

LEGISLATIVE SCORECARD



2016

TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY & NASHVILLE METROPOLITAN COUNCIL



The Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce facilitates community leadership to create economic prosperity. Through partnerships with our members and elected officials, we work to ensure that business needs are a top consideration when policy decisions are made.

MAKING YOUR BUSINESS VOICE COUNT

The Chamber values our partnership with elected officials as we work together to create jobs and build communities. Every year, the Chamber's board of directors adopts a legislative agenda based on issues identified by our members in our annual policy survey. We then share this agenda with state and local elected officials.



















Throughout the year, we work to provide information to our members and advocate as a collective business voice for Middle Tennessee. We are pleased to share our 2016 Legislative Scorecard, which reports how our elected leaders have voted in the past year in four policy areas:

- Creating an environment where business can prosper;
- Promoting talent development of the region's workforce;
- Ensuring quality of life that attracts and retains residents and workers; and
- Leading regional efforts to ensure economic prosperity.

In order to create an environment where your business can succeed and the region can prosper, we help our members engage in policy decisions that directly impact their business:

- Listen: Our annual policy survey allows us to listen to members about their business needs.
- Inform: Our annual legislative agenda provides information about legislative issues important to business.
- Report: Our annual legislative scorecard reports the impact made through our advocacy efforts.
- Influence: Middle Tennessee Business Voice offers members a direct way to influence policy decisions.

2016 TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY LEGISLATIVE SCORECARD

	Chamber Legislative Priority	Action	
An environment where business can prosper	Judicial Selection		 Took action supporting Chamber position  Took action opposing Chamber position or failed to pass legislation supporting Chamber position  No definitive action on this issue or no action recorded
	Business Property Rights		
	Local Hiring Mandates		
	Tax Credits for Angel Investors		
	Statewide Minimum Wage		
Talent development of the region's workforce	High-Quality Voluntary Pre-K		
	Required Aligned Assessments		
	Teacher Evaluation System		
	Charter School Accountability		
	ACT/SAT Opt-Out		
	Elected Directors of Schools		
	School Vouchers		
	Quality of life that attracts and retains residents and workers	Limiting Local Transportation Options	
Regional efforts to ensure economic prosperity	Public-Private Partnerships (P3)		
	Bus-on-Shoulder Transit		

2016 STATE LEGISLATIVE SESSION

An environment where business can prosper



Judicial Selection

Since 1994, appellate and Supreme Court judges have been nominated by a state commission, appointed by the governor, and retained or removed by the Tennessee electorate every eight years. Despite a system that worked well for Tennessee, there was disagreement around whether the Tennessee constitution allowed for retention elections for these officeholders. On Nov. 4, 2014, voters approved a constitutional amendment that preserved the process that was in place, but also required legislative confirmation pursuant to the process outlined by the General Assembly in state law.

Chamber Position

Support a legislative confirmation process for state appellate judicial appointments.

Bill Summary

SB1/HB142 (Kelsey/Lundberg) establishes procedures for the appointment, confirmation and retention of appellate court judges. The Chamber supported this bill.

Status

The General Assembly took action supporting the Chamber's position. This bill passed the Senate and House, was signed by the governor and became effective Jan. 28 (Public Chapter 528).



Business Property Rights

In Tennessee, business owners have the ability to decide whether or not to allow handgun carry permit holders to carry firearms on their premises. If owners decide to prohibit such carrying, they must adequately post notice of such prohibition in compliance with state law.

Chamber Position

Support the ability of private property owners to decide whether to allow or prohibit firearms on their property.

Bill Summary

SB1736/HB2033 (Gresham/Faison), as initially drafted, created a legal cause of action against a property owner who prohibited permit holders from carrying a handgun and subsequently the permit holder suffered an injury. The Chamber opposed this bill.

Status

This bill was substantially amended to reflect the concerns of the business community. As amended, if a person is injured and the property owner has not posted a notice that handguns are prohibited on the premises, the property owner may not be held liable for any damages due to not posting a prohibition. The bill passed the Senate and House, was signed by the Governor and became effective on July 1. (Public Chapter 947).



Local Hiring Mandates

A few cities across the country have implemented policies requiring local residents to comprise a certain percentage of employees on public construction projects.

Chamber Position

Support legislation ensuring a predictable and consistent business environment throughout the state, anchored in the principles of the free-market economy business environment.

