



AEROSPACE

The aerospace industry provides billions of dollars in economic impact to our region and employs thousands of individuals. To ensure the continued growth and development of this vital sector and its contribution to national military readiness, we ask for consideration of the following issues:

- Additional funding to improve Department of Defense (DoD) military readiness rates and reduce the maintenance backlog in tactical aviation in our military services.
- Increased funding for aviation workforce development grant programs and aerospace education programs in pre-K through 12 and post-secondary institutions.
- Increase opportunities for reverse engineering to help empower small businesses to provide innovative solutions, quicker turnaround times, and a more agile and resilient supply chain, while protecting intellectual property.

BIOSCIENCE

San Antonio's healthcare and bioscience industries are credited with an annual economic impact of over \$40 billion and account for nearly one-fifth of all local jobs. Just as critical to region's economy, however, is our role as Military City, USA. San Antonio is home to the largest joint base in the US Department of Defense (DoD), with a robust medical ecosystem all its own. Indeed, the city boasts 10 military treatment facilities (MTF's), 12,000 clinical staff, 37 graduate medical education programs with nearly 600 residents, four critical care air transport teams, a burn flight team, and the DoD's only Level 1 Trauma Center. Our community is a critical nexus of academic, industry, and military medical partners working to promote bioscience innovation and accelerate the process by which emerging medical technologies can be leveraged by our nation's military. To ensure the continued growth and development of this vital sector and its contribution to national military readiness, the Greater San Antonio Chamber asks for consideration of the following issues:

- Expand funding for R&D in new medical technologies to be utilized in various environments such as space.
- Continue DoD investment in "trauma research collaboration."
- Efforts to accelerate market access for Advanced Cell & Gene Therapies to benefit patients with limited or no other treatment options.
- Improve transparency and timeliness of Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) reviews of new products to help prevent substantial delays in patient access or market entry.

BROADBAND

Closing the digital divide is essential for San Antonio and our nation. Access to high-speed broadband/internet enhances and protects every aspect of our daily lives and contributes to the economic success of our community. Public policy initiatives that

support access to and the security of high-speed broadband/internet networks will improve education, telemedicine, public safety, and work/play for everyone. The Greater San Antonio Chamber requests the consideration of issues impacting broadband connectivity including:

- Encourage the expansion of broadband networks by:
 - Making the most of historic federal broadband funding by pursuing common sense tax solutions and encouraging program rules that will incentivize private sector investment.
 - Simplification of permitting processes and avoid price-setting policies to enable cost-effective and timely broadband deployment projects.
 - Expand allocation of more commercial full-power licensed spectrum and reauthorize spectrum authority.
- Bolster network expansion by making internet service more affordable for Americans through:
 - Identification of long-term, sustainable affordability solutions to help Americans get connected and stay connected to high-speed internet.
 - Reforming the Universal Service Fund to help remove affordability barriers to connectivity in communities within San Antonio and across the nation.
- Support the communications systems that our public safety community relies on with:
 - Efforts to modernize public safety, like 9-1-1 call systems, equipment and internal communications platforms between public safety personnel.
 - Reauthorization of 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.

CYBERSECURITY

San Antonio's cybersecurity industry is a significant contributor to our regional economy with an estimated impact of nearly \$10 billion due to our strong connections with the military and research institutions. The sector employs tens of thousands of professionals, having one of the highest concentrations of cybersecurity experts in the US, second only to the Washington, DC region. The Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce supports continued federal investment in our growing cybersecurity/national security ecosystem and asks for consideration of the following issues:

- *Expand Education* – The demand for cybersecurity professionals far outpaces the supply and constantly evolving threats require readily equipped experts. Increased investment in cybersecurity education and workforce development helps secure our digital future and protects critical infrastructure. To bridge the workforce gap, the industry needs federal support for security clearance programs for students and internships that offer real-world training thereby equipping students with the necessary skills and access to classified work environments to fill critical national security roles.
- *Help for Small Business* – Small businesses play a critical role in our economy and are integral to larger supply chains, while also frequent targets of cyberattacks. Unfortunately, many small businesses cannot afford sophisticated cybersecurity tools or dedicated teams and lack in-house knowledge. Federal

investments can help bridge the gap and help small businesses prepare for and combat cybersecurity threats and build resilience. Additionally, reducing cybersecurity risks can make entrepreneurship more viable and attractive. We also encourage the standardization of cybersecurity insurance policies to include proactive measures such as subsidized vulnerability assessments and cybersecurity training. This would help provide small businesses with affordable tools to strengthen their defenses while ensuring consistent coverage.

