Governing Principles...

- We support protection of Iowa’s Right to Work Laws.
- Economic development should be a top priority in the state and should include leveraging the benefits of private/public partnerships.
- We support a regulatory and simplified tax climate conducive to making Iowa a more competitive location for attracting business expansion opportunities and fostering business growth.

- We support streamlined governments at all levels that are efficient, cost effective and responsive to business needs.
- We are opposed to growth in state spending which exceeds the rate of inflation or a growth index.
- State environmental policies and regulations should be no more stringent than their federal counterparts.

BUDGET

State Finances
The Legislative Services Agency projects a revenue and expense gap of nearly $1 billion for FY 2011. We believe the state needs to judiciously scrutinize all expenditures and utilize Lean principles to ensure every expenditure is allocated in the most efficient and cost effective manner. State expenditures must also be reviewed and strategically evaluated based on best practices, the impact, and return on investment.

We support convening a panel composed of both public and private sector representatives that is charged with analyzing where budget reductions can be made and the impacts of those reductions and then making recommendations to the legislature.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

Education Property Tax Inequity
Property tax receipts statewide do not result in level funding for each and every student. Property tax receipts statewide must be equalized on a per-pupil basis similar to the way school infrastructure sales tax receipts have been re-distributed statewide on a per-pupil basis. Currently, there is a huge disparity among school districts in regard to taxable valuation per pupil. FY 2011 taxable valuation per student ranges from $140,215 to $1,034,132 depending on the district. Students in property poor districts run the risk of being served at a lower level because their districts cannot raise local taxes high enough to provide the same level of support as property rich districts. More than 62% of the students in the state are in property poor districts.

Property Tax Reform
Without a commitment to real change and radical reform, property tax problems in the state cannot be solved. We need to revisit what property taxes pay for and how they are levied. We cannot support any measures that broaden the gap between the property tax classifications. We advocate an equitable system.

Unemployment Insurance Tax
Iowa’s 2011 taxable wage base for unemployment insurance, upon which the insurance tax is calculated, is $24,700 while the average taxable wage base of the surrounding Midwest states is $14,253. This disparity in the taxable wage base puts Iowa businesses at a competitive disadvantage. The Iowa Legislature should look into lowering the taxable wage base, while maintaining the solvency of the unemployment insurance trust fund. Requiring a one-week waiting period before unemployment benefits can be paid out would also put Iowa businesses on a more level playing field and contribute to maintaining the solvency of the trust fund.

Chapter 20 Reform
“Ability to pay” shall be a required factor when labor contract negotiations occur, and not only when a negotiation has reached the point of impasse. Criteria in Chapter 20 of the Iowa Code should be restated to include limiting increases to current available resources and comparison to private sector compensation.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Historic Tax Credits
Historic tax credits should be maintained as they provide good “green” policy for the state and encourage the reuse of historic properties. Studies have shown that historic preservation provides a return on investment of 1.5. Iowa’s current lottery system does not do justice to the many qualified historic projects in the queue. While strides have been made in recent years to raise the cap to $20 million, as budgets improve we support lifting the cap entirely to allow qualified projects to proceed. We also support making state tax credits compatible with Federal tax credits.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONTINUED...

Research Activities Credit
The research activities credit has proven to be a very effective economic development tool in generating and retaining high paying technical positions in innovative companies throughout the state. The state’s investments have resulted in private sector investments totaling nearly $1 billion. We support maintaining the research activities credit.

Targeted Jobs Withholding Tax Credits
During the 2006 legislative session, the Iowa Legislature passed legislation that allowed Sioux City and other border communities to receive assistance in funding economic development projects in urban renewal areas by means of a targeted jobs credit. This has been an invaluable economic development tool and should be preserved.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
TIF must be preserved as an economic development tool.

Venture Capital Tax Credits
To promote high-tech business growth and remain competitive in the global knowledge-based economy, Iowa’s leaders must nurture entrepreneurial talent and investment capital in the state. We support restoration of the Community Based Seed Capital Tax Credits which expired in 2008. High-tech businesses are cutting edge and developmental in nature. Continuing the tax credit will help offset the risk involved in investing in this type of venture.

EDUCATION

Air and Army National Guard
We support funding tuition assistance programs for the Air and Army National Guard.

Iowa Tuition Grant
We support funding of the Iowa Tuition Grant.

Workforce Development
Iowa’s workforce and its development system needs to adjust as the economy dictates. We support the critical role of Iowa’s Community Colleges in workforce development, and we encourage the legislature to provide adequate funding.

ENERGY

Energy Policy
Since 1973, U.S. energy production has grown only 13%, while U.S. energy consumption has increased 30%. Even when increases in efficiencies are taken into account, significant increases in demand are projected. We support actions to ensure the development and deployment of affordable, reliable energy supplies that promote energy, economic development and national security.

HEALTHCARE

Healthcare Initiatives
The rising costs of healthcare are negatively affecting business growth. We urge the Iowa Legislature to:
- Maintain the current funding level for the Iowa Statewide Poison Control Center (ISPCC) and actively seek sustainable funding strategies
- Provide true health insurance purchasing pools for small businesses to band together to lower premium costs across state lines and across industries
- Create opportunities for publicly-funded Emergency Medical Services (EMS) throughout the state
- Explore the concept of requiring the workers’ compensation commissioner to establish and maintain a statewide registry or registries of healthcare providers licensed in the state that offer or provide treatment of work-related injuries and licensed physicians trained to perform independent medical evaluations and to issue impairment ratings of injured employees
- Authorize the workers’ compensation commissioner to retain the services of a medical director to assist the division of workers’ compensation
- Establish a medical malpractice Certificate of Merit (COM) requirement to ensure that only cases with merit move through the court system

TRANSPORTATION

North American SuperCorridor Coalition (NASCO)
We support membership by the state in NASCO.

Northwest Iowa Highway Improvements
Transportation systems are significant components of economic development. The completion of a four-lane U.S. Highway 20 would act as an alternate east/west route across the state of Iowa, alleviating the overcrowding and unsafe conditions on Interstate 80. The recent economic renewal of the Siouxland area can only be continued by completing four lanes of U.S. Highway 20 and reconstructing Interstate 29 through downtown Sioux City.

Rail Infrastructure
We support increasing the investment in the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) Rail Revolving Loan and Grant Fund to help develop rail infrastructure. The freight rail system provides critical infrastructure for transporting commodities and commercial goods.

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