Bill Summary

SB1621/HB1674 (Johnson/Marsh) prohibits local governments from requiring a certain percentage of residents to be employed in governmental construction projects. The Chamber supported this bill.

Status

The General Assembly took action supporting the Chamber's position. This bill passed the Senate and House, was signed by the governor and became effective on March 10 (Public Chapter 587).



Tax Credits for Angel Investors

New business creation is key to the economy and job creation. Individuals who invest in startup companies to help them grow are often known as "angel investors." In many states, these investors receive tax credits or other benefits for contributing to these young companies. Tennessee's only form of an income tax is the Hall income tax, which levies a 6 percent tax on the income derived from dividends on stock or from interest on bonds.

Chamber Position

Support legislation to motivate investments in small, newly created businesses.

Bill Summary

SB2539/HB1536 (Norris/McCormick) provides tax credits from the Hall Income Tax for qualified investments in newly created businesses. An investment must be at least \$15,000, and the annual credit is capped at \$50,000. The Chamber supported this bill.

Status

The General Assembly took action supporting the Chamber's position. This bill passed the Senate and House, was signed by the governor and will become effective Jan. 1, 2017 (Public Chapter 1055).



Statewide Minimum Wage

Tennessee has no laws concerning overtime, minimum wage or the regulation of salaried employees, deferring instead to federally mandated wage policies. Currently, five states do not have a minimum wage (Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee and South Carolina).

Chamber Position

Oppose the implementation of a state minimum wage for private business, leaving the federal government to set the minimum wage.

Bill Summary

Three bills were filed to implement a statewide minimum wage: SB2046/HB2277 (Harris/Turner); SB2319/HB2324 (Kyle/Cooper); and SB2322/HB2090 (Kyle/Hardaway). The Chamber opposed all three.

Status

The General Assembly took action supporting the Chamber's position. HB2277 and HB2090 failed in a House subcommittee, while the other bills were not debated.

Talent development of the region's workforce



High Quality Voluntary Pre-K

Since 2005, Tennessee has administered a voluntary pre-K program which is designed to provide early learning opportunities to at-risk students. In September 2015, however, a Vanderbilt study of the program was completed that demonstrated participating children entered kindergarten more prepared, but that this advantage faded during the early elementary years, highlighting an opportunity to strengthen the program.

Chamber Position

Support the preservation of the voluntary pre-K program while making targeted changes to ensure higher quality statewide.

Bill Summary

SB1899/HB1485 (Dickerson/M. White) added additional requirements to the application process for school districts participating in the pre-K program. These requirements seek to replicate best practices with pre-K while ensuring quality and accountability. The Chamber supported this bill.

Status

The General Assembly took action supporting the Chamber's position. This bill passed the Senate and House, was signed by the governor and became effective on April 6 (Public Chapter 703).



Required Aligned Assessments

Aligning assessments to the K-12 education standards used to inform classroom instruction is critical for teachers, parents and students to have a real and authentic picture of each child's academic achievement and progress from year to year.

Chamber Position

Support the requirement that students take assessments aligned to the rigorous standards being taught in the classroom.

Bill Summary

SB2159/HB2462 (Tate/Camper) would have enabled parents to opt their children out of taking state-mandated assessments in some situations. The Chamber opposed this bill.

Status

The General Assembly took action supporting the Chamber's position. This bill was taken off notice.



Teacher Evaluation System

Research has confirmed the most important in-school determinant of student academic success is the quality of the teacher and classroom instruction. Necessary reforms to the teacher evaluation system in 2010 have created an annual evaluation process that incorporates student achievement, academic growth and principal observations, with feedback.

Chamber Position

Support the current evaluation models whereby student academic performance is included.

Bill Summary

SB1453/HB2242 (Byrd/Hensley) sought to institute a two-year waiver of the use of student achievement data in teacher evaluations. The Chamber opposed this bill.

Status

The General Assembly took action in support of the Chamber’s position. This bill was taken off notice.



Charter School Accountability

In 2014, after numerous meetings with stakeholders, the General Assembly made the decision to ensure accountability for charter schools. Under the change in the law, if a charter school appears on a priority list of low-performing schools, it is closed at the conclusion of the academic year. This change prevented outside pressure or politics from enabling a failing school to continue to operate.

Chamber Position

Oppose changes to the law weakening the accountability for charter schools.

Bill Summary

SB2636/HB2101 (Harper/Hardaway) would have allowed failing schools to remain open for up to three years following one year of academic growth. The Chamber opposed this bill.

