

Greater Winter Haven Chamber of Commerce 2019 Legislative Priorities



Transportation

The top transportation priority for Winter Haven is improving the flow of traffic from East Polk County to I-4 as Highway 27 becomes increasingly overcrowded. We believe the [Central Polk Parkway](#) is integral to support the continuing growth of the Central Florida region. We ask you to continue forward movement on the funding of the Central Polk Parkway, and to allocate state funds to re-evaluate the alignment of its northernmost sections—Segments 7 & 8.

Competitive Business Environment

We [support funding for Enterprise Florida and Visit Florida](#) so that they may continue to promote Florida as an ideal climate for business development and leisure travel.

The Chamber supports the [protection of the revenue generated by the Tourist Development Tax](#) to be invested back into efforts supporting development of the tourism and sports marketing industries, as originally intended

The Chamber supports [a reduction in the state's Business Rent Tax](#), with the ultimate goal being a complete phase out. The Chamber supports legislation to protect consumers against insurance fraud via Assignment of Benefits abuse.

Arts & Culture Funding:

A significant body of research demonstrates that the arts are an important contributing factor to the economic development of our community and the education of our children. The Chamber supports [continued funding for programs that promote and expand exposure to arts and culture](#) in Winter Haven, Polk County and across the state.

City of Winter Haven

The Chamber supports the following priorities of the City of Winter Haven:

Support [decision-making at the local level](#) and maintain the principal that governance is best done closest to the people.

Support [significant transportation funding](#) and efforts to improve mobility, vehicular and pedestrian safety, connectivity, and economic vitality.

Support legislation that: [encourages public/private partnerships](#); offers incentives for little to no water resource impacts; and provides funding consistent with the Heartland Headwaters Act.

CRAs are important to the Winter Haven community. We [support legislation to improve municipalities' use of Community Redevelopment Agencies \(CRAs\)](#) to effectively carry out redevelopment and community revitalization in accordance with Home Rule. (may not be an issue this year)

The Greater Winter Haven Chamber of Commerce is a 501(c)6 non-profit with over 750 businesses as investors advancing commerce and community in the greater Winter Haven area.

Contact: Katie Worthington Decker
President/CEO
863-293-2138
katie@winterhavenchamber.com



Greater Winter Haven Chamber of Commerce

2019 Legislative Priorities



Education

The Chamber strongly believes it is important to [protect the State College System's ability to offer locally accessible and affordable baccalaureate degrees](#) in order to meet the workforce needs of the local community and industry demand, especially in those communities with limited access to the State University System for location-bound students.

[Champion training and vocational programs](#) to ensure Florida has a workforce prepared to satisfy the needs of a diversifying economy.

Polk State College

The Chamber supports the following priorities of Polk State College:

Recurrent operational funding of \$2,500,000 to enable the College to [reduce the 1:1065 advisor-to-student ratio](#), support the Pathways Initiative, and increase safety and security through the addition of needed Polk County Sheriff's Office deputies.

PECO funding of \$16,272,759 to [complete the renovation of a 67,000-square-foot academic and workforce classroom](#) facility on the Polk State Winter Haven Campus.

PECO funding of \$2,234,800 to [address College-wide safety and security measures](#) through enhancements to existing surveillance, mass communication, and target-hardening systems.

Maintenance of the current legislatively mandated performance measures and metrics.

Florida Polytechnic University

\$46 million in base budget as well as the \$11 million for the [Applied Research Center PECO](#) project.

Polk County Public Schools

The Chamber supports the following priorities of the Polk County Public Schools:

Codify and continue [funding the Funding Compression Allocation](#) for school districts funded below the statewide average per student to make it a permanent part of the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) formula.

Provide at least a [3% increase to the Base Student Allocation](#) (BSA) and discontinue rolling back the Required Local Effort (RLE).

[Revise cut scores on the general knowledge exam](#) required for teacher certification so that at least 75% of test takers receive a passing score and reduce costs for taking and re-taking the exam to 2015 levels.

[Fully fund the costs to have SROs](#) at every secondary school and allow Safe School Funding to be spent on the costs of Guardians.

[Prohibit the Use of VAM-only scores by FDOE in teacher placement decisions](#). (HB 401 – 2017 Session)

Make [updates to school safety statutes](#) passed under 7026.