- *Standardized Policies* – Standardizing privacy, compliance, supply chain verification, and certification requirements across states promotes efficiency, enhances security, boosts consumer confidence, and supports workforce consistency. One such path could include adopting the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) requirement currently used for federal and defense contractors and expanding its use to a pilot program for small businesses. Such an effort could improve resilience across the supply chain and ensure readiness for both public and private contracts.
- *Expand Regional Facilities* – We support a DoD/USAF partnership with Port San Antonio to build a new, consolidated campus for the 16th Air Force and related agencies, updating critical USAF facilities and further strengthening and leveraging San Antonio's regional cyber and defense capabilities.

EDUCATION

Early Childhood Education

High quality early childhood education is important to support workforce participation and to promote kindergarten readiness. The Greater Chamber encourages support for enhanced access to quality, affordable child care for military families and all working parents across our community.

Public Education

Employers across our region need a strong pipeline of skilled and knowledgeable workers to fill roles in a variety of industries. Our community's public education system helps build that pipeline and provide the foundational skills and specialized training necessary for jobs in fields like technology, healthcare, manufacturing, and other critical sectors. A strong public education system ensures that Texas and the U.S. remains competitive in the global economy and can also lead to further innovations and productivity gains. The Greater San Antonio Chamber support the following efforts to:

- Fully fund Impact Aid to help offset the costs incurred by school districts in our community educating large numbers of military children.
- Increase funding of special education to fulfill Congressional intent to cover at least 40% of cost to implement the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- Maintain Title 1 funding that addresses barriers to educational success by providing additional resources to schools serving high concentrations of students from low-income homes.
- Consider restoration of funding for the Troops to Teachers program.

Higher Education

It is increasingly clear that higher education is beneficial for many promising career paths. Higher education institutions not only help prepare the workforce but drive

innovative ecosystems across the state. The Greater Chamber supports increased investments in general academic and health-related higher education institutions to include:

- Preservation and enhancement the Federal Pell Grant Program by:
 - extending eligibility to short-term/workforce training programs.
 - increasing the annual maximum amount.
 - expanding eligibility to DACA students.
 - increasing lifetime eligibility to 14 semesters.
- Strengthening under-resourced institutions & student support programs by investing in:
 - Strengthening Institutions (Title III-A of the HEA);
 - Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions;
 - Historically Black Colleges and Universities;
 - TRIO; and
 - GEAR UP
- 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 Defense (DoD), 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, to continue vital resources throughout the rapidly growing San Antonio and South Texas.

ENERGY

Texas and the nation face overwhelming growth in electricity demand over the next decade with an urgent need for innovative energy solutions. To protect our community's economic potential, the Greater San Antonio Chamber encourages the development of a federal energy strategy that expands access to Texas produced oil, natural gas, and renewable energy sources including solar, wind, nuclear, geothermal, hydrogen, and CCUS technologies. We value our municipal utility, CPS Energy in its efforts to ensure affordable and equitable rates that do not interrupt economic opportunities and momentum with locally made decisions reflecting the best interests of the community. The Greater San Antonio Chamber supports the following items in order to deliver the electricity our community needs and wants including:

- Continue to reform regulations that create unnecessary delay in obtaining permits for critical infrastructure, including advanced nuclear reactors (ANR) to allow states to request delegation authority for the processing of early siting permits through the development of a state program that is equal to or more stringent than the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). The NRC could approve the safety of ANR designs and let states approve the sites that could be utilized for these advanced reactor designs.
- Withdrawal of proposed energy efficiency standards for distribution transformers by the US Department of Energy

- Increased funding for support programs like the Low-Income Home Assistance Program (LIHEAP) providing financial assistance to community members unable to pay their energy bills.

HEALTHCARE

The health care and bioscience industries have an over \$44 billion impact on the San Antonio economy and are major employers across our region. The Greater San Antonio Chamber recognizes the benefits of a strong healthcare system and supports the following efforts:

- *Health Care Workforce* - Workforce continues to be a primary concern of the health care industry with tremendous consequences for our regional economy. Our population is growing rapidly further increasing the demand on the workforce. Further, the strain has grown in our state since the implementation of the PACT Act and the automatic enrollment of Veterans with toxic exposures. Shortages in the healthcare workforce can lead to delays in care, overburdened systems, and increased costs. Businesses benefit from a healthcare system that operates efficiently with sufficient providers. Therefore, we support the continued increase in resources to grow and modernize graduate medical education.
- *Expand Telehealth* – The uneven availability of health care providers make access to telehealth even more crucial. We support policies and legislation that increase the availability of telehealth and the inclusion of telehealth in care programs, including AI.
- *Access to Health Coverage* - A healthy workforce is critical to economic productivity, competitiveness, and innovation. Access to affordable and comprehensive healthcare reduces employee absenteeism, improves workplace morale, and fosters long-term talent retention. We encourage the preservation of the Affordable Care Act's enhanced premium tax credits to maintain affordability and cost savings for enrollees in the marketplace. Additionally, we support federal policies to expand Medicaid access and streamline coverage transitions for families, improving healthcare outcomes.
- *Increase Mental Health Services Availability* – When individuals have access to mental health care, communities are healthier, more stable, and economically resilient. We support policies to expand access and improve quality, comprehensive mental health services/substances use disorder treatments, ensure long-term telehealth flexibilities, and enforce full parity for behavioral health services.
- *Local Support* – We encourage federal funding for the development of a regional psychiatric center in Bexar County.

