

## MAKE MINNESOTA READY

Our focus at the Minnesota Chamber is to strengthen the business environment to improve the lives of all Minnesotans.

We should be proud of our broad, diverse economy, engaged employers, highly skilled workforce and enviable quality of life. The Minnesota Chamber's *Business Benchmarks* show we have work to do to make our economy more competitive. Too many key economic indicators are out of range. Our goal is for Minnesota to be in the top 10 states for GDP growth, job creation and personal income growth.

The \$1.4 billion budget surplus for Fiscal Years 2018/19 provides an important opportunity to make strategic investments that will make Minnesota Ready to change, grow and compete. In the 2017 session, our priority legislative issues are:

### TAX RELIEF

**Encourage investment, innovation and growth by reducing uncompetitive taxes for all businesses.**

- Enact meaningful business property tax relief and eliminate the automatic business property tax inflator.
- Reduce high income-tax burdens impeding investment in Minnesota businesses and jobs by reducing the rate on "pass-through" businesses.
- Enhance the research-and-development tax credit.
- Conform Minnesota's estate tax to the federal threshold.

### HEALTH CARE

**Ensure access to quality, affordable health care for employers and their employees, and address escalating costs.**

- Make it easier for small employers to self-insure.
- Reform and stabilize the individual market, which supports self-employed and those with defined-contribution arrangements.
- Oppose new health care mandates that increase employer and employee costs.
- Prepare policy solutions for federal law changes impacting the state's public health care programs such as Medicaid.

### WORKPLACE MANDATES

**Oppose new labor mandates. Encourage all employers to share and adopt best practices for providing employee benefits.**

- Ensure consistent, statewide laws by prohibiting local governments from enacting a patchwork of employer mandates.
- Remove the automatic inflator in the state's minimum wage.

### TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT

**Pass strategic and sustained funding of roads, bridges and transit.**

- Increase long-term investment in roads, bridges, and transit.
- Generate new resources through efficiencies, bonding, use of transportation-related revenues from the general fund and adjustments to the depreciation schedule for passenger vehicle tab fees.
- Identify metro funding for build-out of the metro's transit system.

In addition to these priorities, we will advance proposals to enhance education and workforce development, curb rising energy costs, streamline environmental permitting, reform disability access lawsuits and reduce workers' compensation costs.

The Minnesota Chamber also takes pride in seeking private-sector solutions to pressing business issues. We have launched Business Education Networks to better synchronize workforce skills with the needs of the changing economy by first connecting employers with high school and college students, and with higher education and workforce training systems.

The 2017 legislative session is an important opportunity to Make Minnesota Ready through strategic investments, policy changes and progress on key economic issues that can improve our economy and the lives of all Minnesotans.