Status

The General Assembly took action in support of the Chamber’s position. This bill was taken off notice.



ACT/SAT Opt-Out

Tennessee is one of several states that require every student to take the ACT or SAT, making these tests the closest thing the state has to an exit exam. ACT and SAT results provide a measure of college and career readiness and determine HOPE scholarship eligibility and a student's Tennessee Promise award.

Chamber Position

Oppose changes in state law to allow high school students to opt out of the ACT and SAT college entrance exam.

Bill Summary

SB1473/HB2247 (Hensley/Byrd) would allow high school students to opt out of taking the ACT and SAT. The Chamber opposed this bill.

Status

The legislature took action in support of the Chamber's position. This bill was taken off notice.



Elected Directors of Schools

In 1992, through the Education Improvement Act, the law changed whereby an elected local board of education would be responsible for appointing a director of schools. Only three states allow for the election of a director of schools, and less than 1 percent of the nearly 14,000 directors of schools nationwide are elected.

Chamber Position

Oppose legislation to revert to a system of directors of schools being popularly elected.

Bill Summary

SB1606/HB1968 (Niceley/Powers) allows county governments to revert to a system of electing directors of schools pursuant to a referendum. The Chamber opposed this bill.

Status

The General Assembly took action supporting the Chamber's position. This bill failed in the Senate Education Committee and was never discussed in the House.



School Vouchers

School vouchers are scholarships issued by the government to offset the cost of sending a child to a private K-12 school. As of January 2015, 14 states and the District of Columbia had some form of a voucher program. The way in which a student qualifies to receive a school voucher varies from state to state.

Chamber Position

Oppose school voucher legislation that does not provide “real choice with accountability;” support school voucher legislation that requires participating students to take the same state mandated tests as public school students, provides voucher amounts sufficient to cover the cost of participating schools, and contains additional design elements to ensure successful implementation.

Bill Summary

SB999/HB1049 (Gardenhire/Dunn) proposed a scholarship program that would allow low-income students in underperforming public schools to use the district’s state and local per-pupil funding to pay private school tuition. Because the bill did not require students receiving a scholarship to take the same state-mandated test as public school students, the Chamber opposed this bill.

Status

Last year, this bill passed the Senate, but it was taken off notice in the House Finance Subcommittee. This year, the General Assembly took action supporting the Chamber’s position. While the House bill advanced through the committee process, it was placed on the clerk’s desk and not debated on the House floor.

Quality of life that attracts and retains residents and workers



Limiting Local Transportation Options

Communities are developing local solutions to address transportation and congestion-related issues. These solutions often include a combination of sidewalks and bike lanes, in addition to highways and mass transit options.

Chamber Position

Oppose legislation to restrict the ability of local governments to address its transit issues with multi-modal options.

Bill Summary

SB1650/HB1716 (Gardenhire/Carter) would have prevented local governments from expending any state gas tax revenue on multi-modal options, such as bicycle lanes. The Chamber opposed this bill.

Status

The General Assembly took action supporting the Chamber's position. This bill was taken off notice.

Regional efforts to ensure economic prosperity



Public-Private Partnerships (P3)

A majority of U.S. states authorize public entities to enter into agreements with private entities for the design, build, financing, operation and/or maintenance of transportation projects. Some of these states have found P3 to be an innovative approach in addressing transportation needs. These arrangements shift risk to the private sector while incentivizing efficiency and project completion.

Chamber Position

Support legislation providing options to local governments with meeting transit needs.

Bill Summary

SB2093/HB2407 (Ketron/Sargent) allows state and local governmental entities to contract with private entities for all phases of mass transit projects and facilities. The Chamber supported this bill.

Status

The General Assembly took action supporting the Chamber's position. This bill passed the Senate and House, was signed by the governor and will become effective Oct. 1 (Public Chapter 975).



Bus-on-Shoulder Transit

Middle Tennessee faces significant challenges in addressing its transportation and mobility needs. Several states have addressed such needs by enabling mass transit buses to drive on the shoulders of state highways and interstates when traffic congestion reaches a near-standstill. These states have found this option to be a cost effective, safe method of providing near-term relief from traffic congestion.

Chamber Position

Support enabling legislation whereby TDOT may authorize mass transit buses to use the shoulders of state highways and interstates.

Bill Summary

SB1953/HB2022 (Yarbro/Beck) allows TDOT to explore the option of and to subsequently authorize a program whereby mass transit buses may use the shoulders of state highways and interstates to avoid traffic congestion. The Chamber supported this bill.

