



**GREATER  
BINGHAMTON**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

# PROGRESS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

**2026 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

The Chamber is the lead advocate for the Greater Binghamton business community. Our objective is to create *progress through partnership* and influence public policy in a manner that generates economic growth, innovation and fosters new investment for employers in the region.

## MESSAGE TO OUR MEMBERS

Business advocacy in New York State continues to be an uphill battle and that's why it's more important than ever that our membership utilizes the platforms we provide such as lobby days, networking events, and press conferences to make your voices heard.

Last session, we advocated in support of infrastructure upgrades, expanded workforce development programs, increased childcare options, energy affordability and reliability and more. We also opposed several dangerous pieces of legislation that if signed into law would have raised business costs significantly, increased administrative burdens as well as subjected employers to unnecessary lawsuits. We were successful in blocking many of these proposals with the support of our statewide partners including Upstate United (UU), the Manufacturers Association of Central NY (MACNY), the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), the Business Council of NYS (BCNYS), Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), Associated General Contractors (AGC), and other Chambers of Commerce.

Last year, we held several programs with elected leaders from local to federal government, giving our members direct access to their representatives, allowing for stronger public-private partnerships.

We continued to expand our advocacy efforts and provide strong representation for all member businesses by working closely with our Government Affairs Committee, Minority, Women, and Veteran Business Enterprise (MWVBE) members, small businesses, and by building coalitions with not-for-profit organizations in the region.

The Chamber is proud of the bipartisan relationships we have cultivated at all levels of government and will continue to prioritize these partnerships to help your business grow. With your continued support and collective action, we can push for the reforms necessary to ensure a prosperous Upstate NY for generations to come.

To get involved with one or more of our core advocacy committees, please contact Mina Federman at [mfederman@greaterbinghamtonchamber.com](mailto:mfederman@greaterbinghamtonchamber.com).

\* The Chamber's 2026 Legislative Agenda was designed based on input from our annual legislative survey, member feedback, and core advocacy committees. The content contained herein includes some of our priorities but does not comprise every piece of legislation we support or oppose.

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## REGULATORY AND LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

# HOUSING

The Chamber supports the building of quality housing options at target price points in desirable neighborhoods for all community members.

The Chamber is committed to driving collaborative initiatives with stakeholders focused on the long-term economic sustainability of the Greater Binghamton Area. With major state and federal investments in battery manufacturing and Binghamton receiving an official “Tech Hubs” designation, housing will be a key component dictating the success of local expansion projects. While issues related to housing are not new, we are at a pivotal moment in time when housing across all levels is necessary for the advancement of various industries in our community.

### The Chamber Supports:

- Tax incentives to assist developers with the costs necessary to build affordable, market-rate, and high-end housing.
- Grants to assist with the cost of maintaining and renovating existing and outdated housing stock.
- Shovel-ready housing initiatives to help fund the infrastructure costs (electricity, sewer/water, roads/sidewalks, etc.) associated with building residential properties, which will incentivize more development in our area.

### The Chamber Opposes:

- **Rent Control/Stabilization:** The State passed a rent reform package in 2019 that shifted the landscape for tenants and landlords tremendously. Upstate communities can now opt into NYC style rent stabilization that harms investments to our housing stock and reduces the incentives to revitalize aging housing that was previously available to smaller landlords. The Chamber will advocate for housing policy that encourages growth and reinvestment into our current housing stock.
- **Rent Emergency Stabilization for Tenants Act (REST):** This legislation would enable municipalities outside of New York City to opt-into rent stabilization, ultimately eliminating the 5% vacancy requirement and lowering the threshold of six units to one. This proposal is problematic as it doesn't allow mom and pop landlords to reasonably raise rents to keep up with the cost of inflation therefore disincentivizing investments in property upkeep, shrinking the rental supply, and making it even more difficult to evict problematic tenants.

# ENERGY

The Chamber will fight for affordable and reliable energy that can keep our businesses safe and allows them to remain competitive.

The Community Leadership and Climate Protection Act (CLCPA) signed into law in 2019, requires New York State to cut greenhouse gas emissions to 85% of 1990 levels by 2050. It also requires that 70% of statewide electricity be sourced from renewables by 2030 and that the State be carbon free by 2040.