HOUSING

Affordable housing allows local employers greater access to a reliable workforce and can support our talent attraction strategy. Construction of affordable housing can expand the tax base of our region and provide residents with more disposable income which can be spent on local businesses and services. To help our rapidly growing region meet our community's need for affordable housing, the Greater San Antonio Chamber requests consideration of the following requests:

- Reduce costs for the development, preservation, and management of affordable housing making it more economically feasible and sustainable for our region.
- Remove barriers that prevent the production and preservation of affordable housing including streamlined processes and enhanced opportunities for construction and/or preservation.
- Seek opportunities to preserve and expand affordable housing tax credits.

MANUFACTURING

San Antonio's advanced manufacturing sector is a key engine of our economic growth including companies of all sizes from local innovators to global enterprises. The sector supports over 60,000 jobs with a regional GDP of \$13.5 billion. To continue to provide our manufacturers with the resources they need to succeed, the Greater San Antonio Chamber requests consideration of the following items:

- Expansion of federal incentives, including R&D tax credits, to bolster investment in advanced technologies and manufacturing sectors critical to San Antonio and Texas.
- Actions to meet the national need for artificial intelligence (AI) research, testing and standards; advancing quantum information science and technology readiness; and taking the first steps toward addressing maintenance backlogs and facilities revitalization.
- Secure the cybersecurity of U.S. manufacturing, especially supply chains, factory automation, and workforce development.
- Provide resources to build and upskill the talent pipeline. Over the next decade, manufacturing nationwide must fill 4 million openings.
- Increase Section 179 deduction dollar limits. For tax years beginning in 2024, the maximum section 179 expense deduction for new equipment is \$1,220,000, and incentivize the purchase of American made equipment or the use of equipment in US factories.

MILITARY AFFAIRS

Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA) is the largest joint base in the US Department of Defense and is a critical asset to both Texas and San Antonio with comprehensive military operations and mission diversity, encompassing the premier training location for all military disciplines and inter-service collaboration. JBSA is also one of the largest employers in the region, directly supporting over 80,000 personnel (active duty, reservists, civilians, and contractors) and generating billions of dollars annually for the local and state economy through salaries, contracts, and associated spending. San Antonio proudly embraces its identity as "Military City, USA," and our central location in Texas allows JBSA to act as a key logistical and operational hub for missions across the U.S. and globally to enhance our nation's defense operations. Further, our region offers extensive services for veterans and military families, creating a supportive ecosystem for active-duty members transitioning to civilian life, and we serve as a hub for innovation in defense technology, fostering partnerships with private industry and research institutions. The Greater San Antonio Chamber enthusiastically support federal efforts to protect JBSA's strategic value as a model of military readiness, economic

vitality, and community integration, as well as support for active-duty personnel and their families, including:

- Continued investment in initiatives to ensure resiliency (infrastructure, climate, mission) for installations through programs that mutually benefit communities and military missions such as:
 - Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC),
 - Military Installation Resilience Review (MIRR) grant,
 - Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP), and
 - Defense Manufacturing Community Support Program (DMCSP).
- Measures by Congress, the US Department of Veterans Affairs, and the US Department of Defense to reduce military and veteran suicide.

NONPROFIT

Charitable nonprofit organizations across the country are significant employers, economic drivers, and integral problem solvers who positively impact lives and lighten the burden on government. Our organizations make contributions toward the wellbeing of individuals and communities they serve, but face unprecedented workforce shortages, economic uncertainty, increased costs, and skyrocketing demand for services at a time when private donations are declining. To help charitable nonprofit organization keep improving lives, the Greater San Antonio Chamber recommends updates to our federal tax code and efforts to improve government-nonprofit contracting systems and public-private partnerships, specifically:

- *Tax Incentives* – Congress can encourage more taxpayers to help solve these challenges by enacting tax incentives that encourage donations to the work of charitable organizations in their communities, including reinstating and expanding a non-itemizer deduction and retention of the 60% AGI cap on charitable deductions.
- *Contracting Reforms* – Streamline processes, policies, and procedures for government grants to nonprofits to avoid duplication and waste; develop standardized definitions for contracting and grant language; ensure that payments to nonprofit organizations for direct and indirect costs from the federal government through state and local governments are sufficient to cover the costs of providing services; are applied consistently, fairly, and in a timely manner; consider multiyear funding cycles; and eliminate from federal statutes and regulations arbitrary caps on reimbursement of nonprofit indirect, administrative, or overhead costs.