Status

The General Assembly took action supporting the Chamber's position. This bill passed the Senate and House, was signed by the governor and became effective on April 27 (Public Chapter 967).

TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY – SENATE INDIVIDUAL VOTE COUNT

Senator	SB1 Judicial Selection			SB1606 Revert to Elected Directors of Schools			SB1621 Prohibition on Residency Requirements for Workers			SB1716 Limiting Multi-Modal Uses in Transit			SB1899 Strengthening the State Pre-K Program			SB1953 Allowing Bus-on-Shoulder Transit Option			SB2093 Allowing Public-Private Partnerships (P3) with Transit Projects			SB2539 Angel Investor Tax Credit Program		
	Committee	Committee	Floor	Committee	Committee	Floor	Committee	Committee	Floor	Subcommittee	Committee	Floor	Committee	Committee	Floor	Committee	Committee	Floor	Committee	Committee	Floor	Subcommittee	Committee	Floor
Mae Beavers (R-17)			√					√							X	√		X	X		X			√
Steve Dickerson (R-20)			√	√				X	√			√		√		√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
Mark Green (R-22)			√				√	√						√			NVR			√				√
Ferrell Haile (R-18)			√	√				√	√			√		√		√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
Thelma Harper (D-19)			√					X	PNV					√		√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
Joey Hensley (R-28)			√	X				√	X			√		√		√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
Jack Johnson (R-23)			√				√	√						√			√			√				√
Bill Ketron (R-13)			√					NVR	PNV					√		√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
Kerry Roberts (R-25)			√					√						√			√			√				√
Jim Tracy (R-14)			√	√			√	√				√		√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
Jeff Yarbro (D-21)			√					X						√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Lt. Governor Ron Ramsey (R-4)			√					√						√			√			√				√

Davidson County delegation	√ In support of Chamber position	NVR: No vote recorded (absent)	■ Sponsored Chamber-endorsed bill
Middle Tennessee delegation	X In opposition to Chamber position	PNV: Present but not voting	Blank spaces indicate that the legislator did not sit on that particular committee so he/she did not have an opportunity to vote.



Clockwise from left:

L-R - Gov. Bill Haslam (left) and Rep. Charles Sargent (right) present Franklin Mayor Dr. Ken Moore (center) with an award recognizing the city as a Healthier Tennessee Community.

Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey and Sen. Thelma Harper have a discussion prior to a press conference by Gov. Bill Haslam.

Gov. Bill Haslam (center) participates in a ceremonial bill signing with Rep. Mark White (left) and Sen. Steve Dickerson (right), the sponsors of a bill to ensure quality and accountability with Tennessee's voluntary pre-K program.

2016 NASHVILLE METRO COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE SCORECARD

In October 2015, the newly elected Metropolitan Nashville/Davidson County Council began its term. With 27 new members, the current Metro Council brings fresh perspectives to the governance of our dynamic, fast-growing city.

The Chamber offers data, research and business perspective to councilmembers on issues within the Chamber's legislative priorities:

- Creating an environment where business can prosper;
- Promoting talent development of the region's workforce;
- Ensuring quality of life that attracts and retains residents and workers; and
- Leading regional efforts to ensure economic prosperity.

In the nine months that the new council has been in office, its members have worked to understand and address some of the key issues facing our city, including economic development, housing affordability and transit. The Chamber has also been engaged in these and other important public policy conversations.

Transit

The Chamber has played a key role in the transit conversation by convening and supporting the efforts of Moving Forward, a coalition of business, community and institutional leaders working to ensure the creation of a regional transportation solution through a cohesive community effort.

Moving Forward issued its first annual report in June 2016, with updates on progress to the following goals:

- Support the completion of an RTA and MTA strategic plan update within one year (2016)
- Support the identification and passage of state and federal government revenue enhancements for transit within two years (2017)
- Ensure at least 30,000 engagements with Middle Tennesseans in the transit conversation within two years (2017)
- Identify and secure a local dedicated funding source for transit in our region within three years (2018)
- Support breaking ground on the first rapid transit project in our region within five years (2020)



Clockwise from left:

Ronnie Steine, former at-large Metro councilman and former vice mayor, with Councilmember Fabian Bedne, on the Chamber's 25th annual Leadership Study Mission to Minneapolis/St. Paul in April 2016.

Councilmembers Sharon Hurt and Davette Blalock on the Leadership Study Mission in April 2016.