To achieve the goals of the CLCPA, the State will need to build more infrastructure and make significant investments to the grid to make electric buildings and electric vehicles a reality. The New York Independent System Operation (NYISO) has repeatedly warned that if current patterns continue, New York State will be at risk for unreliability – meaning the electric grid would not have enough electricity to meet the power needs of New York State.

The Chamber believes that CLCPA implementation should be done with as little cost to the business community as possible. With New York's significant population loss over the last decade, the legislature must also be aware that continued costs passed on to the ratepayer to fund transmission upgrades will only continue to drive more residents out of New York.

### The Chamber Supports:

- An all-the-above approach to meeting our state's current energy needs, including a mix of traditional fossil fuels, the potential for nuclear power, and renewables to encourage more housing, commercial, and industrial development.
- A 10-year delay to the CLCPA timeline that is currently in statute. This delay would allow more time to address reliability issues, build and permit transmission, generation and vehicle charging infrastructure, develop new technologies for dispatchable, emissions-free generation resources and allow businesses and communities to plan and invest in their futures.
- **Ratepayer Transparency Act:** This legislation would require that gas, electric, and combination gas electric utility bills include, at a minimum, three separate charges related to 1) supply costs 2) delivery costs and 3) charges approved by the Public Service Commission (PSC) that have a statewide impact. This disclosure adds more transparency to the process and allows the ratepayer to delineate what their expenses are going towards, specifically highlighting which costs are a result of state policy or programs.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Chamber will champion economic development processes that build capacity for economic growth and match the needs of the business community.

## The Chamber supports:

- Efforts to increase the number of good paying jobs available in our community
- Programs that provide support to existing businesses
- Tax incentives to attract private investments and new industries to the region

## What steps can the state take to reach these goals?

**Expand Transportation:** Employers and employees alike identify limited access to transportation as a critical workforce barrier. Public transportation schedules need to match the needs of employers. The Chamber will continue to work to find solutions to this problem including creative private-public partnerships that will allow workers to overcome transportation issues.

Our Chamber supports an adequately funded NYSDOT capital program including an additional \$800 million be included in the SFY 2025-26 Executive Budget which will be used to offset inflationary pressures impacting increases to construction and labor costs.

**Broadband Access:** The Chamber is supportive of initiatives to streamline broadband deployment access to low-income families and rural communities. In addition, the Chamber supports efforts to improve high-speed broadband competition that leads to increased consumer options, better service quality, and affordable prices.

**Downtown Revitalization:** To see a true resurgence across Upstate NY, downtowns must be an area of key investment. Empty buildings and vacant lots should be either demolished or repaired to help increase safety and residents' sense of belonging.

**IDA Legislation:** Oppose attempts to make IDA's less effective at promoting local economic development through efforts that limit PILOT timeframes, increase the scope of prevailing wage, and efforts to take New York State out of the site election process for future industry attraction.

**Infrastructure:** Improving utility infrastructure including roads, water, sewer, electricity, and gas will be important as new businesses consider our area for investment.

Limited access to adequate power continues to be an issue for economic development organizations across Upstate New York. The State should provide a funding mechanism for companies and developers interested in existing sites that have limited energy resources available.

**Tourism:** The FY 2025 Budget included \$3.45 million for the Tourism Promotion Matching Grant Program - a critical program to help tourism partners across the State strategically market their communities to increase visitors and spending in their local economies. This year, we are asking the Legislature to restore these funds to \$5 million, which will help visitors bureaus build customized marketing plans, increase foot traffic and overnight stays, and increase job creation in the Greater Binghamton Area.

**Placemaking:** Placemaking is critical to the success and sustainability of communities across New York State. The identification, development and utilization of public spaces and green spaces enhances a sense of community and drives competitiveness. Businesses benefit directly from placemaking as it aids in the recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce. The Legislature should consider allocating funds to support community-based organizations and municipalities' placemaking activities.



# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The Chamber supports employer led talent pipelines to meet the demand of employers locally.

The Chamber of Commerce will continue to advocate for policies and initiatives that will reduce workforce barriers such as childcare and transportation.

The Chamber's affiliate organization, the Greater Binghamton Education Outreach Program (GBEOP), continues to foster business-education relationships to develop and inspire a dynamic local workforce. GBEOP will continue to work with local educators to identify opportunities to partner and facilitate programs that will address the career readiness needs of the graduating class of 2026, while promoting career exploration for students at all grade levels.