SMALL BUSINESS

Small businesses play a key role in the development of a thriving regional economy. The San Antonio metropolitan area has a robust small business ecosystem with more than 38,000 small businesses employing nearly 880,000 with an annual payroll of nearly \$47 million in most recent measure. Importantly, small businesses serve as a critical means to build community and individual wealth. Research has shown that economic growth is highly correlated with the presence of many small businesses and entrepreneurs because the majority of revenue generated by local businesses stays within the community through employment of community residents. Small business

families also have an estimated median net worth between four to six times higher than that of families that do not own a small business. In order to support our small businesses and expand opportunities to other entrepreneurs, the Greater San Antonio Chamber supports policies including:

- *Extend SBIR/STTR* – The SBIR/STTR programs are an important source of early-stage technology funding for small businesses in a variety of industries, stimulating technological innovation and increasing commercialization to transition R&D into impact. We ask they be extended beyond September 2025.
- *Make Deductions Permanent* – Congress passed the largest deduction for small businesses in history in 2017 when it allowed small businesses to deduct 20 percent of qualified income from their federal income taxes. It had a big impact on communities by making it easier for Main Street businesses to grow and create jobs. It is set to expire at the end of 2025.
- *Maintain Affordability of Health Insurance* – We encourage the preservation of the Affordable Care Act's enhanced premium tax credits to maintain affordability and cost savings for enrollees in the marketplace, especially for self-employed small business owners. They also benefit by saving on health costs for their teams, allowing for reinvesting in job creation, innovation, and growth.
- *Continue Critical SBA Loans* - SBA Loan Programs offer financial assistance tailored to various business needs, providing access to capital that might be unavailable through traditional lenders including the 7(a) Loan Program, for working capital, equipment, and debt refinancing; the CDC/504 Loan Program for long-term, fixed-rate financing for assets like real estate and equipment; and the Microloan Program provides loans up to \$50,000 through nonprofit intermediary lenders.

TRANSPORTATION

Reliable transportation infrastructure boosts economic activity by facilitating efficient movement of goods and services, allowing businesses to access a wider workforce and customer base, and promote economic development to a wider region. To help maintain and improve our transportation infrastructure in order to expand economic prosperity and opportunity, the Greater Chamber requests consideration of the following items:

- Maximize allocation for Texas under the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act for ports, rail, and highway projects.
- Support for public-private partnerships to expedite transportation infrastructure development, addressing population growth and trade demands.
- Increased funding of Texas ports of entry to enhance trade capacity and reduce congestion.
- Promote policies supporting Advanced Air Mobility to ensure Texas remains a leader in transportation innovation.
- Appropriations and local grant applications consistent with surface transportation goals.
- Continuation of the Federal Transit Administration and a federal role in funding transit projects with priority for urban areas.
- Support robust five-year reauthorization of the Federal Surface Transportation Act, the current version of which expires September 30, 2026.

WATER

Balanced water management practices and assured access to clean water are essential to our community's continued economic growth and job creation. The San Antonio Greater Chamber appreciates the nationally recognized efforts of our local utilities, San Antonio Water System (SAWS) and San Antonio River Authority (SARA), to ensure a sustainable supply of water for our community that protects our future economic potential. The Greater Chamber supports programs that safeguard our community's water infrastructure and policies that improve the region's water resiliency including:

- Increased Federal investment in water and wastewater infrastructure to help utilities address pressing needs
- Efforts to ensure a stable and equitable framework for managing water utilities
- Improvements to water use efficiency and other conservation efforts
- Water and Wastewater Emergency Assistance Program
- Continued federal funding through U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the Westside Creek Ecosystem Restoration Project.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The continued prosperity and global competitiveness for our state and nation depend on aligning workers' skills with the needs of industry. The Greater San Antonio Chamber supports measures across our nation's critical industries designed to enhance collaboration between education institutions and employers resulting in clear pathways to high-paying, high-demand jobs, and provide employers with much needed workers.

- *Child Care Accessibility* – Families across the country need support accessing quality, affordable childcare to increase workforce participation.
- *Expand Worker Training* – Workers in every community would benefit from multiple pathways to employment and educational attainment including skills based training, apprenticeships, and adult education programs.
- *Immigration Reform* – To ensure Texas remains an attractive destination for global talent, we need reforms that include streamlining visa processes for highly skilled workers and investors and pathways for education and workforce integration.