Ron Lustig of Earl Swenson Associates with Councilmember Freddie O'Connell and Tom Lampe of Messer Construction, also on the 2016 Leadership Study Mission.

Housing Affordability

At the date of publication of this legislative scorecard, the Metro Council was considering BL2016-133, an inclusionary housing bill. Housing affordability is among the Chamber's top priorities. Our members and board understand the importance of housing affordability to attract and retain the workforce needed for our diverse and growing economy.

The Chamber has participated in the debate surrounding the inclusionary housing bill, maintaining our position that the solution to ensuring housing affordability is to encourage additional housing supply through the use of incentives and the reduction of barriers to creating new housing. The Chamber will continue to participate in conversations surrounding the inclusionary housing bill and will seek other tools to add to the supply of housing and incentivize those who provide affordable housing.

Metro Retirees Unfunded Health Benefits



















The Chamber monitors Metro government action to champion cost-effective and efficient policies and practices for the long-term health of the city. One issue of continuing concern to the Chamber is managing the impact of the city's unfunded liabilities related to Metro's retiree health benefits system. Addressing this issue for future hires will ensure current and retired employees are able to receive the benefit they were promised by protecting the solvency of the system and the financial health of Metro Government.

In 2013, Mayor Karl Dean appointed a Study and Formulating Committee to assess the system of benefits for current and future Metro employees. This committee was re-appointed in late 2014 and concluded its work in 2015. The committee found that Metro's retiree health care obligations are not pre-funded, but are managed on a "pay-as-you-go" basis and have a projected liability of \$2.6 billion. The committee also discovered that pensions account for the bulk of Metro's retirement costs and pension costs doubled from 2002 to 2014, but retiree health benefits payments grew by 360 percent during the same time period.

The Study and Formulating Committee recommended to the Metro Benefit Board that Metro continue to provide the retiree medical subsidy for current employees, but that Metro discontinue the retiree medical subsidy upon eligibility for Medicare at age 65 for future Metro employees, except those covered by the Police and Fire Pension Plan. The Benefit Board, at its October 6, 2015 meeting, disapproved the Study and Formulating Committee recommendation on the retiree medical subsidy, leaving this growing liability unaddressed.

The unfunded liability inherent in the current post-retirement medical benefits package will continue to grow, particularly if Metro's investment returns deteriorate, health care inflation grows, and/or if future property tax growth declines. The Chamber will continue to work for a resolution to this threat to Metro's financial security.

2016 NASHVILLE METRO COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE SCORECARD

	Chamber Legislative Priority	Action	
An environment where business can prosper	Partnership 2020 Economic Development Contract		 Took action supporting Chamber position  Took action opposing Chamber position or failed to pass legislation supporting Chamber position  No definitive action on this issue or no action recorded  Issue still under discussion in 2016
	Sustainable Fiscal Policies		
	Transparent Development and Zoning Policies		
	Economic Development Tax Credits and Incentives		
	Government Regulation of Private Business		
Talent development of the region's workforce	School Funding		
	High School Reform		
	Public-Private Partnerships		
Quality of life that attracts and retains residents and workers	Public Infrastructure		
	Downtown Core		
	Poverty and Homelessness		
	Welcoming and Inclusive City		
Regional efforts to ensure economic prosperity	Infrastructure Investment		
	Workforce and Affordable Housing		

2015 - 2016 NASHVILLE METRO COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

An environment where business can prosper



Partnership 2020 Economic Development Contract

For more than 25 years, Nashville Metro Government has invested in Partnership 2020—the Chamber’s public-private economic development initiative. The contract with the city includes job-creation and expansion efforts in Davidson County, proactive marketing to relocation prospects and site consultants, and small business development programming.

Chamber Position

Support job-creation efforts in Davidson County through the public-private Partnership 2020 contract between Metro government and the Chamber.

Bill Summary

The mayor’s operating budget, BL2016-232 (Pridemore), includes funding for the Chamber’s P2020 economic development contract with the city. As in 2015, this year’s contract includes funding to support the Chamber’s small business initiatives. The Chamber supported this bill.

Status

Metro Council took action supporting the Chamber’s position. The bill was adopted unanimously by the Council on June 21.



