



# Houma-Terrebonne Chamber of Commerce **LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

## SUMMARY

The Houma-Terrebonne Chamber of Commerce represents more than 900 businesses which employ more than 30 thousand individuals in the region. The Chamber takes very seriously its responsibility as an advocate for business and industry.

To that end, the Chamber will be proactive in its advocacy.

The Chamber has retained a lobbyist, Eric Sunstrom - The Chesapeake Group, in Baton Rouge and is mobilizing a grassroots legislative action team called the Committee of 50.

All Chamber members and their employees are encouraged to get involved in our legislative activity. See the reverse of this page to find out how to get more involved.

## FEDERAL ISSUES

The Chamber has stood in opposition to the Employee Free Choice Act for years. This legislation would result in additional costs and burdens on small businesses forcing many to close their doors kicking our economy while it's down. The legislation would eliminate a worker's right to a secret ballot instead exposing employees to a public, card-check process whereby union bosses can intimidate and coerce them into favoring unionization. Additionally, once a union is formed, this legislation lets a government arbitrator into the workplace to force a contract on the employees and employers without their consent.

The Chamber also opposes the Consumer Financial Protection Agency Act. Rather than address the failures in regulation that contributed to the national current financial crisis, CFPB will create a massive, new government agency that will restrict access to credit and affordable financial products, impose vast new regulations and cost on businesses and ultimately harm the economy at exactly the time signs of a recovery are being seen.

The Chamber opposes the President's budget which would significantly increase taxes on the oil and gas industry. Such an action would result in a slow down in drilling activity, translating into fewer jobs, less investment in community, and less state and local revenue from producing companies.

The Chamber has not yet taken a position on health care reform because the national debate has made this issue a moving target. However, the Chamber did write letters to the federal delegation suggesting that the business community should not foot the entire bill for reform.

## Federal Delegation:

### Senator Mary Landrieu (D)

328 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
(202) 224-5824  
<http://landrieu.senate.gov>

### Senator David Vitter (R)

516 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
(202) 224-4623  
<http://vitter.senate.gov>

### Congressman Charlie Melancon (D)

404 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
(202) 225-4031  
<http://www.house.gov/melancon>

## State Delegation:

### Senator Norby Chabert (D)

Capitol Office: (225) 342-2040  
District Office: (985) 858-2927  
E-mail: [chabertn@legis.state.la.us](mailto:chabertn@legis.state.la.us)  
Legislative Assistant: Kelli Walker

### Senator Butch Gautreaux (D)

Capitol Office: (225) 342-2040  
District Office: (800) 562-3204  
E-mail: [lasen21@legis.state.la.us](mailto:lasen21@legis.state.la.us)  
Legislative Assistant: Laura Meadows

### Representative Damon Baldone (D)

District Office: (985) 876-8872  
E-mail: [larep053@legis.state.la.us](mailto:larep053@legis.state.la.us)  
Legislative Assistant: Vanessa Abbott

### Representative Gordon Dove (R)

District Office: (985) 876-8823  
E-mail: [larep052@legis.state.la.us](mailto:larep052@legis.state.la.us)  
Legislative Assistant: Debbie Ortego

### Representative Joe Harrison (R)

District Office: (800) 935-2081  
E-mail: [harrisoj@legis.state.la.us](mailto:harrisoj@legis.state.la.us)  
Legislative Assistant: Vickie Larke

## STATE ISSUES

Details: 2010 Regular Legislative Session will convene on March 29 and adjourn on June 21.

### Education:

- The Chamber supports the Louisiana GRAD Act to the extent that it will provide institutions of higher learning the flexibility to increase tuition up to 10 percent as they strive to be even with the southern average. We believe that the legislation does not necessarily give the institutions enough flexibility to achieve their goals in a reasonable amount of time but it is an improvement over the current situation.
- The Chamber believes that the TOPS scholarship program is very valuable and has proven successful. However, increased tuition state-wide as a result of the GRAD Act will cause the TOPS program to be too expensive. The program should be reviewed and modified in order to minimize the impact that tuition increases for higher education may have on the total cost of TOPS.
- The Chamber supported school board reform especially in regards to term limits, micromanagement and professional development.

### Infrastructure:

- The Chamber has been a longtime advocate for coastal restoration and protection. The Chamber supports the protection of dedicated coastal restoration funding.
- The Chamber supports alternate methods of funding for I-49 South as long as equal representation is given to all regions involved.
- The Chamber supports a North-South corridor for hurricane evacuation and economic development.

### Economic Development:

- The Chamber opposes the watering down or elimination of long-standing economic development incentives.
- The Chamber supports the clarification of the nomination process for the Terrebonne Economic Development Authority board of directors. The wording in the legislation is being re-written to indicate that two nominees must be submitted per open board position rather than six.
- The Chamber supports funding to bolster the port and airport as they both significantly contribute to economic development in the parish.

### Redistricting:

- The Chamber believes that this region is significant enough in population and economic development that it deserves to retain its own Congressional District.

## RESOURCES

### Contacts:

Dr. Glenn Manceaux  
Chairman of the Board

F. Travis Lavigne  
Vice-Chair - Government Affairs Division  
Stephen Smith  
Government Affairs Committee Chairman

Drake Pothier  
President & CEO  
drake@houmachamber.com

Eric Sunstrom  
The Chesapeake Group  
Lobbyist - State Legislature

Angelle Percle  
Government Affairs - Staff Liaison  
angelle@houmachamber.com

### Web sites:

Houma-Terrebonne Chamber  
www.houmachamber.com

Vote for Business - Federal Issues  
www.votebyoubusiness.com

United States Chamber of Commerce  
www.uschamber.com

Louisiana Legislature  
www.legis.state.la.us

### Meeting Dates:

The Government Affairs Committee of the Chamber meets regularly on the first Thursday of every month at the Chamber office at 7:45 a.m.

### About the Chamber:

The Houma-Terrebonne Chamber of Commerce is a 501(c)(6) non-profit, business association.

95 percent of a member's investment in the Chamber is tax deductible as a necessary business expense.

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