

2023
2024



**LEGISLATIVE ACTION GUIDE
& POLICY PLATFORM**



ORANGE COUNTY
BUSINESS COUNCIL

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Welcome

The Orange County Business Council (OCBC) 2023-2024 Legislative Action Guide serves as the policy platform guiding OCBC's advocacy programs locally, in Sacramento and in Washington, D.C.

Led by its dedicated Board of Directors, OCBC serves Orange County's diverse business community, working with public agencies and academia to ensure the county's long term economic vitality and high quality of life remains on track.

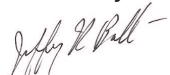
Heading into 2023, the business community faces a unique set of economic challenges and opportunities. After the government mandated shutdowns, high unemployment, supply chain crisis and other debilitating impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic subsided, the economy now faces new problems of high inflation and rising interest rates. Now more than ever, it is important that we collaborate with local, state and federal policy makers to rebuild our business climate and workforce to be even stronger and more resilient to economic volatility.

To support efforts promoting an environment conducive to job growth and economic prosperity, the OCBC Legislative Action Guide is developed with the benefit of the review and contributing opinions of OCBC investors to enumerate a variety of positions on major policy issues.

OCBC's Legislative Action Guide is also available online at www.ocbc.org. We encourage you to review the website frequently and subscribe to OCBC's e-Indicator newsletter for up-to-the-minute news on the activities of Orange County businesses, OCBC-sponsored events, legislative tracking and OCBC position statements.

OCBC values and appreciates each of our investors and our partners in government. Please consider OCBC a reliable resource and staunch advocate for the business community and do not hesitate to reach out to our dedicated team should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Ball
President & CEO



Jennifer Bullard
SVP, Government Affairs & Advocacy



Connor Medina
Government Affairs Manager



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About OCBC

CORE INITIATIVES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Create a full spectrum of jobs to enhance the economic well-being and quality of life for Orange County residents.

WORKFORCE: Lead the business community's efforts to further develop and retain a high-quality workforce that supports the growing technology-based workplace.

HOUSING: Increase the supply, choices and affordability of housing available for a growing Orange County workforce.

INFRASTRUCTURE: Increase investment in the construction, management and maintenance of Orange County's infrastructure, which is integral to the region's long-term viability.

Underpinning the implementation of these initiatives is the expert research of OCBC's Chief Economic Advisor, Dr. Wallace Walrod. Dr. Walrod and his research team produce in-depth analyses of the state, regional and local economy, among them the acclaimed Community and Workforce Indicators Reports and the Housing Scorecard.

Finally, OCBC maintains a robust communications program and presents high profile events to build awareness and support for the initiatives which are key for OCBC and our investors.

HISTORY

OCBC was formed in 1995 through the merger of the 100-year-old Orange County Chamber of Commerce, the Industrial League of Orange County, the Orange County Economic Development Consortium, and the public-private think tank, Partnership 2010.

OCBC accomplishes its mission by leading a high-profile, proactive advocacy program at the county, state and federal level for business interests. OCBC's history of accomplishments includes assisting in reorganizing local governance structures, advancing business-friendly legislation, leading local and regional economic development opportunities, helping charitable partners achieve their financial objectives, promoting high-tech and innovation initiatives and numerous other programs which support the business climate in the nation's sixth most populous county.

Orange County is the best place to live, the best place to work, the best place to invest and the best place to play. Through our core initiatives, OCBC is working to keep it that way.

MISSION STATEMENT

Orange County Business Council (OCBC) represents and promotes the business community, working with government and academia to enhance Orange County's economic development and prosperity in order to preserve a high quality of life.



Orange County Indicators

ORANGE COUNTY PROFILE

- 6th largest county in the U.S. by total population
- 799 land area (square miles)
- 42 miles of coastline
- 3,967 persons per square mile
- 34 cities and several large unincorporated areas
- 3,162,245 population (about 7,000 decrease from previous year)

EDUCATION

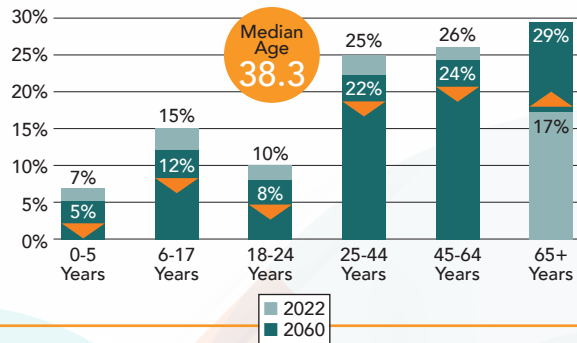
- 41.2% of Orange County residents over the age of 25 have a Bachelor's degree or higher
- 14.9% have a Graduate or Professional Degree

ECONOMY & INCOME TRENDS

- \$94,441 Median Household Income (2020)
- 2.9% Unemployment Rate (2022)
- 10.1% Poverty Level (2020)
- \$275B Gross Regional Product (larger than 27 states including Oregon and Louisiana)

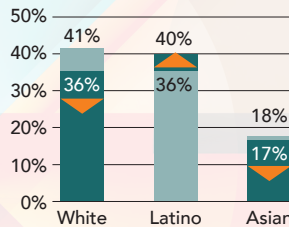
ORANGE COUNTY 2022 COMMUNITY 2023 INDICATORS KEY INDICATORS

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES FOR 2022-2060



DIVERSITY All percentages have been rounded to nearest whole number.

MAJOR ETHNIC GROUPS FOR 2022-2060



HIGHEST POPULATIONS OF FOREIGN ORIGINS

COUNTRY	POPULATION IN ORANGE COUNTY
Mexico	308,008
Vietnam	150,880
China	69,897
Korea	65,332
Philippines	54,347



TOP 3 MAJOR EMPLOYERS

- University of California, Irvine
26,182
- The Walt Disney Co.
25,000
- County of Orange
18,139



TOP 3 MOST IN-DEMAND OC OCCUPATIONS

- Registered Nurses
- Software Developers
- Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing



ORANGE COUNTY'S TOP JOB CENTERS

- Irvine
276,223
- Anaheim
168,183
- Santa Ana
155,713

June 2021-June 2022

EDUCATION TRENDS

OC high school graduation rate increased from

91.1% ↑ to **91.4%**

OC high school drop out rate declined from

5% ↓ to **4%**

HOUSING

Median existing single-family home price, Orange County

\$1,265,000 June 2022

v.s. **\$863,790** in California

Only **29%** of first-time home buyers can afford an entry-level home (priced at \$1,071,000 requiring qualifying income of \$157,500) in Q1 2022

v.s. **41%** in Q1 2020

\$36.63 Hourly wage needed for 1 bedroom (2022) an increase of **1%** compared to 2021

INFRASTRUCTURE

TRANSPORTATION

While Orange County traffic congestion increased between 2020 and 2021, it remains well below pre-pandemic levels.

WATER USE

Orange County water consumption saw a large increase in 2021 (in gallons per capita per day — GPCD), jumping from

108 in 2020 ↑ to **114** in 2021

consuming, however, less water per capita than it did a decade ago.

INTERNET ACCESS

92% Orange County households had internet access in 2020 more than in San Francisco (90%), San Bernardino (88%) and Los Angeles (87%) counties.



SPECIAL FEATURE: REMOTE WORK TRENDS

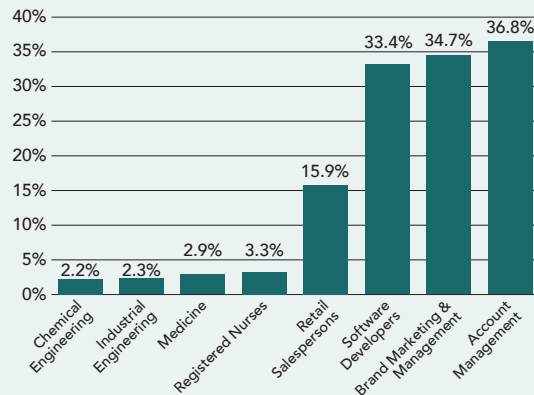
58% of American workers had the option of working from home at least once per week

87% took that option
McKinsey

Average remote workers worked remotely **3.3 days** a week

↓ **15%** Green Street Advisors indicates demand for office space may contract up to 15% due to remote working.

REMOTE WORK ADOPTION RATES BY FIELD



2022-23 Orange County Community Indicators Report Partners



www.ocbc.org



Economic Development



General Economic Development

Orange County is one of the most economically competitive and prosperous regions in the world. Maintaining this competitive edge requires an intense commitment to preserving and enhancing a positive business climate in an evolving and increasingly volatile global economy.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

Public policy should promote and maintain a competitive business environment in Orange County, California, and throughout the nation by enhancing opportunities for high technology companies and others in global trade.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS

1.1	State and local government fiscal reforms that result in better land use decisions that provide stable funding through identifiable sources and a public policy environment conducive to meeting the region's infrastructure maintenance, rebuilding, and expansion; transportation; housing; and workforce education needs.
1.2	Economic development programs that take into account current workforce trends, including the need to emphasize training for health care, tourism, and bio- and high-technology careers.
1.3	Evaluation of regulatory impacts on housing supply, infrastructure development, and other critical land uses, and on business and the economy.
1.4	Continuation of monitoring action at the federal level and preventing enactment of divergent laws at the state level that would stifle technology development and potentially harm the safety and protection around these technologies.
1.5	Federal research and development investments, manufacturers job credit proposals, and other strategies that will support manufacturing and growth in industry clusters that produce high multiplier effects and strengthen global competitiveness.
1.6	Statewide coordinated economic development goals that allow for regional coordination to remain competitive in a global marketplace.
1.7	Economic development programs within educational institutions and other community-based organizations to increase a qualified workforce by ensuring effective and timely communication between businesses, workers, and educators, to ensure that education and training programs target the needs of the community and businesses to provide a robust local talent pipeline for new and in-demand jobs.

