



# SAHCC 2026 Federal Legislative Agenda



This federal policy agenda represents the collective voice of our nearly 900 business members and communicates our key economic and legislative priorities to the United States Congress.



## OUR MISSION

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The San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce is the leading resource, advocate, and access point for Hispanic businesses, Hispanics in business, and the Hispanic market.

## OUR FIVE PILLARS

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1. Small Business,
2. Economic Development,
3. International Trade,
4. Leadership Development, and
5. Workforce Development/Education



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## TOP 10 FEDERAL POLICY PRIORITIES

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1. **Supports** legislation aimed to reduce the burden of taxes and regulations on businesses.
2. **Supports** comprehensive bipartisan immigration solutions to help businesses meet the critical workforce needs and encourage economic growth, including lawful, permanent status for DACA recipients.
3. **Supports** investments and positive policies and regulations in industry driven workforce programs and wraparound support services for all learners who persist and achieve their education and training.
4. **Supports** all actions to address supply chain constraints and encourage the free flow of goods and services with all U.S. trading partners.
5. **Supports** an inflationary-adjusted five-year reauthorization of the Federal Surface Transportation Act.
6. **Supports** legislation to expand access and improve quality for comprehensive mental health services and substance use disorder treatments.
7. **Supports** the expansion of federal programs that reduce barriers to entry and improve access for local and emerging small businesses seeking to compete for federal contracts.
8. **Supports** the appropriations for early childhood education, public education, higher education, skills training, and entrepreneurship development through federal programs.
9. **Supports** strengthening the political and business relationships with governments from across the world to promote trade, strengthen supply chains, and increase foreign direct investment.
10. **Supports** strengthened federal and local military partnerships that leverage existing authorities to modernize mission-critical facilities, enhance operational readiness, and advance national security priorities, including collaborative campus development opportunities aligned with Air Force mission needs.



# Small Business

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## Access to Capital

- Supports enhancing access to capital in the form of grants for small businesses to be applied toward business services that will help them scale.
- Supports policies that would limit or reduce interest rates to current market rates paid by large companies.
- Supports policies that would reduce, limit, or cap lender fees from SBA and CDFI Loans for small businesses.

## Innovation, Research, and Development

- Supports Reauthorization of and increased funding for federal programs such as the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs, that drive innovation and foster economic growth.

## Small Business Growth and Competitiveness

- Supports federal and local small business technical assistance programs that help firms navigate complex regulatory, compliance, and procurement systems and strengthen their ability to compete in both set-aside and open competition environments.
- Supports financial and programmatic investments in incubation, acceleration, and capacity-building initiatives that drive small business growth, job creation, and economic development, particularly in HUBZones and other high-impact areas.
- Supports efforts to strengthen the small business ecosystem by expanding fair, competitive, and transparent federal contracting opportunities for small, women-owned, veteran-owned, HUBZone, and disadvantaged businesses, consistent with constitutional and statutory requirements.
- Encourages stable and predictable federal small business contracting goals that provide certainty for agencies and contractors, support long-term business planning, and prevent disruption to workforce and capital investment.
- Supports initiatives that increase the number of small businesses able to successfully compete in federal and global markets by improving access to certification pathways, procurement readiness, and export assistance, particularly for Hispanic-owned and other underrepresented small businesses.
- Supports the continued viability and integrity of federal small business and disadvantaged business programs by ensuring clear eligibility standards, reasonable compliance requirements, and consistent implementation that preserves access and fair competition for qualified businesses.



## Taxes and Regulations

- Opposes legislative proposals that attempt to sacrifice the privacy of business owners.
- Opposes legislation regulating a private business's daily operations and or employment practices.
- Support reasonable reforms and policies that improve fairness, access, and transparency in the federal procurement process and further promote meaningful small business participation in federal contracting opportunities.
- Support the exemption of American-owned small businesses from the Corporate Transparency Act (CTA) or repeal the mandate entirely.
- Support for funding through direct grants to help municipalities digitize and modernize their permitting systems, increasing transparency and reducing delays.
- Support policies like the SPEED ACT (H.R. 4776) that modernize and improve federal permitting processes to ensure that major projects can move forward efficiently, responsibly, and with predictable oversight.
- Supports policies that would provide business owners with annual tax credits for the expansion of their business, increasing job creation, new products or services, and new or additional space/locations. This would encourage growth and allow businesses to keep more funding to invest in their business.
- Incentives for inter-agency coordination that reduce redundancy in permitting requirements across federal, state, and local jurisdictions.

