



**Plano Chamber of Commerce
Legislative Priorities
85th Session of the Texas Legislature**

The Plano Chamber of Commerce is committed to maximizing business development and economic growth of the community through advocacy, education, innovation, and collaboration.

The Plano Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors has adopted the following Legislative Priorities to guide our efforts during the 85th Session of the Texas Legislature. These priorities, if adopted, would help our community grow in a responsible way and address key issues related to our unprecedented population and job growth.

Economic Development

- Refresh the Texas Enterprise Fund with adequate funding to keep it competitive (recommend a minimum fund balance of \$200m per biennium).
- Maintain the R&D tax credit to incentivize new investments in Texas by new and current businesses from multiple industries.
- Oppose any bill that would damage Texas' reputation as a "business-friendly" state, such as legislation that would promote discriminatory practices on the basis of gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or identity.

Transportation

- Continue the current policy of no diversions, which compels transportation tax revenue to be invested in and spent solely on transportation projects and priorities.
- Maintain regional decision making authority by local elected officials and the regional Metropolitan Planning Organization to prioritize and identify funding for transportation projects in North Texas.
- Provide funding to maintain and expand Texas' transportation infrastructure, ensuring that all tools are available to address growing congestion, including toll roads, public/private partnerships, and managed lanes, along with full appropriation of Prop 1 and Prop 7, the voter-approved, transportation-dedicated revenue streams.
- Create policies that further the development of a Texas high-speed rail project and oppose legislation that would inhibit successful delivery of a North Texas-Houston service funded by the private sector.

Public Education and Workforce

- Improve our public school finance system to create a more equitable and transparent structure for all school districts, considering remedies such as a cap on the recapture rate, which forces some districts to send a portion of their revenue back to the state. Plano ISD will pay over \$102 million in recapture this year, representing over 17% of its operating revenue.
- Maintain current levels of funding for high-quality Pre-K programs, at a minimum, and develop a long-term, sustainable plan to expand Pre-K programs statewide for all eligible children.
- Oppose any attempts to decrease the flexibilities created by the Districts of Innovation legislation passed during the 84th Legislative Session, which allows academically acceptable districts to apply for exemptions from certain state requirements as they test innovative initiatives aimed at increasing student achievement.
- Expand high-quality Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses aligned to meet workforce needs and provide students with opportunities to be successful.
- Increase opportunities to improve student achievement and teacher development through accountability and improvements to our standardized testing system.

Higher Education

- Continue special items funding for The University of Texas at Dallas and Collin County Community Colleges District so both institutions can maintain high-quality programs that directly benefit Plano's workforce, such as the Academic Bridge Program and the Middle School Brain Program at UT Dallas, as well as the Small Business Development Center partnership with CCCC.
- Support legislation that will advance the goals set out by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's 60x30TX plan, which would result in 60% of Texans between the age of 25 and 34 earning a postsecondary educational attainment by the year 2030.
- Continue funding and policies that aid in the development of a Tier One university in North Texas, including continuation and funding for the Texas Research Incentive Program (TRIP) that provides state matching money for private research money raised at the state's emerging research universities.
- Provide funding for 100% of students eligible for the TEXAS Grant Program, which provides funds to college-bound students with financial need.
- Create legislation that would allow Collin County Community College District to offer a baccalaureate degree in Nursing. Current projections show Texas will have a shortage of 71,000 nurses in 5 years and universities alone cannot meet this demand. Collin College can help by providing a quality instructional program at an affordable price. This is a top staffing concern for hospitals and medical centers in Plano.

Taxes and Spending

- Eliminate or reduce business inventory taxes.
- Maintain local control of property taxes with local tax structures and processes that are fair and equitable for businesses.
- Improve the state tax system to create a process that is transparent, equitable and requires all tax revenue collected to be invested in and spent on the original source of the revenue.
- Continue to evaluate the Margins Tax and its effectiveness in generating tax on a broad basis from the business sector.

Healthcare

- Continue and improve upon initiatives important to our hospital community, including the long-term extension of the Medicaid 1115 Transformation Waiver.
- Expand telemedicine in Texas to better serve patients, especially vulnerable patients impacted by the social determinants of health.
- Provide adequate funding for mental health services to allow individuals with severe and persistent mental illness to receive services in an appropriate setting and divert them from more expensive and inappropriate facilities such as emergency rooms or jails.

Water and Environment

- Oppose any legislation determined to prevent or slow the implementation of water management strategies included in the Texas State Water Plan.
- Conduct appropriate oversight on State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT) applications to ensure appropriately prioritized funding.
- Expedite general state permitting and inter-basin transfer processes.
- Create effective water management strategies that include incentives for increased conservation efforts, recycling, and reuse projects.