1.8	Work with internal and external partners to ensure that small business has access to technical assistance, capital, and a support structure to scale from small, to medium, to large business while remaining within Orange County.
1.9	Support for new business and expansion of business within Orange County through incentives and programs such as the permanent establishment of Opportunity Zones, California Competes Tax Credits, Manufacturing/R&D/Biotech Sales and Use Tax Exemption and the New Employment Credit.
1.10	Contracting government services out to the private sector when appropriate, sustainable, and cost-effective for the construction of public infrastructure. Using progressive contracting methods, including design/build, design/build/operate, design/build/own, and public-private partnerships that provide a sufficient timeframe to determine effectiveness, expanded eligibility and allow the appropriate balance of partnership between state and local agencies.
1.11	Sustainable public and private infrastructure that protects public health, facilitates a well-educated public and workforce, supports a robust economy with reliable multi-modal transportation systems, provides reliable water and waste management systems, provides for reliable natural gas and electric transmission, distribution, and storage systems and supports sufficient "green" and open space infrastructure to promote quality of life.
1.12	Reforms to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) that improve the cost and efficiency of the environmental permitting process without compromising existing and relevant environmental protections, and also minimize litigation and related delays.
1.13	Honoring the collective bargaining agreements established in industries and businesses without legislative intervention.

OCBC OPPOSES

1.14	Government-mandated profit caps.
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Economic Competitiveness and Global Trade

In order for Orange County to maintain and build on its economic competitiveness, Orange County needs to continue to expand into global markets, develop trade partners, support local enterprises and sustain economic vitality. The best way for California to protect its job base is to ensure a diverse workforce that will be fit for an increasingly interdependent and competitive global economy and reduce the relatively high cost of doing business.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

Public policy should promote and maintain a competitive business environment in Orange County, California, and throughout the nation by enhancing opportunities for high technology companies and others in global trade.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS

1.15	Overall trade policy and practices that enhance Orange County as a globally competitive metropolitan region, able to compete for new foreign investment and increased imports and exports.
1.16	Unlimited fast track authority for the President in international trade negotiations and U.S. participation in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and adherence to its precepts for the promotion of fair standards.
1.17	Removing barriers that hinder U.S. companies in foreign markets and the elimination of unfair trading practices.
1.18	Negotiations in the U.S. and other countries to protect patents, trademarks, copyrights, and intellectual property.
1.19	Agreements and standards facilitating the development of a port security strategy to secure movement of goods and services, and long-term strategies to avert work stoppages at West Coast ports.
1.20	International trade education designed to increase general awareness, understanding, and participation in the growth of international business.
1.21	Programs and training that assist companies to expedite regulatory compliance for trade, such as Foreign Trade Zones.

1.22	Support for leveraging foreign investment, existing treaties and expansion of opportunities with foreign governments, and international and domestic business incentives and programs which grow Orange County's economy through import and exports via Free Trade Agreements, the U.S. Export-Import Bank, U.S. Commercial Services and District Exports Council, and industry focused trade missions.
1.23	Support for research and development of new technologies that will generate new business creation and growth opportunities such as Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, Artificial Intelligence (AI), 5G network expansion, and IoT, to create a competitive Smart Metropolitan Region prepared for business in the "Smart Economy."
1.24	Continued advocacy for an open environment to allow for continuing research and the creation of responsible AI technologies. Work with public and private sector leaders to educate the public, media, the business community and policymakers on the benefits of AI and Financial Technology (FinTech).
1.25	Urging regulators to avoid regulatory arbitrage and proceed with caution regarding FinTech development and implementation. As with traditional financial services, avoid massive regulatory duplication, unnecessary burdens and ambivalence to cost benefit analyses to encourage FinTech innovation.
1.26	Open markets here and abroad including supporting trade deals in the Pacific and with the EU and UK and the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).
1.27	An in-depth study of the benefits of offshore outsourcing to the economy of California and the nation.
1.28	Greater investment from and collaboration between federal, state and regional economic development organizations to drive more foreign direct investment into Orange County.

OCBC OPPOSES

1.29	Protectionist policies including tariffs.
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Tourism

Tourism is California’s fourth largest employer and fifth largest contributor to the gross state product. The economic generating power of Orange County’s entire tourism sector—from theme parks to sports, arts and entertainment to hospitality, and the thousands of other retailers and small businesses that serve visiting tourists—is absolutely essential to the economic health of Orange County.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

Legislation should focus on restoring, supporting and protecting the tourism industry through responsible advocacy working with elected officials, government agencies, and the public.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS

1.30	Protecting Orange County’s tourist destinations as critical to enabling a growing share of Orange County’s jobs and economic impact.
1.31	Encouraging public-private partnerships for increased investment in tourism projects.
1.32	Encouraging partnerships between visitors’ bureaus, convention centers, hotel operators, and economic development leaders to showcase Orange County expansion and growth opportunities to tourists and visiting business leaders.
1.33	Designation of John Wayne Airport as a Port of Entry by U.S. Customs and Border Protection so that the federal government is responsible for all costs associated with federal inspection services.
1.34	Support for ease of access to multi-modal mobility options for tourists and visiting business leaders to reach their destinations.
1.35	Investment in infrastructure and coastal protection to support leisure destinations and tourism attractions.
1.36	Government incentives for attracting private investment for dining, entertainment, and lodging establishments.
1.37	Encouraging thoughtful employment regulation which recognizes the complexities of large-site tourist destinations.
1.38	Recognizing the importance of investment in tourism assets, encourage CEQA and other regulatory process reform to streamline development which will promote economic recovery and growth.
1.39	Reduced barriers to travel, including lower wait times during the international visa process.

General Business Issues

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

The best way of ensuring that a corporation’s business will prosper to the benefit of the shareholders, directors, officers, employees, and customers, is to create a corporate culture that encourages everyone in the corporation—from the directors to the officers to the employees—to perform their duties in an honest and competent manner. Rules regarding the governance and management of corporations, including those pertaining to accounting procedures, should ideally be created and imposed voluntarily by a corporation’s directors and officers, rather than mandated by law. OCBC recognizes, however, that in some cases, mandatory laws are preferable in order to ensure uniform compliance or to foster public confidence.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

Public policies should promote standards of corporate governance that guide boards of directors and corporate officers in managing their corporations in a competent and ethical manner.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS	
1.40	Establishing a climate that encourages competent, qualified, honest, and ethical people to commit the time and effort necessary to become corporate directors.
1.41	Protecting not only a corporation’s majority and minority shareholders, but also its employees, customers, suppliers, creditors, and the public at large.
1.42	Providing safeguards against negligent or incompetent decision-making while still giving directors and officers the freedom to take reasonable business risks.
1.43	Reinforcing corporate directors’ duties to appoint competent and ethical managers as officers of the corporation and monitor and evaluate the performance of those officers.
1.44	Encouraging corporate directors to represent the interests of all shareholders, including minority shareholders.
1.45	Addressing conflicts between state and federal laws in areas such as insider trading, release of corporate information and other corporate governance matters.
1.46	Promoting corporate establishment of internal guidelines that provide clear descriptions of the directors’ and officers’ positions and duties.
1.47	Setting criteria by which directors can determine the level of detail required of board meeting minutes (and supporting documentation) to allow regulators and independent auditors to determine whether board members have properly exercised their fiduciary duties.

1.48	Allowing corporations flexibility in selecting tools to assist in effective corporate governance; such as establishing specialized committees of the board of directors (e.g., audit and compensation committees) and obtaining directors' and officers' liability insurance to attract qualified personnel.
1.49	Establishing reforms to alleviate costs of Sarbanes-Oxley compliance.

EMPLOYEE/EMPLOYER RELATIONS ISSUES

Public policies and regulatory climates can either boost or negatively impact the ability of California's businesses to compete locally, nationally, and globally. In considering public policies and regulations impacting the workplace, it is important for decision makers and regulators to be mindful of ramifications their decisions have on business owners striving to remain competitive in the global marketplace.

COMPENSATION ISSUES

Wage and compensation issues have a direct impact on labor costs and therefore impact a business' overall competitiveness. State policies and regulations that go well beyond federal protections for employees place Orange County businesses at an economic disadvantage when competing with businesses from other states.

CHEMICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURE

Businesses inherently need to ensure that workplaces are healthy and safe for all employees by adhering to various regulatory measures in place to protect workers from chemical and other environmental exposures. To the extent that California enacts policies and regulations that exceed federal standards for employee protection, Orange County businesses are at an economic disadvantage compared to those operating in other states.

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

Independent contractors serve an important role in the economic development of Orange County by providing expertise, flexibility, quality improvement, and cost savings to all types of businesses. Recent case law and legislation are eroding the cost-effectiveness of independent contractors. The continuation of this trend will deprive businesses of a vital resource.

RIGHT TO WORK

Labor unions are increasingly active in influencing policymakers on workforce issues. It is important to create a better balance between employees' rights to organize and business vitality and not impose prescriptive labor policies that are unreasonably burdensome.