## Economic Development

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### Aviation

- Supports grants and other funding to facilitate the Terminal Development Plan for San Antonio International Airport.
- Supports FAA and Department of War funding to facilitate the development of parallel runways at San Antonio International Airport, expanding air service capacity and deconflicting the shared airspace with Randolph Air Force Base and its training missions.
- Support FAA funding for consolidated facilities and critical infrastructure improvements within the civil portions of Kelly Field.
- Supports additional funding to improve Department of War military readiness rates and reduce the maintenance backlog in tactical and mobility aviation in our military services.
- Supports continued public/private partnerships around regulatory, workforce education, and infrastructure support for the Advanced Air Mobility industry.



## Broadband

Encouraging the expansion of broadband networks.

- Making the most of the historic federal broadband funding by pursuing common sense tax solutions, encouraging program rules that will incentivize the private sector investment, and moving programs forward in an expeditious manner.
- Supports legislation that simplifies permitting processes and avoids price-setting policies to enable cost-effective and timely broadband deployment projects.
- Advocating for Congressional action to allocate more commercial full-power licensed spectrum and reauthorize spectrum authority.

Bolstering network expansion by making internet service more affordable for Americans.

- Identifying long-term, sustainable affordability solutions to help Americans get connected and stay connected to high-speed internet.
- Reforming the Federal Universal Service Fund to help remove affordability barriers to connectivity in communities within San Antonio and across the nation.

Supporting the communications systems that our public safety community relies on.

- Supporting efforts to modernize public safety, like 9-1-1 call systems, equipment, and internal communication platforms between public safety personnel.
- Encouraging Congressional action to reauthorize FirstNet. As of July 2024, more than 28,500 public safety agencies and organizations rely on FirstNet®, built with AT&T for enhanced communications to keep their communities safe.

## Energy

- Supports reforms to federal laws that currently slow the process of obtaining necessary permits for critical infrastructure.
- Supports additional federal funding for programs such as the Low-Income Home Assistance Program (LIHEAP) as it provides invaluable support and financial assistance to our San Antonio community members unable to pay their energy bills.
- Support efforts to enhance natural gas pipeline safety and damage prevention, including continuation of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's (PHMSA) Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization (NGDISM) Grant Program.



## Housing

- Supports increasing and/or maintaining funding for programs used to increase multifamily and single-family housing production, as well as homeownership. Programs include but are not limited to the Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, Tax Exempt Bonds, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), CHOICE Neighborhoods and Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME).
- Supports tax incentives to encourage the conversion of underutilization of commercial real estate to residential housing.
- Support the extension and improvements to the Opportunity Zone program to boost private investments in affordable housing.
- Supports policies, federal funding, and programs that would provide grants and tax credits for more mix use developments including affordable workforce housing and space for emerging small businesses in the same development.
- Supports policies, federal funding, and programs that would provide grants and tax credits for housing developments that include access to public transportation, day care, food/grocery outlets, educational workforce training, community gardens, and healthcare facilities in the same development.

## Healthcare

- Supports preserving and strengthening the Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) program to ensure continued access to care for vulnerable populations and financial stability for safety-net healthcare providers.
- Supports value-based care policies that promote ways hospitals and health systems can address non-medical drivers of health, and ensure certain flexibilities made possible by the public health emergency (PHE) declaration are made permanent to continue the transformation of care delivery and improve maternal and child health outcomes, with a particular focus on eliminating disparities.
- Supports strengthening the 340B Drug Pricing Program to ensure transparency and program integrity while maintaining its vital role in sustaining safety-net hospitals and healthcare providers that serve vulnerable populations and support regional workforce health. Any major reforms should allow sufficient transition time for market stability.
- Supports federal policies that strengthen today's health care workforce and build a future pipeline of health care professionals to meet growing national and regional demand for care, including:
  - » Enhancing workplace safety for all team members, including enacting federal protections for health care workers against violence and intimidation.
  - » Continuing to increase the number of residency slots eligible for Medicare funding to address physician shortages, including shortages of behavioral health providers.
  - » Addressing nursing shortages, including by advancing solutions to nursing faculty shortages that constrain the ability to meet future nursing needs.
  - » Making changes to National Health Service Corps loan repayment programs to ensure doctors and nurses may practice where the need is and not be completely restricted to certain facilities or geographic locations.
  - » Expand the Health and Human Services (HHS) J1 Waiver program to include physician specialists and eligible areas/sites that qualify for the program.



## Healthcare (cont.)

- Supports alternative options for affordable and high-quality health insurance plans available to small business owners and their employees.
- Supports adjustments and appropriations to enhance the Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP).
- Support the renewal and extension of the Enhanced Premium Tax Credits to ensure affordable health coverage for workers, self-employed individuals, and small business owners, reducing workforce disruptions, improving employee retention, and strengthening small business competitiveness.
- Supports legislation to expand access and improve quality, comprehensive mental health services/substance use disorder treatments.
- Supports and requests federal funding for the development of a regional psychiatric center in Bexar County.
- Opposes CMS planned budget/pay cuts to ancillary medical providers.

