



FEDERAL ADVOCACY AGENDA

115th Congress

Our nation's historic rise to economic power in the mid-20th century was based in large part on significant federal investments made prior to that time in key areas. We invested heavily in this country's transportation system and infrastructure, in basic research and development and in public education to ensure a skilled workforce. The Heartland region rose to become one of the most productive regions in the world and a leader in transportation logistics, engineering and architecture and home to exceptional public universities and research institutions. The infrastructure and workforce investments made last century no longer support our modern economy and its high-tech needs. A renewed vision for federal investment and policy leadership in key areas is needed in order to strengthen our nation's economic drivers and regain our competitive edge.

The Heartland Civic Collaborative is a multi-metro collaboration designed to capitalize on the collective assets of the entire region in order to strengthen its competitiveness and opportunities. The HCC strives to provide a strong presence in national policy debates, assuring legislative and regulatory actions do not negatively impact the region, and to collectively and strategically pursue federal funding opportunities for economic development. The HCC's Federal Advocacy Agenda emphasizes the need to recapture that investment spirit in the areas that make our country strong and that will continue to support a robust and growing economy for the 21st Century.

PRIORITY AREAS

Transportation and Logistics

1. Continue to support passage of multi-year federal transportation funding authorization that establishes clear direction, adequate funding, and a fair strategy for prioritizing and completing the nation's most vital transportation investments.
2. Support policies that ensure responsible management of the Heartland's inland waterway system and that emphasize flood control, improved navigation and a secure water supply.
3. Support continued funding and development of policies and programs to enhance the Heartland region's position as a transportation and logistics hub, including trade policies to improve export programs and create business opportunities for small and medium-sized firms in the region.
4. Support the expansion of the use of public/private partnerships and other innovative project funding and delivery methods for new transportation capacity and reconstruction of existing facilities.

Life Sciences

The life sciences comprise of the fields of scientific study of living organisms that are human, animal and plant.

1. Support federal programs and funding that promote and assist in research and development, maintain the integrity of a peer review process, and are not obstructed or overly-prescribed.
2. Support funding for biomedical research and data analytics for eventual application to improving human health, as well as advancing animal and plant sciences.
3. Support federal programs that promote the commercialization of biotechnology.
4. Support tax incentives and research to develop renewable and alternative forms of energy such as wind, solar, hydrogen, and biofuels.

Entrepreneurship

1. Support continued funding of Economic Development Administration (EDA) programs and efforts to make EDA more strategic with a greater focus on regionalism and innovation.
2. Support sustained, federally-funded fundamental research and the development and deployment of advanced technologies.
3. Support making permanent the Research and Experimentation tax credit to encourage companies to invest additional resources in the research, development and experimentation of various products and services that promote job creation and economic expansion.
4. Support the Startup Act.

Education and Workforce Development

1. Support expansion of the H-1B program and the Employment-Based immigrant visa program for highly-skilled workers based on critical need in key industries, such as STEM industries.
2. Support the maintenance of federal funding for need-based student aid programs and the strengthening of those programs to improve college access, affordability and completion.
3. Support continued funding for the Perkins Basic State Grant Program, which helps community colleges fund career and technical education offerings that lead to high-demand, high-skilled occupations.
4. Support increased federal investment in early childhood education programs in order to ensure high program standards, improve accountability and measurement of results, and expand access.
5. Support incentives and programs that encourage the expansion of a skilled workforce.
 - Support a dedicated federal strategy and funding to improve STEM education at all levels.
 - Support efforts to attract and retain innovative and talented foreign entrepreneurs.
 - Support commerce and business opportunities in the region by supporting programs to hire and retain regional airplane pilots and truck drivers.

Other Areas of Common Interests

- Health Care
 - Promote strategies and solutions to help businesses contain health care costs, improve the quality of health care coverage and services.
 - Support efforts to modernize and improve the Medicaid program in order to increase efficiencies, maintain Medicaid funding and provider taxes at levels that allow Heartland states to sustain vital safety net coverage for the disadvantaged, and reduce the burden of the costs of the uninsured on businesses.
 - Support federal medical malpractice liability reforms that will improve the legal environment and insurance market for health care practitioners and providers, and protect access to affordable, quality health care.

- Energy
 - Support the modernization, expansion and protection of energy infrastructure necessary to generate, store, transmit and transport energy across the nation.
 - Support tax incentives and research and development that encourage the entrepreneurial development of energy efficient products, designs and processes and encourage green building and other environmentally friendly practices.
 - Support the federal Renewable Fuels Standard.