AVAILABILITY OF LABOR

The Orange County labor pool will continue experiencing significant growth. However, forecasts indicate a substantial contraction of its 25- to 34-year-old population segment due to a lack of attainable housing opportunities for young families, among other reasons. Orange County must respond to the fact that as its population ages, the region loses the single greatest age group that contributes to the job base.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

Public policies should enable business to respond competitively to new opportunities while promoting safe environments for employees.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS

1.50	California's conformity with federal law in the areas of overtime and alternative work schedule flexibility.
1.51	Efforts to keep California from further exceeding federal laws for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exempt and non-exempt classifications,• Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and• Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) discrimination (e.g., age discrimination, sexual harassment, etc.).
1.52	The right of employees and employers to enter into agreements for Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR).
1.53	A consistent definition of independent contractors, simplified rules regarding independent contractor/client relationships and the elimination of financial penalties, such as back taxes and benefits obligations, arising from good faith misclassifications.
1.54	Limitations on the activities of unions where the employees of a company have indicated a lack of desire to unionize.
1.55	Limitations on the use of binding arbitration in labor/management negotiations.
1.56	Legislative review of existing statutes with a focus towards a more equitable balance of the rights of employers, employees, and organized labor.
1.57	A better balance between employee privacy and business responsibility, including limits on business liability where privacy legislation precludes employers from asking or securing employee information.
1.58	Reforms to public employee pension obligation system to prevent insolvency.

OCBC OPPOSES

1.59	Prevailing and living wage mandates and ordinances.
1.60	Unreasonable minimum wage mandates that unfairly target specific sectors.

LITIGATION REFORM

Employers and their insurers often face the painful choice of settling frivolous lawsuits early as an economic tradeoff to mounting a more expensive—though usually successful—legal defense. Civil litigation reform that makes the legal system more efficient, less expensive, and faster to respond to genuine needs is critical to economic success.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

Litigation reform is needed to halt the crippling effects of unwarranted, excessive, and frivolous lawsuits on businesses, consumers and taxpayers.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS

1.61	Reforms to the legal system to discourage and eliminate frivolous lawsuits, including reasonable limits upon recoveries, particularly in punitive damages and non-economic damages, and prevailing party recovery of litigation expenses, including attorneys' fees, in cases of questionable merit.
1.62	Use of arbitration and mediation for prompt and cost-effective dispute resolution in appropriate circumstances, including employment, health care, property and automobile accident cases.
1.63	Construction dispute litigation reform and other legal strategies to encourage settlement of issues between builders and homeowners.
1.64	The cornerstones of the Medical Injury Compensation Reform Act (MICRA), which place reasonable limits on attorneys' fees and non-economic damages in medical malpractice cases.
1.65	New laws to ensure consumers are fully informed of their rights and options when hiring a contingency fee attorney.
1.66	Appellate review of rulings granting class action certification, similar to established law providing for appellate review of rulings denying class certification.
1.67	Stricter guidelines for the use of science and hired "experts" in the courtroom.
1.68	Improvements to California's system for jury service and jury selection to achieve a more representative sample of the community to serve as jurors.
1.69	Preservation of reforms enacted through California's Unfair Practice Act, intended to reduce excessive litigation and abusive lawsuits targeted at California businesses.
1.70	New laws for disclosure of partnerships between the attorney general and private attorneys pursuing litigation on behalf of the State.
1.71	Reforms to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) legislation that encourages access rather than litigation.
1.72	Action by the attorney general to stop abusive lawsuits alleging violations of the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 (Proposition 65).
1.73	Reforms to the Private Attorney's General Act (PAGA) to prevent abuse.

OCBC OPPOSES

1.74	Attempts to circumvent the workers' compensation system in the construction area.
1.75	Attempts to publicize confidential business information obtained in the "discovery" process of a lawsuit.
1.76	Efforts by the attorney general to regulate business through litigation instead of the public legislative process.

TAXES AND FEES

Business taxpayers pay more than their share of the cost of government. Additional tax increases, especially those that target business, cripple California’s economic growth and job creation.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

To advocate for policies that enable businesses to benefit from simplified tax structures, lower taxes, taxes logically associated with specific government services, and the enactment of incentives supporting economic growth.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS

1.77	Balanced local, state, and federal budgets that reduce spending without shifting costs to or imposing mandates upon other levels of government.
1.78	Federal tax reform, which may include consideration of the flat tax, a national sales tax, or value-added tax to meet overall policy objectives as a replacement for current income tax structure.
1.79	Lower capital gains taxes.
1.80	Tax credits and other incentives for saving and investing, including increased 401(k) percentages and increased ceiling limits on contributions.
1.81	The use of private sector investment, rather than governmental taxes and spending, where possible, to accomplish public benefits.
1.82	Clear distinctions between taxes and user fees; a direct nexus for fees to an administrative cost or provision of public service.
1.83	Extreme caution in the modification or elimination of taxpayers’ ability to have elected officials, as opposed to appointed board members and staff, determine California tax disputes.
1.84	Tax incentives to maintain and create high-value jobs in the manufacturing sector.
1.85	Review of public services provided by government, privatization of public services wherever possible, restructuring of governmental agencies for greater efficiency and streamlining of the tax structures.
1.86	Reforms to the State and Local Tax (SALT) Deduction cap to address disadvantages for California businesses.

OCBC OPPOSES

1.87	Taxes that place California or Orange County at a competitive disadvantage.
1.88	Changes to Proposition 13 (i.e. split roll tax).

1.89	Taxes on services.
1.90	Federal, state, and local fees imposed by agency/department officials rather than those duly approved by the voters or appropriate elected officials.
1.91	Local sales tax increases without alternative methods of funding, cost reductions, or a list of projects or services for voters that includes oversight, accountability and a sunset option.
1.92	New state or local streaming taxes and existing digital advertising taxes being interpreted to apply to internet streaming offerings.

CONSUMER PRIVACY

The California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) is a significant and far-reaching update to the way in which businesses are regulated with regards to customer information. Privacy needs to equally protect and benefit the consumer, business, and employee. With e-commerce rapidly expanding, lawmakers must gain a deeper understanding of how consumers benefit from information sharing and allow businesses greater flexibility.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

To advocate for strong consumer privacy protection, while continuing to promote business opportunities and enable businesses to be competitive.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS

1.93	Privacy guidelines set forth in the Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act.
1.94	Fair and equitable state and local regulations that align within federal guidelines and do not interfere with a company's ability to serve its customers.
1.95	Legislation that allows businesses to access critical information required to respond to the workplace needs of injured or disabled employees and prevent further injury in the workplace.

OCBC OPPOSES

1.96	Burdensome privacy regulations that would stifle commerce while providing little protection to the consumer.
1.97	Local privacy ordinances that attempt to preempt state or federal legislation or regulation.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION REFORM

Whether paid in the form of insurance premiums or direct expenses for medical treatment and benefits, workers' compensation is a significant cost of doing business for every public and private

employer in California. Workers' compensation costs to employers must be reduced to ensure that California remains economically competitive in the global economy. In addition, the system needs more reforms to ensure efficient and clear processes, allowing employers and employees to resolve workplace accidents without having to navigate the court system.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

To advocate for an efficient and cost-effective workers' compensation system that provides fair compensation for legitimate claims while protecting employers from the financial and productivity effects of abuse.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS	
1.98	Controlled costs through the elimination of fraud, reduced litigation, and the consistent application of established principles for determining eligibility.
1.99	Best practices in the areas of standards, medical findings, and criteria applied uniformly to the application of workers' compensation law and the administration of the workers' compensation system to streamline the determination of disability, delivery of benefits, and decisions concerning injured workers' ability to return to work.
1.100	Elimination of financial and other incentives for claimants to seek legal representation.
1.101	The option for employers to combine health care coverage for employees with the medical coverage provided through workers' compensation.
1.102	Efforts to address the problem of carrier insolvency consistent with the above principles.
OCBC OPPOSES	
1.103	Any roll-back or amendments designed to weaken workers' compensation reform in California.

GOVERNMENT REFORM

Orange County has 34 incorporated cities and more than 200 independent agencies providing a myriad of services to its residents. Hundreds of directors serve on the governing boards of special purpose agencies that often receive less attention from the public and/or media. While the quality of public services provided by these government agencies is often very good, multiple management layers and overlapping service areas dictate a need for greater efficiency and accountability. OCBC urges the Governor, the State Legislature, municipalities and special districts to work for the adoption of stable, long-term, and reliable financing formulas for local governments that will in turn promote land use approvals that are not solely based upon revenue generation.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

Californians should be able to rely on long-term, stable, reliable, and equitable funding for essential public services.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS	
1.104	State and local government finance reform that provides a long-term, stable financing mechanism for essential public services and infrastructure during both lean- and high-growth economic times.
1.105	Accountability to the voters and other taxpayers that includes a form of funding for public services that is understandable to the voting public.
1.106	Local government term limit reform that results in long enough terms to encourage leadership on governmental association and regional/special district governing boards.
1.107	Services provided at the level of government closest to the people and with funds most closely related to the services, including greater reliance upon property taxes by local governments to provide property-related community services.
1.108	Clarification of state and local governments' roles.
1.109	Eliminating of unfunded state mandates.
1.110	Equitable redistribution of sales and property taxes to protect cities' and counties' long-term infrastructure, public safety, and human resources investments.
1.111	Contracting governmental services out to the private sector through the competitive bidding process when appropriate.
1.112	Effective research/market-based pension reforms.

OCBC OPPOSES	
1.113	Wasteful government spending.
1.114	State raids on local government funding.
1.115	Excessive and inconsistent term limits on elected officials.
1.116	Legislation or regulations that are intended to harm or eliminate competition in a free marketplace.
1.117	Regional governmental bodies reaching beyond their scope or jurisdiction to create or influence policy.