Sustainable Fiscal Policies

As discussed above, the Chamber continues to be concerned about the impact of the city’s unfunded liabilities related to Metro’s retiree health benefits system. The solutions recommended by the 2013-2014 Study and Formulating Committee were not adopted by the Metro Benefit Board. The unfunded liability inherent in Metro’s current post-retirement medical benefits package remains and will only grow, particularly if Metro’s investment returns deteriorate, the cost of health care increases and/or future property tax growth declines.

Chamber Position

Support responsible fiscal policy that ensures the long-term prosperity of the city.

Bill Summary

No bills were filed on this issue.

Status

Because no bills were filed on this issue in 2015-2016, it is not included in the individual vote count.



Transparent Development and Zoning Policies

A lack of clear definition, transparency and predictability around the development process can create barriers to investment by making it difficult for business to operate or expand.

Chamber Position

Support predictable and transparent development and zoning policies that encourage development, investment and support for entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Bill Summary

Council is currently considering two zone change applications that would reduce the zoning entitlements on properties without the consent of the property owners. The Chamber does not generally weigh in on individual zone changes, but the impacts of these rezonings have troublesome implications for the general business environment in Nashville.

Status

As of the publication of the 2015-2016 Legislative Scorecard, Metro Council had yet to act on BL2016-219 and the other rezoning, BL2016-297 (Dowell). The Chamber opposes these bills.

In both cases, the property owners obtained zoning for their properties in conformance with Metro's rules and regulations, but if the proposed zone changes are adopted, these properties will lose their current entitlements to build multi-family housing. In the case of the first bill to reach council, BL2016-219 (Bedne), the property owner had begun development of 96 low-income, multi-family units, having secured competitive Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC). If the rezoning occurs, the property owner will not be able to complete their 96-unit development, but will have their entitlements reduced to 34 single-family lots.

Furthermore, the Tennessee Development and Housing Agency, which awards the competitive LIHTC to communities across the state, has indicated that if jurisdictions seek to rezone properties that have been awarded LIHTC credits, these actions could jeopardize the award of future tax credits. LIHTC are the most significant incentive available for creating affordable housing, which makes BL2016-219 even more troubling.



Economic Development Tax Credits and Incentives

Designed to generate positive economic returns by creating jobs and generating new tax revenue, economic development tax credits and incentives are valuable investments critical to maintaining a competitive business environment in Tennessee and Davidson County.

Chamber Position

Support the use of local government tax credits and incentives for economic development as additional tools to encourage the location or expansion of business in Nashville.

Bill Summary

BL2016-149 (O’Connell) proposed incentives and public infrastructure investments for the relocation of Lifeway Christian Resources headquarters to the North Gulch. The Chamber supported this bill.

Status

The Council took action supporting the Chamber’s position by approving incentives for the Lifeway Christian Resources project on March 15, in a 32-1 vote.



Government Regulation of Private Business

Government regulates private business in a number of ways, including regulations on inter-state commerce, which are generally created and enforced at the federal level. Such is the case with regulations surrounding natural gas infrastructure. Despite this established regulatory scheme, in 2016, the council considered action to regulate gas compressor stations.

Chamber Position

Oppose legislation that duplicates existing federal regulation and harms regional cooperation on important energy infrastructure decisions.

Bill Summary

Substitute BL2016-234 and RS2016-219 (Bedne) purport to grant the Metro Health Department the ability to seek additional information from applicants seeking air quality permits for gas compressor stations and other major sources of air pollution. Metro Health states, however, that this is unnecessary, as that power is already granted to them. Substitute BL2016-234 also inserts location prohibitions—through zoning regulations—into the health portion of Metro Code. Regulation of location of natural gas infrastructure is the purview of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and location prohibitions applied by local governments have been overruled in court in the past. This action exposes Metro government to sanction by the state legislature and generates ill will between Metro and other city and county governments in the region, which cannot prohibit gas compressor stations in their jurisdictions. Furthermore, the Metro Health Department has stated that the bill will not improve air quality, because the current practices and policies to regulate air quality are effectively meeting federal air quality standards.

Status

As of the date of publication, substitute BL2016-234 and RS2016-219 were still under consideration by Metro Council. The Chamber opposes this bill and this resolution.

Talent development of the region's workforce



School Funding

In order for Metro Schools to offer the programs and support necessary to boost academic performance and close the student achievement gap, they need appropriate funding from local, state and federal sources.

Chamber Position

Support operational and capital funding for public education as a city budget priority.

Bill Summary

The mayor's proposed operating budget (BL2016-232 [Pridemore]) increased funding for Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) by \$33.3 million to a total of \$843 million. This represents an increase of 4 percent from the previous year.