## Military, Veterans, and Spouses

### Mission Sustainment/Enhancement:

- Supports sustaining and enhancing Joint Base San Antonio's (JBSA) mission readiness and ensures the long-term protections of the region's military installations by helping to preserve, protect and grow military missions in the region.
  - » We will advocate for all missions, but our focus will be on cyber, intelligence, military medicine, military research, aviation, space, and training ecosystems.
- Supports sustaining and increasing Public-Public, Public-Private (P4) partnerships with the region's military; and, pursuing funding through the National Defense and Authorizations Act (NDAA) and appropriations process to resource both on- and off-base projects and other programs.
  - » Leverage proven avenues of approach:
    - » Air Force Community Partnership Program
    - » Engagement/coordination with Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC)
    - » Military Installation Resilience Review (MIRR) grant
    - » Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP)
    - » Defense Manufacturing Community Support Program (DMCSP)
  - » Decades of regional expertise and efficiency -- ensures continued military readiness and long-term cost savings to the United States government and taxpayers.
    - » Addresses critical needs of USAF facilities, strengthens, and leverages San Antonio's regional cyber and defense capabilities.
- Supports an Increase in appropriations to improve Department of War military readiness rates and reduce the maintenance backlog in aviation and infrastructure for military units in the region.
- Advocates for the Department of War to name San Antonio as the host city/location for future years' Warrior Games, beginning in 2028.



## **Military, Veterans, and Spouses (cont.)**

### Military Family Quality of Life (QoL):

- Supports strengthening and growing quality of life programs that benefit military families and veterans such as housing, spouse employment, education, childcare, and special needs.
  - » Implement policies that facilitate long-term and meaningful employment for military spouses.
  - » Expand the Work Occupancy Tax Credit to incorporate military spouses.
  - » Advance childcare solutions for military service members and families to include:
    - » Fully funding Fee Assistance programs
    - » Resolve staffing and capacity challenges.
  - » Commission in-depth study on impact of childcare challenges on recruiting/readiness/retention
  - » Strengthen military service members' and families' resilience by addressing housing challenges.
    - » Advocate for reform of Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) calculations process such as restoring 100% BAH% -- ensures adequate housing support payments.
  - » Supports fully funding Impact Aid to offset costs incurred by districts educating large numbers of military children.

### Veterans:

- Supports the efforts of Congress, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of War to reduce military and veteran suicide and increased resources for mental health and wellness programs.
- Supports access to capital programs that will grant funding for veterans and their families to become entrepreneurs, open businesses, and amplify our economy.

### Surface and Public Transportation:

- Supports increased funding opportunities for operations and capital expenses through direct funding and collaboration with local partners to advance multimodal transportation options as identified and supported by locally driven processes.
- Supports a multi-year extension of the Alternative Fuels Tax Credit.
- Supports legislative language for the usage of alternative fuels as a transition toward a higher usage of electric vehicles as technology demonstrates usable range and capability.

### Water:

- Supports increased Federal investment in water and wastewater infrastructure to help utilities address pressing needs.
- Supports laws and regulations that provide a stable and equitable framework for managing water utilities.
- Supports ongoing water conservation efforts, such as improving water use efficiency.
- Supports Water and Wastewater Emergency Assistance Program.
- Supports continued federal funding through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the Westside Creek Ecosystem Restoration Project.
- Support San Antonio River Authority's application to manage the construction of the Westside Creeks Ecosystem Restoration Project through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers pilot 1043(b) program
- Support inclusion in Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2026 to modify and add at the end of Section 1329 of WRDA 2024: "The Federal share of the cost of carrying out Alternative 7 shall be 65 percent for aquatic ecosystem restoration and 50 percent for recreation."



# International Trade

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- Supports fully funding of the EPA's Border Water Infrastructure Program (BWIP) that is administered by the North American Development Bank (NADBank).
- Supports federal initiatives that provide alternative financing and dedicated funding streams for modernization and construction of land ports of entry and related community infrastructure and for other purposes.
- Supports modernization of the U.S. Tax Code to allow U.S. businesses to effectively participate in the global economy and repatriate profits earned abroad.
- Supports strengthening the political and business relationships with governments from across the world to promote trade, strengthen global supply chains with strategic partners and foreign direct investment.
- Supports the US to stabilize and honor existing agreements and advocate for trade partners to do the same, through the provisions and channels established in the existing legal framework.
- Opposes any legislative or executive actions related to the implementation of tariffs on foreign goods or services, especially those that come from our neighboring countries of Mexico and Canada.
- Supports the expansion and amplification of Article 25.1 of the United States, Mexico, Canada Agreement (USMCA) which will allow small, medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to have broader access to international markets and the ability to scale their business.
- Support to promote cross-border workforce exchanges and talent mobility for specialized occupations in advanced manufacturing, logistics, cybersecurity and bioscience.
- Support for expansion of technical assistance and trade education programs to help SMEs understand and leverage USMCA benefits.
- Support to direct USTR to expand SME-focused trade compliance assistance programs.
- Support consistent USTR reporting to Congress on USMCA compliance and dispute outcomes.