CYBERSECURITY

Protecting against massive and sustained cyberattacks that pose a threat to U.S. economic

competitiveness and critical infrastructure resources is key to businesses success. Technological developments in interconnectivity promise great innovation opportunities, but also increased and novel cybersecurity risks that must be sufficiently addressed.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

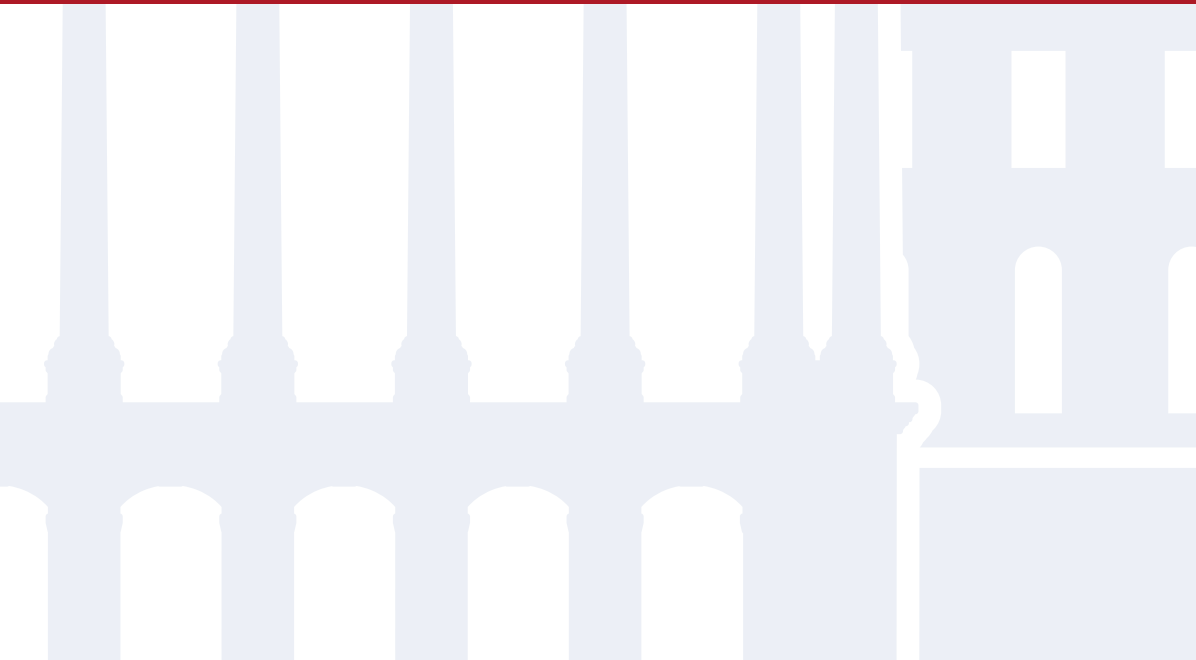
Encourage investments in cybersecurity safeguards (including preparedness and mitigation measures) and their deployment as part of broader risk management strategies.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS	
1.118	Continued public-private partnership to develop and improve frameworks for improving critical infrastructure cybersecurity.
1.119	Maintenance of a voluntary approach to cybersecurity practices in the private sector, as opposed to a system of legally mandated practices.
1.120	Passage of bills similar to the Cyber Information Sharing Act at the federal or state levels that remove barriers to the sharing of information about cyber threats and cyber events.
1.121	Adherence to transparent rule-making procedures by government agencies considering an increase in their oversight of private sector cybersecurity practices in activities falling under their respective jurisdictions.
1.122	Strict consistency with a risk-based approach for further government oversight of private sector cybersecurity practices.
1.123	Creating either a single federal standard or efforts to harmonize disparate state standards pertaining to data breach notification criteria and procedures.
1.124	Efforts designed to make Orange County's elected representatives at various government levels champions of reasonable and appropriate cybersecurity policies.
1.125	Active engagement by Orange County companies with legislative and regulatory officials and participation in various public-private policy councils on cybersecurity.
1.126	Increasing awareness among Orange County companies about government sales opportunities involving cybersecurity goods and services (including technical requirements).
1.127	Outsourcing of cybersecurity in order to reduce company risk by not trying to do things in house.
1.128	Ensuring all cybersecurity measures are audited and frequently reported.
1.129	Creation of policies at the Board/Council level so leaders are aware of actions regarding cybersecurity.



Infrastructure



General Infrastructure

The efficient movement of goods, services, people and information into, out of and within Orange County is critical in this growing economy. Effective delivery necessitates infrastructure that is well-maintained and enhanced to meet demands now and in the future. Private sector innovation and investment is integral to meeting these objectives.

OCBC supports a comprehensive approach to addressing the state's infrastructure needs and will work with government to ensure that a proportional share of state and federal infrastructure funds are secured for Orange County projects. Comprehensive infrastructure improvements include: natural gas and electric transmission and distribution systems; transportation funding to repair roadways, reduce congestion, improve bridge safety, expand public transit, airports and improve port security; as well as policies that promote water supply development, water storage and improved delivery systems, along with funding for levee repair, and advanced flood control systems.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

Public policies should promote annual state, local, and private investments in infrastructure sufficient to meet the expanding needs of a growing population and a dynamic and healthy economy and to protect existing public and private infrastructure investments.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS

2.1	Protection for dedicated transportation-related tax revenues, annual funding to maintain and enhance personal mobility, and the movement of goods and services.
2.2	Potential for Mileage-Based Road Usage Charges to eventually replace gas tax.
2.3	Investment strategies based on sound science and public policy criteria that direct resources into the most needed regional and local infrastructure categories and leverage state and federal dollars, maximizing the return on existing infrastructure investments.
2.4	Priority funding or financing tools for joint-use, public-private infrastructure plans and projects.
2.5	Utilization of research findings to create awareness of Orange County's infrastructure needs and further the dialogue on asset management and smart public investments in infrastructure.
2.6	Maintaining in-state manufacturing for California's transportation fuel needs and jet fuel needs to keep greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to a minimum and promote the robust California economy as the most cost-effective energy solution for the transportation fuel needs of California.

2.7	Desalinization technology to increase water supply reliability by retail water agencies that voluntarily choose to participate in the projects.
2.8	Adequate rehabilitation and protection of critical levee and waterway systems in the Bay-Delta and other areas of the State that have critical importance to the long-term and sustained movement of water supplies to their points of use.
2.9	Adequate investment in surface water impoundments, water recycling/reuse projects, groundwater cleanup, and water storage systems that protect the State from droughts, earthquakes, and other events that would otherwise cause significant economic dislocations, loss of human lives, or the loss of significant natural resources.
2.10	Fair-share federal and state funding to Orange County based on population, urban nature, and the amount of tax revenue contributed to federal and state budgets.
2.11	Restrictions on growth control policies and “smart” growth initiatives that may result in unintended consequences such as unreasonably higher housing costs, increased commute times that impact individuals and families, limited housing supplies that impact labor supplies and unreasonably inflated land values that limit economic expansion.
2.12	Accelerated project delivery through streamlined environmental delegation and increased authority to local California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Districts and through use of alternative project delivery methods such as design-build, public-private partnerships, etc.
2.13	Fair distribution of sales tax revenues based on origination point of sale rather than distribution.

Telecommunications

Delivery of advanced data services is important to the future of the U.S. economy. Broadband internet and voice telecommunications services bring connectivity to people, businesses, and critical services. Closing the “digital divide” through combined efforts on availability, adoption, and affordability are key to the education and health care sectors and to overall business’ success.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

Public policy and regulatory frameworks should promote advanced telecommunications networks to enable the exchange of knowledge, trade, and communications.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS	
2.14	Fulfillment of the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 to fully open competitive markets and maintain the benefits of competition to Orange County consumers.
2.15	Fair and equitable regulations by local agencies and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and Federal Communications Commission (FCC), to ensure equal treatment for all communications providers and limited regulation by the FCC and CPUC with regard to advanced communications services.
2.16	Private sector investments to install and maintain state-of-the-art broadband capabilities for businesses and residents in Orange County.
2.17	Local government support and prompt permitting for the placement of infrastructure leading to expansion, construction, and implementation of advanced broadband networks, including the expanded deployment of fiber optic, wireless small cell technology and wireline hybrid fiber coax (HFC) infrastructure.
2.18	A policy that protects the rights of business and residential consumers to select the communications provider of their choice by providing telecommunications companies the authority to enter buildings and businesses without prejudice.
2.19	Fair and equitable area code relief plans that minimize inconvenience to customers.
2.20	Limiting the municipal rights-of-way fees to the reimbursement of the city’s actual costs of administering the use of the public rights-of-way so that these fees are not used to generate general fund or other special purpose revenues.
2.21	Protecting the principles of Open Internet through bipartisan Congressional action.
2.22	Maintaining the classification of Broadband as an Information Service under Title I of the Federal Telecommunications Act.

2.23	The preservation of cable providers' authority under the California Digital Infrastructure and Video Competition Act (DIVCA).
2.24	Policy reform related to Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS) which recognizes the need to avert catastrophic wildfire events but also takes into account the telecommunication industry's reliance on commercial power to operate their communications network, the potential safety hazards and implications of deploying portable generators in high fire zones and business protections for telecommunication companies who make good faith efforts to comply with their PSPS requirements.

OCBC OPPOSES

2.25	Taxes, fees, or burdensome regulations that would stifle electronic commerce.
2.26	Government, government-owned utilities or other government subsidized consortiums offering communications services since their powers of taxation and regulation provide an inherent competitive advantage relative to other communications providers and have a high fail rate resulting in misuse of tax dollars. State and local governments should instead seek to partner with and support private broadband providers that have invested billions of private-risk capital, rather than build duplicative, taxpayer-funded networks.
2.27	Requiring cable operators to sign onto ancillary agreements that are inconsistent with the authority granted under DIVCA, such as Encroachment, Lease, License, and Maintenance Agreements.

Transportation

Transportation infrastructure is imperative for business to successfully operate. Employees must get to and from work efficiently, as personal mobility is integral to a thriving economy and community. It is important that government not constrain the movement of residents or goods throughout Southern California's diverse network of ports, rail lines, roads, and transit.

