

Workforce Development

The St. Louis Regional Chamber supports robust and innovative solutions to the region's unique economic and workforce challenges. The St. Louis region's population has been stagnant for years due to economic policies of the past, minimal continuing education support, and inadequate workforce training programs. The Regional Chamber supports broadening our region's workforce base by expanding opportunities in apprenticeships and occupational licensing that will make it easier to work in Missouri.

According to the Missouri Chamber of Commerce, "only 44% of Missouri business owners are satisfied with the state's availability of skilled workers."

Action Items

Expanded Workforce Act of 2020 – HB 1688

(Grier): Requires licensing authorities to grant a license to applicants who have met certain requirements and passed any necessary examination.

Professional License Reciprocity – HB 2046

(Grier): Enable professionals, who have been licensed for at least one year in another state, to continue working in their professions without delay.

Fresh Start Act of 2020 – SB 647 (Koenig):

Individual cannot be disqualified from licensure for any occupation solely because of a prior conviction unless it pertains to the occupation.

Missouri Innovation Funding

The St. Louis Regional Chamber seeks to expand our capacity to support entrepreneurs with the capital, infrastructure, and networking relationships needed to create and scale new enterprises. Missouri has become a leader in entrepreneurship—not just in the Midwest but across the country. However, relationships with the entrepreneur and business communities must be nurtured to realize the region's full potential. Policy priorities for the St. Louis Regional Chamber include both direct support for entrepreneurs and innovators, like the Missouri Technology Corporation (MTC), as well as ensuring the region is preparing the workforce to take on the jobs entrepreneurs will create. Not only will these kinds of initiatives contribute to Missouri's long-term attractiveness, but in the near-term they will create jobs for our people and provide an opportunity to bring new workers and enterprises into the economy.



Action Items

HB 7 (Missouri Technology Corporation):

Current funding levels remain at \$3,000,000. The Regional Chamber supports an increase in funding for the Missouri Technology Corporation.

Tort Reform

Missouri's lawsuit climate leaves many business owners and entrepreneurs skeptical of creating or maintaining businesses in our state. Tort reform will establish a more predictable legal climate, protect legitimate victims, and extinguish out-of-control lawsuits will make Missouri a more attractive place to do business and help alleviate the current disfunction in Missouri's civil courts.

Missouri's lawsuit climate ranks 44th in the nation, costs the state \$1.6 billion each year, and has killed more than 26,500 jobs

Action Items

Punitive Damages – SB 591 (White), HB 1553 (DeGroot): Requires plaintiffs to present clear and convincing evidence that harm was intentional in order to receive punitive damages and establishes new procedures and timelines for filing for punitive damages.

Missouri Merchandising Practices Act – SB 727 (Luetkemeyer), SB 745, SB 746 (Burlison), SB 793 (Koenig): Requires those seeking damages for unlawful merchandising practices to establish the person acted as a reasonable consumer, the transaction resulted in damage, and the individual damages to be appropriately calculated.

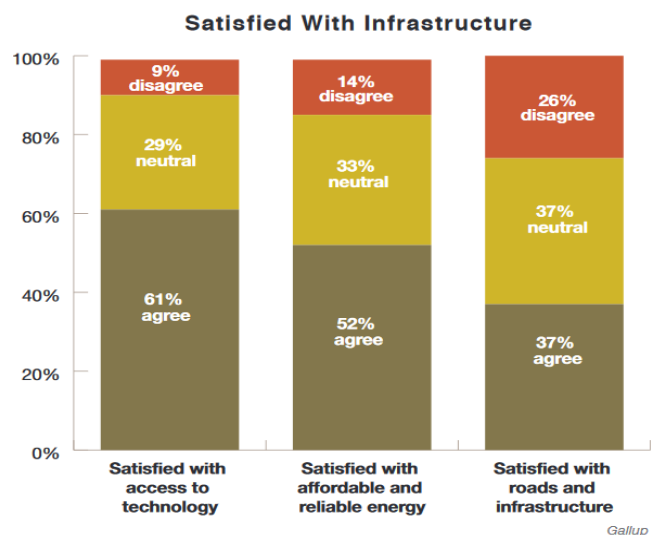
Statute of Repose – HB 1596 (Trent), SB 555 (Riddle): Places reasonable time limits on product liability lawsuits, 15 years after the sale or lease of the product.

Arbitration Agreements – SB 726, SB 728 (Luetkemeyer), HB 2049 (Coleman): Modifies provisions relating to the enforcement of arbitration awards and intervention in court proceedings between employers and employees and insurance companies.

Transportation & Infrastructure

The interstate system—which began just outside of St. Louis—was once considered a crown jewel of the United States. However, in recent years the nation, and more specifically the St. Louis region, has seen a significant drop in transportation and infrastructure quality. Recent successful initiatives to raise funds to fix Missouri's crumbling infrastructure are a step in the right direction but are still not equal to the state's infrastructure needs. The Regional Chamber supports unique ways to raise funds including the exploration of toll roads, increased registration fees, and other necessary taxes.

In addition, the expansion of broadband is one of the many reasons our state has not grown in population. The inclusion of broadband is imperative if Missouri is to compete with states in the region and throughout the country.



Missouri 2030 poll surveying business owners in the state.

Action Items

Gas Tax – SB 539 (Libla): Increases the tax on gasoline and diesel fuel.

Broadband – HB 1859 (Riggs), SB 632 (Hegeman): Currently, the broadband internet grant program for unserved and underserved areas of the state will expire in August 2021. These bills would extend the program through 2027.