Status

Metro Council took action supporting the Chamber's position. The city's operating budget was adopted by a vote of 36-0 and the city's capital budget was adopted by a vote of 37-0 on June 21.

The capital spending plan (RS2016-245 [Pridemore]) included \$150 million for MNPS, with \$105 million for building projects and \$45 million for district-wide projects. This is the largest capital request for new projects for MNPS to date. Projects include the renovation of Hillsboro High School and McMurray Middle School, as well as new classrooms at Antioch High School, necessary maintenance to school buildings throughout the district, and technology for students.



High School Reform

Recognizing that today's students are tomorrow's workforce, the Chamber has made public education its No. 1 priority. The Academies of Nashville are reforming our high schools with an innovative approach that prepares each student for college and career through curricula enriched by real-world experiences in Metro Nashville Public Schools' 12 zoned high schools and the implementation of the college and career-ready K-12 education standards – a set of expectations created to help students develop greater critical-thinking skills and expose them to real-world concepts. This area must continue to remain a budget priority for the city.

Chamber Position

Support school reform efforts that improve graduation rates and academic achievement.

Bill Summary

No bills were filed on this issue.

Status

Because no bills were filed on this issue in 2015-2016, it is not included in the individual vote count.



Public/Private Partnerships

Community colleges provide affordable education opportunities to many first-generation college students and working adults seeking additional education, technical training and certifications.

Chamber Position

Support public-private partnerships that address the city's postsecondary completion and workforce needs.

Bill Summary

No bills were filed on this issue.

Status

Because no bills were filed on this issue in 2015-2016, it is not included in the individual vote count.

Quality of life that attracts and retains residents and workers



Public Infrastructure

Investing in public infrastructure is critical to improving the quality of life in any growing metropolitan area. Entertainment and convention venues are important to attracting and retaining Nashville businesses, workers and residents.

Chamber Position

Support investment in public infrastructure and entertainment that have a strong business and financial case and broaden Nashville's reputation as a livable city.

Bill Summary

No bills were filed on this issue.

Status

Because no bills were filed on this issue in 2015-2016, it is not included in the individual vote count.



Downtown Core

Downtown Nashville is a neighborhood and business district that serves as a major economic engine for the county through sales and property tax collections, which only continue to grow.

Chamber Position

Support the development of the downtown core as essential to the growth of Davidson County and the region.

Bill Summary

No bills were filed on this issue.

Status

Because no bills were filed on this issue in 2015-2016, it is not included in the individual vote count.



Poverty and Homelessness

In order to succeed as a community, our efforts must focus on eliminating barriers to prosperity for all Nashville residents. Metro Social Services' 2015 Community Needs Evaluation found that in 2014, 19.9 percent of Davidson County residents were living below the poverty line. The Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency's annual "point-in-time" count of homeless in the city found that, in 2014, there were 2,301 homeless people living in Nashville.

Chamber Position

Support projects and programs that eliminate barriers to prosperity, such as poverty and homelessness reduction.

Bill Summary

No bills were filed on this issue.

Status

Because no bills were filed on this issue in 2015-2016, it is not included in the individual vote count.



Welcoming and Inclusive City

A welcoming and inclusive environment is vital to building a global city that continues to attract and retain businesses, workers, visitors and investment from all over the world.

Chamber Position

Support efforts to maintain our identity and brand as a welcoming, inclusive city.

Bill Summary

No bills were filed on this issue.

Status

Because no bills were filed on this issue in 2015-2016, it is not included in the individual vote count.

Regional efforts to ensure economic prosperity



Infrastructure Investment

Nashville and the Middle Tennessee region are growing rapidly, with an expected 1 million new residents moving to the area by 2040, increasing our regional population to nearly 3 million. Nashville/Davidson County residents are experiencing the traffic and congestion that come with this growth, and the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization predicts that our travel times will double over the next 25 years. To provide transportation options to current residents, new residents and visitors, Nashville and the region must invest in mass transit.

Chamber Position

Support the expansion of Metro Nashville's multi-modal transit systems and a dedicated funding source for regional mass transit infrastructure that has a strong business case for success.