Long-term, dedicated and stable funding is essential for the expansion, improvement and maintenance of the transportation system. Private sector participation and investment, as well as innovative project delivery, are key to meeting these transportation objectives. OCBC supports efforts and transportation funding formulas that ensure California taxpayers receive fair and adequate return on their investments.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

Public policy should promote safe, efficient and cost-effective movement of people, goods and services via air, highway and rail conveyances.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS	
2.28	An integrated, comprehensive and efficient multi-modal transportation network in Orange County, meeting the needs of its residents and of a globally competitive Orange County, to include inter-county and intra-county highways, mass transit, passenger and freight rail and air travel services, facilities and infrastructure.
2.29	Long-term, dedicated and consistent funding sources by federal, state and local governments equitably distributed for new road, highway and transit improvement projects and associated operating costs, as well as for maintenance, safety and capacity enhancements.
2.30	Reduced regulatory burdens for project approvals, increasing efficiency in meeting environmental requirements and eliminating unnecessary duplication on lead agencies awarding contracts using alternative project delivery mechanisms.
2.31	Full and efficient implementation of the renewed Measure M, Orange County's 30-year, half-cent sales tax specifically dedicated to transportation improvements without state interference to alter expenditure plans dictated by voters.
2.32	Government agencies contracting services with the private sector for the construction of public infrastructure, using progressive contracting methods (i.e., design/build, design/build/operate, and design/build/own) and public-private partnerships when appropriate, sustainable, and cost-effective.
2.33	Projects that allow for more efficient transitions between transportation modes and improve capacity.

2.34	Public-private partnerships, including private sector investments in intra-county and inter-county transportation infrastructure projects.
2.35	Investment in the development and use of Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technologies (e.g., smart vehicles, smart corridors, traffic management centers and real-time traffic data information availability) to maximize use of existing facilities and capacity.
2.36	Implementation of managed lane technology on select new lanes or conversion of carpool lanes to managed lanes to increase mobility and generate highway construction and maintenance revenue.
2.37	Coordination between local, state and federal permitting agencies conducting environmental reviews to expedite project delivery and promote cost-effectiveness along with environmental compliance.
2.38	Directing a portion of cap-and-trade revenues to roads for improving road conditions and traffic flow that reduces fuel use and GHG emissions.
2.39	Ensuring effective projects, efficient project development and delivery, appropriate funding sources and prioritizing “self-help” states and counties.
2.40	Ensuring that the intent of SB 1 is followed by preventing diversion for non-intended uses, making sure funding is easily accessible by local and regional governments, expediting its use and ensuring Orange County receives a fair and equitable share.
2.41	<p>Raising revenues across a broad range of options (must be guaranteed by strong accountability and reform measures), including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasonable increases in federal gasoline and diesel excise taxes. • Ensuring SB 1 funds are used effectively through accountability, transparency, oversight and a sunset option. • Dedicating a portion of the cap-and-trade revenue paid by motorists at the pump to transportation projects that reduce GHG emissions. • Ensuring existing transportation revenues are invested in transportation-related purposes (i.e. truck weight fees and fuel taxes for off-road vehicles that are currently being diverted into the general fund). • Exploration of a user charge introduced over time for electric and other non-fossil fuel powered vehicles that may not proportionally contribute to road upkeep. • Exploration of options to replace the gas tax at both the state and federal level to address long-term transportation funding in response to increasing fleet fuel efficiency and the transition to non-internal combustion engines.
2.42	Maximizing direct investments in regional priority projects.
2.43	Prioritizing projects that support and ease inter- and intra-regional travel.
2.44	Incentives for the transition to near-zero and zero-emission transportation technologies, including Fuel Cell Electric Vehicles (FCEVs), to help businesses, customers, and transit operators comply with state requirements.

2.45	Policies that facilitate the development of infrastructure for near-zero and zero-emission transportation technologies including FCEVs, such as permit streamlining and the build out of fueling and charging infrastructure to help achieve state mandates.
2.46	Policies that will help tolling agencies meet national interoperability mandates while protecting consumer data.

WATER SUPPLY, WATER QUALITY, AND WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT

Orange County’s economic viability depends on the availability of a safe, reliable, and affordable water supply. OCBC serves as a resource for educating businesses, elected and appointed officials and the public at large about programs and projects that will address this need.

Southern California is highly dependent on both the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) and the Colorado River for its imported water supplies. Almost half of the water consumed in Orange County is imported. The continued reliability of these sources, however, is subject to the successful implementation of the Delta Conveyance Project in a way that achieves the co-equal goals of restoring the Delta ecosystem and water supply reliability and to continued cooperative approaches to the management of the Colorado River. Ongoing planning and development of local water supply resources and storage is also vital to diversifying Orange County’s water supply portfolio and alleviating potential future water shortages.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

To ensure Orange County has safe, clean, high quality, adequate and reliable water supplies in order to support the needs of economic growth and quality of life in Southern California.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS	
Statewide	
2.47	Securing Orange County’s fair share of approved and proposed state water bond funding and other state and federal water infrastructure funding.
2.48	State and federal funding of public benefits related to the restoration of the Delta.
2.49	Accelerated development of a secure and reliable alternative conveyance system in the Delta that will significantly improve water supply reliability and water quality.
2.50	Successful and fair implementation of the “Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life” legislation.
2.51	State and federal cooperation, funding and policy adoption to ensure balanced implementation of a modernized Delta Conveyance to achieve the co-equal goals of Delta ecosystem restoration and improved water supply reliability.

2.52	Continued implementation of, and adherence by, all involved parties to the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA).
2.53	Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS) programs and projects that increase storage in Lake Mead.
2.54	Development of cost-effective surface and groundwater storage to improve the reliability of water supplies throughout California and to create emergency water supplies for times of shortage.
2.55	Review and updating of California's regulations governing recycled water.
2.56	Development of a uniform framework and science-based regulations which would allow for the cost-effective expansion of potable reuse throughout California.
2.57	Simplification of the process of water transfers between all areas of the state and, where possible, pre-approval of these transfers.
2.58	Drinking water regulatory standards that are based on science and can demonstrate cost effectiveness.
2.59	Programs and projects that affect sustainable salt management.
2.60	Consolidation of California codes that codify recycled water as a resource, not a waste.
2.61	Statutory protection for local investments in drought resiliency, drought-resilient supplies and emergency supplies.
2.62	Federal and state programs and funding for dam safety and seismic improvements to water storage reservoirs to help restore and preserve water storage capabilities.
2.63	The development of new, cost-effective water supplies, storage, and emergency supplies to mitigate climate change impacts and ensure droughts are fully planned-for scenarios and not treated as emergencies.

Regional

2.64	Regulatory frameworks that promote efficient maintenance and management of water resources and infrastructure.
2.65	Efforts to secure a combination of federal, state, regional and local funding for the development of local and regional projects that will improve water reliability through transfers, desalination, water use efficiency, storage and water recycling.
2.66	Cost-effective expansion of water recycling with a focus on newly developing areas.
2.67	Water use efficiency projects and programs, as well as voluntary conservation, to reduce urban runoff and over-watering.
2.68	Development of cost-effective and sustainable desalination of ocean water and groundwater, including reasonable approaches to the regulation of brine disposal.
2.69	Projects that make optimum use of groundwater resources.

Local

2.70	Projects and programs that protect the quality, reliability and sustainability of the Orange County Groundwater Basin, including the current and future expansion of the Groundwater Replenishment System.
2.71	The San Juan Watershed Project which will enhance the quality, reliability and sustainability of the San Juan Groundwater Basin.
2.72	Expedited acquisition of necessary property behind Prado Dam by Orange County Flood Control to maximize usable water storage.
2.73	Completion of the Santa Ana River Mainstem Project and the funding and timely distribution of the accumulated state subventions to reimburse Orange County.
2.74	Completion of the Santa Ana River Interceptor (SARI) wastewater line relocation project to ensure the long- term integrity of the pipeline, protect public health and safeguard the environment.
2.75	Development of additional stormwater capture at Prado Dam.
2.76	Continued North-South County collaboration to enhance water supply and system reliability as well as provide South County with a more reliable emergency water supply.
2.77	Preservation and expansion of local water storage, including recycled water storage through the development of the Syphon Reservoir Recycled Water Storage Project and other projects.
2.78	Development of cost-effective emergency water supplies for Orange County, including through projects such as the Kern Fan Groundwater Storage Project and other water banking projects.

OCEAN WATER QUALITY AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Orange County must take adequate and appropriate action to protect public health, water resources, and environmental resources from the harmful effects of point source and non-point source water pollution. OCBC supports improvement of ocean water quality through widespread public education and the adoption of cost-effective public policies, practices, and facilities that are consistently based upon sound research. Orange County is better served by a reasonable regulatory process that functions cooperatively, uses scientifically-based facts, and establishes water quality objectives that consider the cost of attaining water quality standards.

