



TUESDAY | January 2, 2007

THE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE:

A New Year, A New Set of Priorities



Coming up at the Chamber

[View all upcoming events on our Web calendar.](#)

FRI | Jan. 12
Health Care Committee Meeting

[more info](#)

WED | Jan. 17
Business After Hours Mixer
Taste of the Chamber

[more info](#)

THU | Jan. 18
Education & Workforce Development Committee Meeting

[more info](#)

FRI | Jan. 19
Land Use, Construction & Housing Committee Meeting

[more info](#)

THU | Jan. 25
118th Annual Inaugural Dinner

[more info](#)

The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce is the voice of business in L.A. County. Founded in 1888, the Chamber promotes a prosperous economy and quality of life in the Los Angeles region. For more information, visit www.lachamber.org

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As the new year begins, we have the opportunity to focus anew on key public policy priorities for the next 12 months. With significant changes in Washington, D.C. and the start of a new legislative session in Sacramento, the next six months will be crucial to the future of our region's economy.

In addition, and perhaps more important, recent actions by the Los Angeles City Council demonstrate that we have much work ahead if we want to reestablish L.A.'s image as a top business destination for new high-paying jobs and stop the growing gap between rich and poor.

Our priorities in 2007 include the following, not necessarily in priority order, because quite simply, our economic future depends on making progress in all of these areas.

Improve L.A.'s business climate. It is a shameful statistic that in the past two decades L.A. has lost 50,000 jobs while growing by 1 million residents. Actions by the City Council, like the self-defeating living wage mandate for private business, continue to batter our city's image as a place to grow a business and create new jobs. Nothing is more urgent than stopping the council from doing further damage and start working together on pro-job growth initiatives.

Spend funding from Propositions 1A through 1E wisely and begin to develop additional infrastructure funding through public-private partnerships. Not only do we have to work together to make sure the current money is spent wisely and efficiently, it is also time to prepare for the next round of funding in Washington, D.C.

Achieve real statewide health care reform to reduce the number of uninsured, especially children, while minimizing the burden on businesses and working families. We recognize that no interest group will get everything they want out of a bipartisan package, but the current trend of higher costs for businesses and their employees every year will lead to catastrophic results over the long term.

Reform L.A. County's health care system. The King/Drew Medical Center tragedy is the most recent example of why the L.A. Board of Supervisors must cede day-to-day control to hospital management and health care experts. Only then can the county develop a comprehensive regional health care plan, address a skyrocketing deficit and take board politics out of patient care.

Develop a long-term partnership between the mayor's office and the Los Angeles Unified School District to focus more attention and resources on the education of our youth. This partnership must also involve parents, teachers and employers--key stakeholders in supporting education in the home and workplace. No matter the result of the city's appeal on AB1381, this city-wide partnership is overdue.

Invest in L.A. as a national asset. Over the last five years, the Chamber has been leading the charge to get our region's fair share of federal dollars and investment. With the increased role many Californian delegation members will play in key congressional committees, now is the time for Southern California to come together and advocate for our regional priorities.

The first step towards achieving any of the above is to bring together our region's many business organizations around a common agenda. While we may have different constituencies and sometimes opposing priorities, there are many important areas of common ground that require us to collectively develop tactical plans and strategies. The Chamber looks forward to even greater regional collaboration through the annual Access Washington, D.C. and Access Sacramento trips to improve the economic opportunities and quality of life for every Southern Californian.

Please let us know your thoughts on these priorities, and [volunteer to be a part of our work](#). Happy New Year and all the best in 2007.

And that's *The Business Perspective*.

Gary L. Toebben
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L.A. Business THIS WEEK

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