeated.
 - The governor signed into law HB 463, which empowered the Mahoning County Board of Elections to reject anti-business charter amendments proposed for the City of Youngstown. The Ohio Supreme Court upheld the law.
 - The governor signed into law SB 331, a bill that protects the City of Youngstown and all employers within the city from a charter amendment calling for the creation of a part-time workers' rights commission that would enforce draconian anti-business laws.
 - The Ohio General Assembly legalized electronic notarization, paving the way for a West Coast software company with that technology to move to the Valley.
 - The Western Reserve Transit Authority Warren Express bus line, which provides more than 50,000 rides that bring people to employment and other destinations, was preserved despite the loss of a federal grant.
 - The Chamber provided the City of Niles and Weathersfield Township with customized economic development services.
- ## INFRASTRUCTURE
- Funding was secured for an interchange on I-680, near the Ohio Turnpike, to alleviate traffic on Western Reserve Road and extend economic development opportunities to southern Mahoning County.



PARTNERSHIP WITH SWING STATE STRATEGIES

The Regional Chamber has leveraged the power of its membership, along with its established, highly successful, in-house government advocacy operation, to partner with Swing State Strategies, one of the most influential public policy organizations in Columbus.

The goal of the partnership is to help the Valley play a bigger role in the development of state and federal policy so that the region can better compete with the so-called “three Cs”—Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati—which are often seen as having greater influence.

In addition, as a member benefit, the Chamber is now able to offer a cost share for high-level government advocacy to any business, nonprofit or local government. Services may include general representation on state and federal policy issues or legislation, as well as specific engagements, such as state capital budget applications.

Swing State Strategies President Michael Hartley said, “There are many issues of geographical importance, such as protecting the Youngstown Air Reserve Station, bringing more state and federal dollars back to the Valley or expanding the region’s notoriety as the hub of additive manufacturing research and development.”

Regional Chamber Vice President of Government Affairs Guy Coviello added, “Larger metropolitan areas have used this kind of strategy for years. This is the first step toward leveling that playing field for the Youngstown-Warren region.”

Coviello also touted the opportunity for Chamber members, especially small and mid-size companies and nonprofit organizations, to be able to tap into a degree of government advocacy typically reserved for larger organizations.



ABOUT SWING STATE STRATEGIES

Swing State Strategies (S3) is a public affairs, policy and political strategy consulting firm based in Columbus, Ohio. S3 brings decades of combined experience in state and federal government relations, high-profile political campaigns, coalition advocacy management and working directly with corporate leaders. S3 has earned a reputation of trust, integrity and results and achieves results for clients by maintaining strong relationships, built over decades, in the political, policy and corporate arenas.

S3 offers a full complement of government affairs, public affairs and political consulting services, including coalition building, strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, community coordination, public relations, policy advocacy and event planning.