The Chamber will continue to host programs that provide professional development opportunities for the current workforce. Talent & Leadership programs are necessary as they help to diversify our local talent and increase employee retention.

## The Chamber supports:

- Initiatives that keep low level or first-time offenders out of the justice system and get them into the workforce. Employment for someone with a prior criminal record often reduces recidivism and is beneficial to the well-being of our community. The Chamber will support initiatives based on the voluntary cooperation of employers in our region.
- Efforts to connect migrants with employers looking to fill open positions in our community.
- Increased funding to support our educational institutions and trade associations that specialize in preparing students, unemployed individuals, and incumbent workers for careers in the trades.
- State funding for a flagship regional manufacturing workforce training center in the Greater Binghamton area, which is currently in a planning stage led by the Broome County IDA.

# HEALTH CARE

The Chamber will support healthcare policies that increase affordability and access to coverage.

Healthcare remains a top concern for businesses in our area. A constant complaint from membership is the high cost of healthcare coverage in New York State.

The Chamber holds that universal, affordable, and level of quality are all important factors in a healthcare system, however, the most efficient way to achieve this is through a gradual approach and sustained efforts, not through a government takeover of the health insurance industry.

New York State is approaching universal coverage through a public-private partnership that currently provides over 95% of New Yorkers with medical coverage. The New York Health Act would raise taxes by approximately \$160 billion in the first year alone and there are still looming questions about associated cost controls and reimbursement rates for healthcare providers.

The State should take steps to approach 100% coverage and promote cost saving measures without abolishing private insurance as the New York Health Act would do.

If Medicaid reimbursement rates are used under a single payer system, our local hospitals will lose significant revenue. Our area hospitals have already absorbed significant pandemic-

related costs for which government and other payers have inadequately paid. The Chamber supports finding ways that medical technology can be used to expand healthcare access, reduce costs and improve quality. These funding gaps make investing in these innovations, like telehealth development, even more difficult for healthcare facilities.

The Chamber supports efforts to produce a sufficient talent pipeline for the healthcare industry, including funding for employer-led workforce development programs and support for our local nursing program. Since the Pandemic, dire staffing shortages have negatively impacted patient's access to reliable health care. Expanding clinical training capacity is a key component to assuring that doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals have the capacity to meet our community's health care needs. A healthy community is critically important to maintaining a productive workforce and in turn a thriving community.

Additional mandates on health plans and HCRA taxes on healthcare is a large part of the problem that makes healthcare coverage unaffordable for New Yorkers. Let's look for ways to decrease cost and increase choice.

# TAXES & SPENDING

The Chamber believes that government has a responsibility to use its resources effectively to decrease the tax burden on residents and businesses.

Each year, New York State continues to increase taxes to cover larger budgets. In 2025, the state legislature passed a \$254 billion budget, which is \$17 billion more than the year prior.

The Chamber will continue to advocate for fiscal responsibility such as decreased spending, lower taxes and the consolidation of duplicitous programs and services.

## The Chamber Supports:

- Tax credits to lower costs for residents and business owners.
- Initiatives to consolidate redundant government services or eliminate ineffective programs.
- Maintaining the 2% property tax cap. With inflation on the rise, property owners and first-time home buyers cannot afford any additional tax increases.



# MANDATES & EMPLOYER REGULATIONS

The Chamber is supportive of efforts to eliminate burdensome regulations that make doing business in New York unnecessarily difficult.



**Extended Producer Responsibility:** Current EPR proposals would shift recycling costs of end-of-life packaging materials such as glass, metal, paper & plastic products from municipalities onto manufacturers. Under some proposals, manufacturers would be mandated to join “producer responsibility programs” within one year of implementation which would require them to be solely responsible for funding the collection, processing, and education of their recycled materials. For manufacturers working in food service, there have been limited proposed alternatives, suggesting serious threats to food safety. Like most employer mandates, businesses will be forced to pass the cost on to the consumer. York University estimates that this program would “result in \$800 million direct costs for the industry, with the potential of an additional \$2 to \$3 billion impact on the New York State economy”.