Bill Summary

BL2016-259 (Shulman) charges the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) to provide to Metro Council by December 31, 2016, a comprehensive mass transit plan for Nashville/Davidson County, funding options to pay for the plan, and a proposed timeline for implementation. Through its support of Moving Forward (described in the introduction to the Metro Council section above), the Chamber is supportive of the completion of the MTA strategic plan update—a process titled nMotion, which is currently underway. The Chamber supports BL2016-259's call for the completion of the plan by end of calendar year 2016. The Chamber does believe that the funding conversation requires more research and public discussion before specific funding options can be offered.

Status

As of the date of publication, BL2016-259 was still under consideration by Metro Council.



Workforce and Affordable Housing

Workforce and affordable housing are key needs for Davidson County to retain and attract residents and workers. The 2015 Metro Social Services Community Needs Survey found that in 2014, 67,746 Nashville households were “cost burdened,” meaning that 30 percent or more of their household earnings went to paying for housing. The Chamber’s 2015 Vital Signs poll revealed nearly two out of three respondents think the region needs to focus on expanding affordable housing options.

Chamber Position

Support workforce housing programs and projects to ensure people from all socioeconomic levels have the opportunity to live in Metro Nashville/Davidson County.

Bill Summary

BL2016-133 (Bedne), the inclusionary housing bill (discussed in the introduction to the Metro Council section of the scorecard), is currently under consideration by Metro Council. Meanwhile, BL2016-219 (Bedne), the rezoning of property against the wishes of the property owner (described above in Transparent Development and Zoning Policies), could negatively impact Nashville/Davidson County’s ability to secure Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, which are the most productive tool for the financing of affordable housing.

Status

As of the date of publication, BL2016-133 and BL2016-219 are still under consideration by Metro Council. The Chamber opposes BL2016-219 and continues to engage in discussion around BL2016-133.

2016 NASHVILLE METRO COUNCIL INDIVIDUAL VOTE COUNT

Council Member	BL 2016-149 Lifeway			BL2016-232 Metro Operating Budget (Includes MNPS Budget and P2020 Contract)		
	Floor	Committee	Committee	Committee	Floor	Committee
John Cooper (at large)	X	✓		X	✓	✓
Erica Gilmore (at large)	✓	✓			✓	✓
Sharon Hurt (at large)	✓		✓		NVR	
Bob Mendes (at large)	✓	✓			✓	✓
Jim Shulman (at large)	✓				✓	
Vacant (1)	NVR				NVR	
Decosta Hastings (2)	✓			✓	✓	
Brenda Haywood (3)	PNV		✓		✓	
Robert Swope (4)	✓				✓	
Scott Davis (5)	✓	✓			✓	
Brett Withers (6)	✓		✓		✓	
Anthony Davis (7)	✓				✓	
Nancy VanReece (8)	✓			✓	NVR	
Bill Pridemore (9)	NVR	✓			✓	✓
Doug Pardue (10)	PNV				NVR	
Larry Hagar (11)	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Steve Glover (12)	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Holly Huezo (13)	PNV				✓	
Kevin Rhoten (14)	✓			✓	✓	
Jeff Syracuse (15)	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Mike Freeman (16)	✓		✓		✓	
Colby Sledge (17)	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Burkley Allen (18)	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Freddie O'Connell (19)	✓		✓		✓	

Council Member	BL 2016-149 Lifeway			BL2016-232 Metro Operating Budget (Includes MNPS Budget and P2020 Contract)		
	Floor	Committee	Committee	Committee	Floor	Committee
Mary Carolyn Roberts (20)	✓				✓	
Ed Kindall (21)	✓			✓	✓	
Sheri Weiner (22)	✓	NVR			✓	✓
Mina Johnson (23)	✓		NVR		✓	
Kathleen Murphy (24)	NVR		✓	✓	✓	
Russ Pulley (25)	✓	✓			✓	✓
Jeremy Elrod (26)	✓				✓	
Davette Blalock (27)	✓				✓	
Tanaka Vercher (28)	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Karen Johnson (29)	✓				✓	
Jason Potts (30)	✓				✓	
Fabian Bedne (31)	✓		✓		✓	
Jacobia Dowell (32)	PNV	✓			✓	✓
Sam Coleman (33)	✓		✓		✓	
Angie Henderson (34)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Dave Rosenberg (35)	✓				✓	

✓ In support of Chamber position	■ Budget committee vote
X In opposition to Chamber position	■ Planning, zoning and historical vote
NVR: No vote recorded (absent)	■ Parks, library and recreation
PNV: Present but not voting	■ Sponsored Chamber-endorsed bill

Blank spaces indicate that the legislator did not sit on that particular committee, so he/she did not have an opportunity to vote.



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