Federal, state, and local government agencies must address urban runoff issues pragmatically and sequentially. Various methods suggested by private and public entities to address urban runoff must be fairly considered on a case-by-case basis and the permitting authorities must evaluate the site-specific costs, constraints and other practical matters. Flexibility and cost-effectiveness are principles that all parties must embrace as the collective understanding of this issue evolves. Watershed approaches will lead to more meaningful improvements.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

California must protect, enhance, and sustain ocean water quality using comprehensive, watershed- and science-based approaches that reduce contaminants from point and non-point sources in a cost-effective and sustainable manner. Stormwater management should integrate public safety and pollution control in a cost-effective manner.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS

2.79	Compliance with laws and regulations aimed at protecting coastline and ocean resources from inadequately treated wastewater and sanitary sewer overflows.
2.80	Water quality management programs to reduce, where practical, non-point source pollution as well as improve ocean water quality.
2.81	Science-based programs and projects to manage urban runoff and stormwater in a cost-effective and sustainable manner.
2.82	Improvements in water quality testing methodologies to more quickly and accurately determine levels of pathogens, sources of contamination, and health risk, which result in the timely notification to the public.
2.83	Dry weather diversions into the sanitary system for treatment and disposal or reclamation, but only when there is sufficient capacity to do so and other practices of the sanitary sewage system are not negatively impacted.
2.84	Education of business, residents, and visitors regarding pollution prevention practices that reduce urban runoff and the importance of water quality to the economy and quality of life in Orange County.
2.85	Updates to the Basin Plans to incorporate current scientific understanding and establish appropriate standards that adequately protect water quality in a practical and cost-effective manner.
2.86	Employing risk-based approaches, “use attainability analyses”, and other valid scientifically-based techniques to evaluate bodies of water and their designated uses when setting water quality standards, adopting Total Maximum Daily Loads and issuing permits that require action by public and private entities.
2.87	The use of technology, best available practices and “natural treatment” systems to adequately protect public health and the environment from harmful pollutants contained in urban runoff and agricultural runoff with a preference for natural treatment system solutions.
2.88	Exempting “natural treatment” systems from the definition of “Waters of the United States” and “Waters of the State” recognizing that these facilities are water treatment systems that provide multiple benefits.

2.89	California policy should be amended to treat stormwater and dry weather runoff as a resource wherein flood protection, water quality, and water supply improvements are complementary goals.
2.90	Regional, watershed/subwatershed-specific stormwater and dry weather runoff planning efforts that engage key stakeholders in the planning process and allow for consideration of local factors that may impact the appropriateness of stormwater and dry weather runoff capture, infiltration and use within a region should be encouraged.
2.91	Stormwater and dry weather runoff management and capture planning on a regional, not parcel-by-parcel, basis. Regional boards should move away from parcel-by-parcel water quality requirements and focus on regional compliance in order to encourage large-scale regional storm water and dry weather runoff capture, retention, diversion, use and recharge.



Environment



Environmental Regulation

Reasonable environmental protections are important for sustaining Orange County's high quality of life. However, conflicting and costly regulations jeopardize the business climate, which supports and finances the essential services contributing to the quality of life enjoyed by residents. We must protect our environment without sacrificing economic prosperity or global competitiveness.

Excessive, conflicting, and overlapping requirements among local, state and federal jurisdictions can create inefficiencies that stifle job creation and divert business dollars away from developing products, investing for growth, and adding value to customers and shareholders.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

Policymakers must coordinate their oversight and take into consideration market-oriented approaches and incentives that offer maximum compliance flexibility and achieve cost-effective outcomes. Regulations should protect the environment without sacrificing economic prosperity or global competitiveness.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS

3.1	Environmental regulations that are based upon sound science (e.g. realistic risk assessments, accurate pollutant inventories and credible environmental and economic models) and produce achievable, cost effective, and measurable benefits to public health and the environment.
3.2	Improved methods and techniques for modeling and measuring health risks, securing accurate pollutant inventories, assessing environmental impacts and measuring the effectiveness of control measures.
3.3	Consistency and coordination in CEQA and other environmental review processes among governmental agencies to streamline environmental reviews, expand participation by project proponents, and ensure fairness in environmental review fees.
3.4	Efficient environmental analysis through integration of environmental and planning laws and the elimination of CEQA duplication.
3.5	CEQA litigation for compliance issues rather than delay to reduce frivolous, excessive and costly lawsuits.
3.6	Local access to and accountability from regulators within regional and statewide frameworks that promote statewide consistency.

3.7	Innovative, market-oriented approaches for meeting environmental standards such as emission reduction credit banking and trading, habitat conservation plans, carbon labeling of goods sold within the state and incentives for voluntary impact reductions.
3.8	Participatory and inclusive processes between the regulated community, regulators and other stakeholders leading to consensus-based rule making and the correction of deficiencies.
3.9	Environmental justice policies that weigh environmental effects against economic opportunity so that the overall quality of life of the affected populations is not adversely impacted.
3.10	Urban runoff and ocean water quality strategies that include thorough assessments of all sources, prevention of pollution through education, cost-effective regional and watershed-based solutions and treatment options and public infrastructure improvements.
3.11	Reforms in California’s Electronics Recycling Program to clarify requirements in order to better facilitate compliance by both manufacturers and consumers.
3.12	Environmental regulations that also enable the state to meet housing objectives.

Climate Change and Air Quality

California is a leader in combating global climate change and the state under Governor Newsom’s leadership has enacted a robust legislative and regulatory agenda to achieve aggressive GHG reduction targets. These include state mandates requiring that, by 2045, renewable and zero-carbon energy resources must supply 100% of electric retail sales to customers and GHG emissions must be reduced to 85% below 1990 levels, as well as an executive order requiring that all new cars and passenger trucks sold in California be zero-emission vehicles by 2035. Progress towards these mandates must be conducted with a plan in place to address cost and infrastructure challenges associated with achieving them. Climate change regulations should be implemented with stakeholder input from the business community and with a systematic and integrated approach across all sectors of the economy, to avoid driving businesses out of California to higher GHG-emitting states. Additionally, climate change goals should be pursued in a manner that does not also neglect housing goals or disproportionately negatively impact disadvantaged communities. OCBC recognizes the importance of the issue of global climate change and will continue to engage in the effort to achieve equitable solutions.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

OCBC supports reasonable efforts on climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency, but it is important to pursue policies that achieve California’s environmental goals in a cost-effective manner. Protecting California’s economy and the environment for future generations are mutually desirable goals. Thus, regulatory and legislative solutions must embrace and protect both.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS

3.13	Minimizing the compliance costs by actively pushing for measures that effectively reduce carbon while allowing for continued economic growth.
3.14	The California Air Resources Board (CARB) incorporating cost effectiveness, sector equity and a consistent path to GHG reduction targets as key criteria for the adoption of program measures in the Scoping Plan. Cost effectiveness, as used here, means pursuing lower cost options and not simply placing a cost per-metric-ton price tag on a measure. To the extent that CARB is incorporating the social cost of GHGs in its cost-effectiveness calculations, CARB should also include the impacts on energy affordability. Safety measures should be included in the Scoping Plan to ensure that California’s GHG reduction program is continuously monitored based on key variables that will trigger warnings about impacts on California’s residents and businesses.
3.15	Promoting manufacturing in the state for transportation fuels and jet fuels, since importing them from locations with less stringent environmental controls only increases the world’s GHGs and the cost of energy for California consumers. Promote the development of local clean energy sources.

3.16	State-sponsored regulatory relief and incentive-based program funding, rather than mandates, for emerging technologies.
3.17	Focusing on GHG reduction strategies that support a pro-growth agenda, including adequate housing, choice and mobility solutions for a growing state population.
3.18	Adequate funding for planning and implementation of state mandates at the local level.
3.19	Environmental regulations that are developed in a way that allows for economic growth in California.
3.20	Environmental policy approaches that recognize and encourage California's leadership and innovation in the environmental arena and the pioneering of new, low-carbon technologies.
3.21	Transparency in the public process concerning development and implementation of the state's climate change agenda.
3.22	Dedicated funding and streamlined permitting to support efforts related to resilient infrastructure and climate adaptation measures, including along the critically important coastal rail corridor.
3.23	State funding and planning efforts to enable achievable pathways and commercially-available technology needed to meet zero-emissions vehicle mandates.

OCBC OPPOSES

3.24	Mandates that negatively impact California's most vulnerable populations (social equity) without appropriate mechanisms to help those communities to adapt.
3.25	Mandates or regulations not based on a scientifically derived and uniform threshold of significance for GHG emissions used in environmental analysis.
3.26	Reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as a way to limit development outside of transit-focused urban cores or impact voter-approved local transportation sales tax expenditure plans.
3.27	Mandates on business and residents that negatively limit business' options or ability to compete.

Energy

OCBC recognizes protecting California’s economy and the environment for future generations are mutually desirable goals. Thus, regulatory and legislative solutions must embrace and protect both. OCBC generally supports open and efficient markets, promoting competition, reducing costs, technology neutrality and increasing value to consumers as California transitions to a clean energy future. It is important to have reliable and diverse sources of energy that enable communities to meet California State requirements and allow businesses to have the ability to be competitive in the economy.

ELECTRIC ENERGY

OCBC supports the development of renewable electricity systems and clean energy technologies to provide jobs and boost the economy while helping the State meet its environmental goals. Orange County is well positioned to take advantage of the emerging economic opportunities that these clean energy technologies and renewable energy resources present.

NATURAL GAS, RENEWABLE AND DECARBONIZED GASES

Demand for natural gas continues to increase throughout the U.S., but supply production must keep pace with that demand, particularly for low-carbon fuels such as clean natural gas.

Renewable gas, including biomethane, hydrogen, bio syngas and synthetic natural gas (methanated hydrogen), has the potential for targeted benefits in the electric generation, residential, industrial, and transportation sectors with the potential to produce a net savings of GHG emissions. OCBC supports the development of renewable gases, including hydrogen and biomethane, in California to provide jobs and boost the state’s economy while helping the state to meet its environmental goals.