**21st Century Anti-Trust:** The proposed legislation would modify the State’s current antitrust laws to make New York one of the first states in the nation to adopt an “abuse of dominance standard”. The terms “market dominance” and “size of market” in this proposal are poorly defined and as a result could subject businesses small and large to various lawsuits as well as criminal penalties for having a presumptive

dominance of 30-40% of a market. Furthermore, this proposal would establish a pre-merger notification requirement and 60-day review process with the NYS Attorney General's office for businesses worth \$9 million or more in assets. There are currently no other states or countries in the world that have this long of a review period. The Chamber opposes any legislation that would cause hardworking small businesses to undergo unnecessary litigation that reduces competition and stifles innovation and growth.

**SWEAT (Employee Lien):** The Chamber is opposed to SWEAT also known as the "employee lien", which incentivizes employees to secure liens on their employer's personal and company property for alleged wage and hour violations without allowing them the opportunity to defend themselves. This legislation is redundant as the state and federal government already have existing measures in place to protect employees from such violations.

**Paid Family Leave/Bereavement Leave:** New York State is on its 9th year of Paid Family Leave. The current benefits include 12 weeks of paid leave at 67% of the employee's average weekly wage. In 2026, the maximum weekly benefit rose to \$1,228.53, which is \$51.21 more than the maximum weekly benefit in 2025. In addition to the weekly benefit, the employee contribution rate continues to increase on an annual basis.

The Chamber will continue to advocate that the Paid Family Leave program does not expand from its current form. The Chamber will continue to stand against any attempt to shift the cost of Paid Family Leave onto the employer.

**Permanent Paid Sick Leave:** In 2020, the State passed legislation that would require all New York employers with five or more employees or net income of more than \$1 million to provide up to 40 hours of paid sick leave to their employees. This law has presented many challenges for companies in our community who are struggling with this additional cost of doing business while also managing significant labor shortages. This mandate is particularly difficult to comply with in industries like construction where wages fluctuate significantly based upon the location of the work.

**Short Term Disability Benefits:** Short term disability is a 26-week insurance program for non-work-related illnesses and injuries yet much of the financial burden falls on the small businesses, putting them at a competitive disadvantage, whereas states like California and Rhode Island require workers to fund their state program through employee tax deductions. The Chamber is opposed to any legislation that would expand this program from its current form, which would undoubtedly raise premiums on some of New York State's smallest businesses.

**Project Labor Agreements:** A Project Labor Agreement (PLA) is a pre-hire collective bargaining agreement between trade unions and contractors that establishes the terms and conditions of employment for a specific construction project. The Chamber is opposed to PLA's as we believe they are anti-competitive, prevent non-union local businesses from bidding on public projects and unnecessarily drive-up costs for New York taxpayers.

**Prevailing Wage Expansion:** Unfortunately, in 2020, Prevailing Wage expansion passed to include projects that receive incentives of more than 30 percent of construction costs and the costs exceed \$5 million. This policy has captured a lot of projects and will stagnate economic recovery. The law has just taken effect and it is currently difficult to know the number of projects that are not happening because of this. The Chamber will stand against attempts to alter the prevailing wage law to capture more projects or lower thresholds.

**Scaffold Law:** Scaffold Law imposes an absolute liability standard on gravity related construction accidents. This law was once intended to champion safety but making the employer 100% liable for all gravity related accidents has the reverse effect. This law stifles development in our community and costs taxpayers and the private sector approximately \$800 million annually. The Chamber supports repealing the Scaffold Law and replacing it with a comparative negligence standard utilized by 49 other states across the nation.

**Worker's Compensation:** Certain reforms such as reductions in the annual workers' compensation assessment rate have been implemented, however, worker's compensation costs remain high in New York putting us at a competitive disadvantage to other States like Texas or Virginia. It is important that common sense reforms continue to be put in place to further improve the system and reduce rates.

**Local Government Mandates:** Unfunded mandates that are passed down from the State limit our local governments and put strain on our communities. The Chamber will fight against additional mandates that increase costs on local governments. The property tax cap is a good policy but must be coupled with mandate relief.

**Blueprint for New York - Creating a Roadmap for Change (2025):** The Chamber supports the policy recommendations in this report prepared for the Public Policy Institute of New York. Link to report: [www.ppinys.org/blueprint-new-york-creating-roadmap-change](http://www.ppinys.org/blueprint-new-york-creating-roadmap-change)



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