2025 TENNESSEE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The Chamber of Commerce, serving Johnson City, Jonesborough and Washington County, acts as a legislative advocate for small to large businesses and organizations in our area. We recognize that our businesses are the driver of economic prosperity in the region and state, and we aim to support their operations and protect their business interests as Tennessee's 114th General Assembly convenes.

AGRICULTURE

To ensure agriculture remains Tennessee's #1 economic driver, and to lower TN's ranking of #3 in the country for farmland loss, we:

- Advocate for Northeast TN business owners to sit on the TN Agricultural Enhancement Program (TAEP) Retailer Committee, ensuring regional businesses are represented in the distribution of over $14 million that is invested in profit-maximizing and farm-protection projects across the state each year.
- Support Governor Lee's desire to establish the Farmland Preservation Fund, allowing the TN Department of Agriculture to compensate landowners with a portion of their land value, encouraging/enabling owners to keep their land as farmland for future generations.

EDUCATION

To ensure Washington County is developing a qualified workforce, we:

- Support the publication of findings of the TN Board of Education and TN Dept. of Education's study of relevant substitutions of Algebra II as a high school graduation requirement.
- Support the publication of findings of the TN Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations' study on the laws, regulations and roadblocks involved with operating a childcare business.
- Advocate for the funding of a universal school meals program for K-12 students, as one in five Northeast TN students is food insecure and federal/state funds that provided meals to students from 2020-2022 have been depleted.
- Advocate for an appropriate portion of the TN sports betting tax to fund the **Tennessee Promise completion grants**, helping permanentize this pilot program, and the **Promising Futures early learning scholarship** program, providing accessible high-quality childcare and preschool for working families.
- Advocate for the funding of the **Phase II renovation of ETSU's Brown Hall** and the **$2.5 million in recurring funding for the Bill Gatton College of Pharmacy**. With ETSU's high-quality education and tradition of graduating students who fill critical STEM and medical-related jobs, funding for update facilities would grow the University's educational and recruiting capacities.

BUSINESS/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

To ensure long-term resilience for Washington County businesses and residents, we:

- Request the allocation of state funds to assist Northeast TN disaster relief efforts in response to the extensive damage caused by Hurricane Helene.
- Oppose any increase of the filing fee(s) for businesses' Annual Report(s).
- Oppose any state action that would result in mandating the election of school superintendents.
- Oppose any state action that would allow candidates for a local municipal office to declare a party affiliation on the ballot.
- Advocate for increasing the availability of capital to businesses by leveraging funding sources to invest in technology-based firms to foster innovation and create high-skill/high-paying jobs.

HEALTHCARE

To ensure a healthier, more productive business community, we:

- Support policies that prioritize mental health support within the workplace, fostering a healthier, more resilient workforce
- Support the development of pipelines for healthcare workers, leveraging high school and higher education programs that introduce students to the healthcare profession.

Tennessee Government & Washington County Delegation:

Governor Bill Lee (R)
Lieutenant Governor Randy McNally (R-Oak Ridge)
Speaker of the House Cameron Sexton (R-Crossville)

Senator Rusty Crowe (R, TN-03)
Representative Tim Hicks (R, TN-06)
Representative Rebecca Alexander (R, TN-07)

For more info., contact Cooper Reaves at reaves@johnsoncitytnchamber.com

The Chamber of Commerce's 2025 Tennessee Legislative Agenda was created with the input and support of these partners:

Appalachian Resource Conservation & Development Council
East Tennessee State University
THE CHAMBER JOHNSON CITY JONESBOROUGH•WASHINGTON COUNTY
Second Harvest Food Bank of Northeast Tennessee
West Hills Tractor