CARBON-FREE ENERGY

National, state, and local policies should support a diverse supply of carbon-free energy sources (e.g., hydro, wind, solar, geothermal and bio-gas), provide adequate transmission and distribution infrastructure systems, encourage distributed energy technology and promote the efficient use of energy.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

To advocate for reliable, stable, and competitively priced energy supplies for businesses and consumers.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 3.28 | Comprehensive and coordinated national, state and local energy policies that will address multiple energy and environmental issues as a system in order to ensure adequate supplies, reasonable pricing in order to facilitate economic growth and preserve quality of life and achieve California’s environmental goals at the lowest cost to consumers. |
|-------------|---|

3.29	A market structure that will promote realistic pricing policies, accurate price signals (that recognize cost-of-service and are devoid of cross-subsidies), market stability and access to competitively priced supplies.
3.30	A diverse resource mix that provides resilient and reliable options for meeting state mandates and does not negatively impact the ability of businesses to compete.
3.31	Continuation of direct access programs that avoids cost shifting, ensures that providers are accountable for their share of continued supply reliability, and preserves the financial viability of California's utilities.
3.32	Improvements in generation, transmission, distribution and storage infrastructure required to support future statewide growth and reserve needs (electric and gas).
3.33	Grid "intelligence" in order to integrate distributed energy resource technology and micro-grid infrastructures into the power grid.
3.34	Removal of unnecessary regulatory impediments and improvement of coordination between regulatory agencies with overlapping responsibilities to eliminate unnecessary obstacles and inconsistent regulatory findings that could negatively impact these future improvements.
3.35	The easing of barriers to maintaining, upgrading and building natural gas and dedicated hydrogen pipelines/storage facilities and electrical transmission lines.
3.36	Easing of barriers to increase in-state production of crude oil to reduce dependency for importing more than 50 percent of the state's crude oil needs from foreign countries with less stringent environmental controls than California.
3.37	Close coordination between state and local regulatory agencies to ensure responsible protections for the environment while supporting reasonable growth needs.
3.38	Improvements in demand-side energy management and conservation programs for businesses and consumers leading to more predictable load shed capabilities during periods of high energy demand.
3.39	Continued research, development and use of cleaner, alternate power sources such as co-generation/distributed generation, renewable energies and fuel cell technologies.
3.40	Distributed energy systems policies that support technologies like combined heat and power and fuel cells which provide resilient and reliable backup power.
3.41	Appropriate policies including incentives to ensure economic volumes of renewable gas, including hydrogen and renewable diesel, remain accessible.
3.42	A more participatory role for business in regulatory processes so as to promote a better understanding of rate structures upon business operations.
3.43	Ensuring policies and regulations are technology neutral, focusing on outcomes and not solutions.
3.44	Employing new and proven natural gas-based equipment and applications such as combined heat and power technologies as energy efficiency tools.

3.45	Employing new and proven electric equipment and applications such as heat pump water heaters and heat pump HVACs as energy efficiency tools and reducing regulatory barriers hindering customer adoption.
3.46	The development of carbon-free energy sources (e.g. wind, solar, hydro, renewable gas), energy storage technologies and carbon capture and storage.
3.47	Creating a safe environment by supporting an escalated enforcement process, which helps limit the damage to natural gas pipes and underground utility lines, on excavators who did not call DigAlert (811).
3.48	Support incentives to help businesses navigate California's clean energy transition. Ensure incentives are funded by appropriate sources and methods, like tax incentives and existing revenue streams (e.g., cap-and-trade revenue) and not by increasing or creating new fees or taxes.



Health Care



Health Care

The health care industry is one of the most highly regulated sectors of the economy and suffers from unsustainably low reimbursement from the government, as well as unpredictability of funding. In Orange County and throughout California, we must explore new models that will use existing resources more efficiently. The business community must partner with elected and agency officials and influential stakeholders to forge creative, consensus-based solutions to health care access and support the providers. Medi-Cal membership through CalOptima Health exploded in recent years, jumping from 745,796 in 2020 to 818,383 in 2021 and further to 893,922 as of mid-2022, for a total increase of approximately 20 percent over the past three years. All age groups saw increases in their membership over the past year. The COVID-19 pandemic was likely a major factor as a clear demonstration of the importance of health insurance.

Important policy debates, including the future of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), will continue while demographic shifts driven by the aging American population—along with rapid innovation in health care technology and scientific discovery—drive strong demand for new therapies and cures.

OCBC will also continue its focus on supporting the public health and health care priorities that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic to support the County's economic recovery.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

Promote public-private partnerships to expand affordable health care coverage for all citizens; maximize free market options and choices; and minimize mandates upon employers, insurers and providers. Identify sustainable, reliable funding sources for all initiatives and programs.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORT

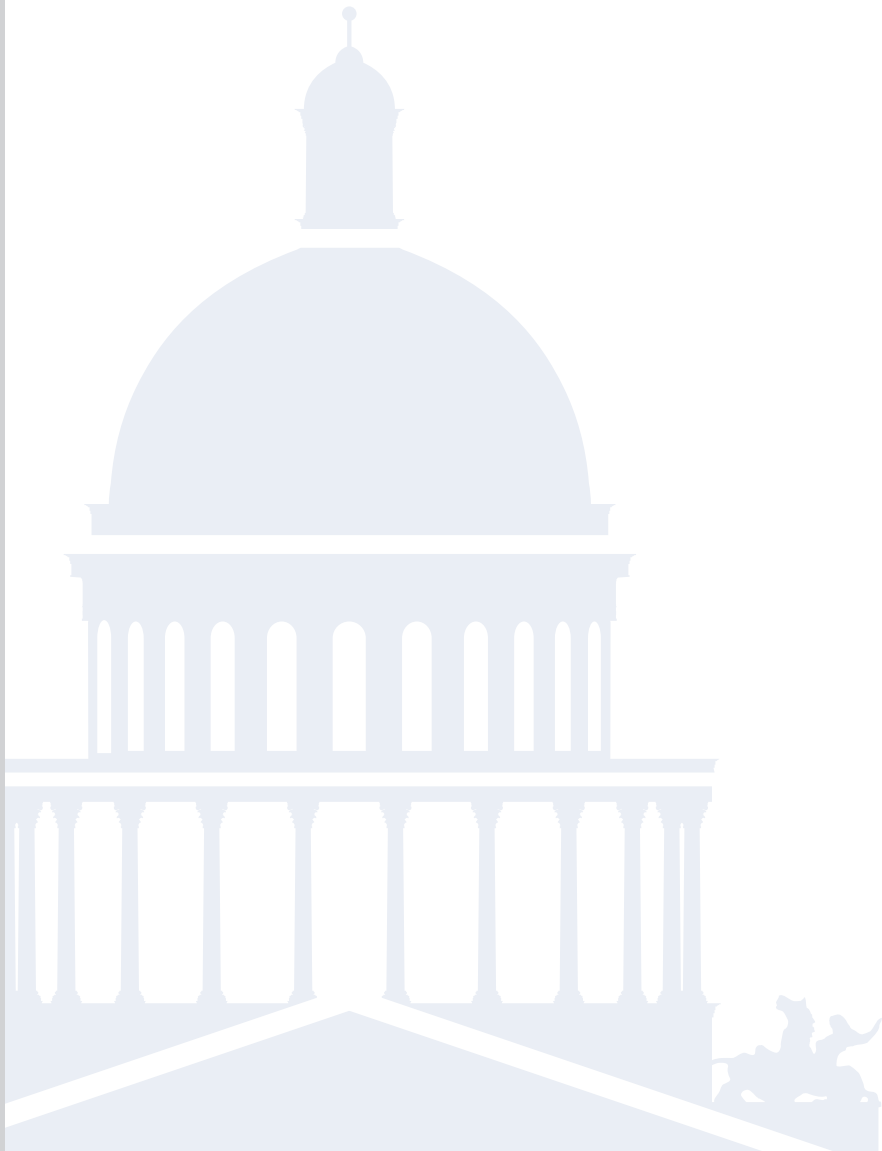
4.1	Monitoring federal efforts to modify provisions of the ACA to evaluate impacts on health care coverage for Americans and ensure collective accountability, cost transparency, timely reimbursement to health care providers and improved cost and coverage outcomes for employers and employees.
4.2	Competition in the health care market and among private-sector providers as the best means to achieve a more efficient, affordable and quality-driven health care system.
4.3	Preservation of MICRA in California and adoption of similar policies at the federal level. Restrictions on meritless lawsuits against hospitals and other providers alleging breach of government obligation to provide medical care to uninsured patients.
4.4	Reasonable, cost-based reimbursements to health care providers in voluntary, contracted relationships with governmental entities to provide health care services.

4.5	Emphasis in workforce development initiatives and the direction of workforce development funds toward solutions that will increase the number of nurses and other health professionals needed in the Orange County workforce.
4.6	Reasonable flexibilities in the California nurse/patient ratio regulations that recognize practical, workplace challenges and are consistent with the provision of quality hospital care.
4.7	State/local fiscal reforms that address property tax distribution inequities in realignment formulas in order to bring Orange County closer to parity with other counties in providing health care services to their residents.
4.8	Adequate funding to assist hospitals and medical personnel in planning for and responding to natural disasters, mass casualty incidents and other public health emergencies.
4.9	Seismic mandate relief for hospitals without the imposition of additional, unrelated regulatory burdens.
4.10	The evaluation of current health care delivery models in Orange County, with an eye toward changes and reforms leading to greater efficiencies, better patient care, expanded health care access and a sustainable system.
4.11	Policies that promote the retention and growth of California's life sciences industry, with particular emphasis on issues that affect Orange County's ability to maintain its leadership in the biopharmaceutical and medical device sector.
4.12	Development of options for employers to combine health care coverage for employees with the medical coverage provided through workers' compensation.
4.13	The alignment of policies with current research and data to support early intervention for mental and developmental health of children and adolescents.
4.14	Federal/State legislation and regulations that support innovative value-based models of care that drive health care affordability, quality and access to care for patients, employers, payers and health systems.