# Education

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## Early Childhood Education

- Support policies that expand access to affordable, high-quality childcare to increase workforce participation, improve retention, and reduce barriers for working families and small businesses.
- Support policies and increased federal funding that expand Early Head Start, Head Start, and high-quality early childhood education for children ages 0–3, strengthening school readiness and long-term workforce outcomes.
- Support for maintaining TEACH Grants and expanding access to them for early childhood educators working across all settings.



## Academic Health Centers

- Supports enhanced FY26 funding for academic health centers through a full appropriations package to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the Department of War, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and related agencies. Increased funding opportunities for academic medicine research and development, workforce development, and direct services through investments in federal grant opportunities, along with potential funding through Congressionally Directed Spending/Community Project Funding, will continue to provide vital resources for our communities throughout San Antonio and the South Texas border region.

## Higher Education

- Supports preserving and enhancing the Federal Pell Grant Program by:
  - » Extending eligibility to short-term/workforce training programs,
  - » Increasing the annual maximum amount,
  - » Expanding eligibility to DACA students, and
  - » Increasing lifetime eligibility to 14 semesters.
- Supports strengthening under-resourced institutions and student support programs by investing in:
  - » Strengthening Institutions (Title III-A of the HEA),
  - » Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions,
  - » TRIO
  - » GEAR UP
  - » Federal Work Study (FWS)
  - » Community Project Funding Requests

## Public Education

- Supports increased funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) by increasing the percentage funded to what was intended when originally enacted.
- Supports robust investments in programs that strengthen student, family, and community success such as:
  - » Title I (high-need schools)
  - » Title IV-A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment)
  - » Full-Service Community Schools
  - » 21st Century Community Learning Centers
  - » Project AWARE (mental health)
  - » AmeriCorps (service-based solutions)



## Public Education (cont.)

- Supports efforts to strengthen the teacher pipeline, including incentives toward entering the teaching profession, creating a system for transferability of certifications between states, and continuing to improve the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program.
- Supports increasing funding for federal Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) education programs and initiatives that help expand the STEM workforce.
- Supports amending under the ESSA, Title II, Part A of the Higher Education Act to expand the Teacher Quality Partnership Program.
- Consider restoration of funding for the Troops to Teachers Program

## Workforce and Talent Development

- Supports implementing quarterly tax credits through the 941-employer tax reporting for employer led programs which lead to increasing local skilled workforce through on the job training for the first 90 days for new hires.
- Supports preserving and enhancing the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) to increase workforce participation, support working families, and strengthen the small business labor pool.
- Supports innovative federal policies that reduce child care costs and expand availability, including employer-partnership models and nontraditional-hour care options, such as proposals reflected in the Tri-Share Child Care Pilot Act (H.R. 6312) and the After Hours Child Care Act.
- Supports implementing policies, rules, and regulations that allow for the investment in successful and employer led workforce development programs such as:
  - » Federal incentives to businesses that offer internships, apprenticeships, and OJT opportunities;
  - » Perkins Career and Technical Education;
  - » Dual credit;
  - » Adult education and training including GED/HSE programs;
  - » Veterans training; and
  - » Educator development and training.
- Support federal policies that strengthen education, training, and employment pathways for youth aging out of foster care and kinship care to expand the workforce, reduce barriers to employment, and connect employers with a new pipeline of job-ready talent.
- Supports a permanent legislative solution for DACA recipients and those with temporary status, recognizing their ongoing contributions to the economy.

## Immigration

- Supports increased allotment, modernization, and administrative reforms to EB-5 (Capital Investor), H-2A (Agriculture), H-1B (High Skilled Workers), H-2B (Seasonal Workers), J (Internships), O (Science Professionals), and L-1A (Executives and Managers) to improve efficiency, transparency, and workforce alignment across agriculture, seasonal industries, and high-skilled sectors.
- Supports balanced comprehensive reform policies that mitigate the economic fallout from potential mass deportations, while opposing any mass deportation policies that target mixed-status families.
- Opposes ICE worksite raids causing disruption to business operations and any collateral arrests.
- Support policies that restrict arrests at “sensitive locations” to ensure families receive care without fear at critical community places like hospitals, playgrounds, and food banks.