

2006 Major Victories for California Employers

Lawmakers and the Media are Listening

The California Chamber of Commerce is the voice of California business. We use our significant clout to promote cost-saving reforms and fight anti-business legislation, tracking some 3,000 legislative proposals each year on behalf of employers. Policymakers listen to the CalChamber because they know we speak for more than 15,000 member businesses employing 25 percent of the state's private workforce — 3 million jobs from industries across the spectrum.

Stopping Another Round of 'Job Killer' Bills

Strong advocacy by the CalChamber, in conjunction with the business community, job-friendly legislators and action by the Governor, stopped 95 percent of the 2006 "job killer" bills, saving employers millions of dollars and protecting jobs for the California economy. Following is a sampling of the costly proposals that will *not* become law. For more details, visit www.calchamber.com/jobkillers.

- **Protected workers' compensation reforms** by securing a veto of legislation rolling back the reforms by arbitrarily doubling the permanent disability payments over three years without sound data with which to base the increase (SB 815).
- **Helped control employer unemployment insurance costs** by winning vetoes of bills forcing employers to subsidize a strike against their own company by providing unemployment insurance benefits to workers unemployed due to a strike (AB 1884) and creating a new monetary penalty payment equivalent to all lost wages and benefits that employers must pay directly to all workers unemployed due to the strike (AB 2209).
- **Helped control health care costs** by winning vetoes of bills to impose a government-run health care system on all Californians (SB 840) and impose a tax on employers with more than 10,000 employees to spend the equivalent of 8 percent of their total payroll on health care or pay the equivalent amount to the state (SB 1414).
- **Stopped tax increases** — such as legislation increasing the tax burden on small business by increasing the personal income tax rate (AB 1177); reducing the state's only economic development tax credit (AB 1766/SB 1008); and driving up fuel prices for businesses and consumers (AB 2442).
- **Kept a lid on wage costs** by backing the removal of automatic annual indexing from the minimum wage hike bill ultimately signed into law (AB 1835).
- **Safeguarded the ability of California ports to keep goods moving** by supporting the veto of one proposal to assess a new container fee (SB 927) and stopping passage of another that would have increased the cost of goods movement (SB 764).

Defeating Tax Hike Initiatives

Voters rejected CalChamber-opposed anti-business tax hikes on the November 2006 ballot, including proposals that would have increased gasoline prices and property taxes, and attempted to stifle the ability of the business community to communicate with voters (Propositions 86-89). In June 2006, voters rejected CalChamber-opposed Proposition 82, which would have boosted taxes on high earners and small businesses to create a massive new preschool bureaucracy.

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Investing in Critical Infrastructure

Voters approved with hefty majorities the CalChamber-supported bond measures that will protect and boost transportation funding, plus permit the state to issue bonds funding education facilities, housing and levee protection/disaster preparedness projects (Proposition 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E).

Helping Stimulate Business Activity

Led a business coalition that won bipartisan enactment of legislation ensuring that businesses operating in enterprise zones could continue to enjoy program incentives while applications for renewing the enterprise zone designation are pending (AB 1550). Also led a coalition of employer groups that defeated “job killer” proposals aimed at reducing the enterprise zone program (SB 1008 and AB 1766).

Making Sure Students Are Better Prepared for the Workplace

Protected hard-won measures to ensure schools are held accountable for student achievement in a court case upholding the high school exit exam and by securing the veto of legislation that would have undermined the effectiveness of the exam by lowering state student proficiency standards (AB 2975).

Going to Court to Protect Employers

Spoke out on behalf of employers in court cases that upheld cost-saving workers’ compensation reforms and voter-approved Proposition 64 protections against frivolous lawsuit abuse. Presented arguments to protect employers from lengthy court cases involving meal and rest period violations.

Helping California Small Business

Supported enactment of legislation helping small businesses, the engine of economic growth, maintain and create jobs by examining the cost impact of state regulations (AB 2330), helping them prepare for disasters (AB 3058) and re-establishing the ombudsman program to improve small business access to information on regulations affecting their business (SB 1436).

Boosting Tourism in California

Backed a tourism industry effort that won approval of legislation providing a significant boost to funding to market California as a travel destination (AB 2592), helping the fourth largest employer in the state compete with other states and nations in attracting travelers and the resulting revenues and jobs.

Increasing World Trade, Investment and Tourism Opportunities

Strengthened ties and increased economic opportunities with **Mexico, California’s top export market**, by joining the Governor on a successful trade mission to promote business investments and encourage tourism. Supported granting permanent normal trade relations status to **Vietnam**, permitting California and other U.S. companies to benefit from trading concessions that other nations enjoy because Vietnam now is a member of the World Trade Organization.

Supporting Pro-Jobs State Leadership

Endorsed the re-election of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to a second term so he can continue the leadership and pro-jobs policies that have helped the creation of more than 600,000 new jobs and the addition of more than \$20 billion in tax revenues to the state treasury. CalChamber support also helped elect nine pro-jobs Democrats and four pro-jobs Republicans to the California Legislature.

For more information, visit www.calchamber.com or contact the California Chamber of Commerce at 1-800-649-4921.

Helping California Business Do Business®