OCBC OPPOSES

4.15	Disparity in taxes, regulations, or mandated standards applied to private-sector health plans versus public-sector or union plans.
4.16	Mandatory staffing ratios and other unfunded mandates imposed by government agencies.
4.17	Imposition of burdensome and inflexible standards on nonprofit hospitals in order to obtain tax-exempt status and financing.
4.18	Unreasonable mandates upon employers to procure health care coverage for employees.
4.19	Mandates on hospitals and other providers to provide services at government-imposed rates (de facto, forced contracting).
4.20	Price control legislation or attempts to influence the free-market process impacting the biopharmaceutical and medical device sectors.

4.21	Mandates that require Orange County-based companies in the life sciences sector to report proprietary information to any government agency.
4.22	Legislative or regulatory attempts to establish benchmark rates to resolve out-of-network payment disputes between payers and health care providers.



Housing and Land Use



Housing and Land Use

A diverse housing market is critical to the long-term success of Orange County. Residents need a broad spectrum of housing products. Whether it's a single-family detached home or high-rise rental apartments, residents of Orange County need choices, and the cities within Orange County must plan to meet current and future housing needs. In addition, the business community needs a healthy housing market to attract and retain top talent employees. Housing growth has not kept up with demand in Orange County for decades, resulting in a severe supply shortage, while simultaneously the development of new housing faces persistent regulatory and community barriers.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

Public policy and regulatory frameworks should promote the highest and best land use practices for meeting California's housing, community infrastructure, recreation, business facility, and open space needs while preserving the quality of life in California.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS

5.1	Incentives to local governments to encourage overall increases to the housing supply, housing affordability and choices of home types for a variety of families and workers.
5.2	State and local fiscal reform to permit cities and counties to make land use decisions based upon good planning principles, rather than upon potential tax revenue generation or cost of service issues. Address funding formulas that are unfair to Orange County and establish a nexus between sources of funding and services and programs funded.
5.3	Ongoing efforts to ensure that construction disputes are addressed outside of the court system.
5.4	Limits on taxes, fees and assessments that unfairly burden new homes and new homebuyers with costs for community-wide infrastructure (e.g., roads, water, sewer, school) needs.
5.5	Legislative and regulatory incentives for the development of for-sale and rental housing near existing jobs and high job growth areas.
5.6	Protection of large-scale master planned communities and associated entitlements.
5.7	Housing bonds within state capacity limits.
5.8	Public-private partnerships to provide affordable, transitional and emergency housing.

5.9	Fair and economically sensible land use and zoning policies based on the most accurate state, regional and local housing needs projections to achieve a reasonable balance between residential and commercial uses as well as an appropriate jobs-housing mix that takes advantage of opportunities for transit-oriented development, infill, high-density and mixed-use development.
5.10	Creative approaches to re-purpose land for housing, business and mixed-use purposes, as well as complementary to the existing neighborhoods and surrounding communities.
5.11	Collaborative land use decision-making processes that permit and encourage business community input.
5.12	Legislation to develop a permanent source of funding for affordable housing.

OCBC OPPOSES

5.13	“Prevailing wage” requirements and other legislative and regulatory barriers to the construction of housing for working professionals and their families.
5.14	Unfair application of zoning laws, including instances when businesses are unreasonably or unfairly treated.
5.15	Urban limit lines, moratoriums, and other measures that stifle housing creation, economic development or goods movement.
5.16	Any form of rent control.
5.17	State and local adoption of inclusionary zoning.
5.18	Comprehensive ballot-box land use planning that contradicts “good planning” or contributes to a constrained housing supply for a growing workforce.
5.19	Policies designed to empower no-growth advocates with tools that aid the denial of housing projects.



Workforce Development

Workforce Development

Fostering continued economic growth in Orange County requires a capable workforce that sustains and enhances growth and development. Workforce development and education are key to supplying industry with the necessary pool of talent that drives innovation and prosperity as trends suggest an intensifying skills gap. While Orange County's public schools perform significantly better than state and national indicators, educational improvements are required to develop a knowledgeable, high-performing workforce for competitive advantage. OCBC research indicates the skills gap is inhibiting Orange County's established and growing innovation, entrepreneurial and technology clusters. These gaps occur at all levels, but a strong focus is needed on "middle skill" jobs, which require post-secondary education, but not necessarily a university degree. Systematic research at the regional level is required to both quantify these gaps and craft effective responses. The impacts on education and changing workforce trends as a result of COVID-19 must also be taken into account as the Orange County economy recovers from the pandemic's effects.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

Orange County needs a highly-qualified, well-educated workforce and a robust educational system developing a talent pipeline prepared for productive jobs in a knowledge-based economy while supporting the needs of Orange County's employers in today's workplace.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS	
Overall	
6.1	Annual assessments on worker shortages and industry growth patterns in Orange County across diverse business sectors.
6.2	Public-private partnerships with business to support education programs through nonprofits to fill the workforce gaps.
6.3	Collaboration on the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and Local Control Funding Formula to ensure students are college and career ready.
6.4	Successful and fiscally responsible implementation of a cradle-to-career longitudinal data system.
6.5	Developing more nimble models for educational institutions to respond to the rapid changes in economic and workforce trends.
6.6	A reorientation of education institutions at all levels to prioritize the development of skills and competencies for students to be career ready upon graduation.

6.7	Facilitation of more students pursuing career technical education in diverse industry sectors, especially career sectors that face worker shortages.
6.8	Investment in the modernization of school facilities at the primary, secondary and collegiate levels to make them more suitable for a 21st century learning environment.
6.9	Partnerships between industry and academia for internships, apprenticeships, job shadowing, and externships to provide a global workforce perspective.
6.10	Increased teacher development in enriched curriculum, particularly in career technical education disciplines.
6.11	Innovative strategies and methods to better teach English-language learners and close the achievement and opportunity gaps.

Federal

6.12	Sustained federal funding for critical basic research.
6.13	Sustained federal funding for Small Business Innovation Research Programs (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer Programs.

State

6.14	Increased access to early childhood education and successful and fiscally responsible implementation of universal preschool to assist in lowering the achievement and opportunity gaps.
6.15	Commitment to fund higher education at the appropriate levels to absorb increased enrollment growth and return to a more stable funding policy for students and California's higher education system, while continued efficient stewardship of appropriated resources and expansion of revenue generating endeavors are achieved.
6.16	State school bonds to match local dollars for school facilities.
6.17	Funding for student support services geared towards timely degree completion.
6.18	Sustainable funding for regional career technical education programs—from elementary school through college and adult retraining—to respond to changes in the economic and workplace environments.
6.19	Expanded English-language programs for employees and job-seekers coupled with digital literacy so non-native English speakers develop the skills that increase their chances of employability.
6.20	Streamlining teacher and administrator certification, including alternative avenues to expand the pool of high-quality teachers and administrators.
6.21	Partnerships and collaboration that would assist schools in providing broadband and devices for online instruction to occur anywhere.
6.22	Updating the California State University per student funding formulas to ensure equitable funding amongst all 23 campuses in the system.

6.23	Inclusion of financial literacy in the K-12 school curriculum.
6.24	Support of Career and College Access Pathways or Dual Enrollment programs that allow students grades 7-12 to take community college courses that count toward required credit for Associates and Bachelor's degrees.
Local	
6.25	Locally-determined priorities and implementation strategies for attaining and exceeding statewide academic standards.
6.26	Emphasis on 21st century skills such as written and verbal communication skills, teamwork, problem solving, time management, employability skills, literacy and life-long learning.
6.27	Continued support of programs like OC Pathways that foster collaboration between universities, community colleges, and K-12 schools, as well as occupational training programs, businesses, workforce investment boards and others involved in workforce preparedness, to develop programs that respond to employer and labor market needs and to ease matriculation between educational institutions.
6.28	Assisting educational providers and Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) to strategically align available funding with research outcomes and projections that respond to both the current and future employment and training needs of businesses.
6.29	Internships, field studies, service learning and workplace-centered opportunities for students at all levels, including graduate students.
6.30	Highly trained and appropriately compensated teachers, faculty, staff and administrators.
6.31	Workplace externships for teachers to refresh skills in their discipline.
6.32	Support and funding for programs that offer training, retooling and reskilling of the current workforce and provide students with the digital literacy upon graduation to be competitive in the global economy, including the development of a Regional Training Center for Orange County.

Immigration

Immigration has a significant impact on California’s economy, affecting both the labor force and the movement of goods. America’s current immigration system is broken, however, and does not meet the needs of residents or businesses. Immigration reform is especially important to California as approximately 1.1 million of the estimated 2 million undocumented immigrants in California are working and contributing to the state’s economy.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

Recognizing that a talented workforce is a key driver of the economy, OCBC seeks to bring increased focus on the critical challenge of improving access to top international talent. OCBC promotes increased availability of legal immigration and immigrant investment as a way to improve long-term economic competitiveness. Comprehensive immigration reform legislation that includes a carefully monitored guest worker program, which provides Orange County businesses with a higher-skilled and lower-skilled labor pool, is necessary to compete in today’s marketplace. The federal government, not businesses, has primary responsibility for enforcing immigration laws.

POSITIONS

OCBC SUPPORTS

6.33	A bipartisan solution in Congress that will improve border security to effectively target those who pose security threats to our country.
6.34	Temporary worker programs to meet the needs of employers for high- and low-skilled jobs that cannot be filled by U.S. workers.
6.35	Combining enforcement of employment verification with 100 percent reliable employment eligibility information (E-Verify).
6.36	An earned pathway to legal status for undocumented workers.
6.37	Protecting Dreamers, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) recipients, and employment-authorized H-4 dependent spouses from losing their work authorization.

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