

# around the table

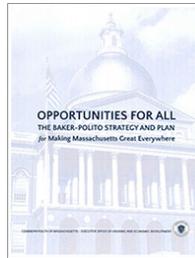
## 2016 Legislative Wrap-Up

### ECONOMY

## Roundtable Supports Major Priorities Contained in Economic Development Legislation

The Roundtable urged Senate and House leaders to adopt economic development legislation that improves the state's long-term competitiveness in the global economy. Roundtable priorities included:

- \$45 million in capital funding to invest in new equipment and technology to strengthen vocational technical education across the state;
- new state tax deduction—similar to those in 34 other states—for contributions made to 529 college savings plans;
- greater diversity on the advisory committee guiding the state's work to increase access to computer science education through the Massachusetts Computing Attainment Network; and,
- new early college high school program to create a unique pathway for students working toward an associate degree or other professional certificates.



**These initiatives were included in the final bill, along with a series of other incentives and programs to spur economic development across the state.** The Roundtable also strongly opposed a provision in the Senate bill authorizing the Inspector General to create a new office that would review tax incentives—a function already performed by the Department of Revenue—which was not included in the final bill.

## Roundtable Supports Pay Equity Legislation Signed by Governor Charlie Baker

Roundtable members have identified equity and diversity as essential elements of a healthy, productive and successful workplace. The new pay equity law signed by Governor Charlie Baker strikes a careful balance between the workers it seeks to protect and the employers who would have to implement it. The Roundtable commends the Legislature, Attorney General Healey, AIM and our colleagues in the business community for thoughtfully addressing this important social and economic issue. **MBR is pleased to support this new law.**



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Special thanks to Roundtable members and our partners throughout state government and the business community.

### ENERGY



## Roundtable Advocates for Member-Driven Principles in Energy Legislation

Guided by the principles established by the Roundtable's Energy Task Force, the Roundtable worked collaboratively with other business groups to advocate for clean, reliable and cost effective energy resources for customers and employers across the state. The final version of energy legislation adopted by the Legislature calls for 2,800 megawatts of offshore wind and hydroelectric power obtained through competitive procurements consistent with our principles supporting a balanced, regional, competitive approach to achieve the goals of the Global Warming Solutions Act. The bill also did not include several measures we opposed, such as a doubling of the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard and language that would have limited the state's ability to expand access to cheap natural gas. Both measures would have driven up costs.

The Roundtable advocated strongly with policy makers and leaders in the Baker Administration to focus attention on the high cost of electricity while positioning the state to create a path toward a more reliable, sustainable energy future that includes increased energy efficiency, innovative distributed generation and storage technologies, cost effective renewable energy, and expanded natural gas capacity. A coalition of business organizations communicated directly with legislative leaders.

**"In short, we support public policy that provides reliable, sustainable, affordable energy resources for consumers and businesses enabling the state to meet the needs of a growing economy and the goals of the Global Warming Solutions Act in the most cost-effective way possible."**

## EDUCATION



### Roundtable Advocates for Lifting Cap on Public Charter Schools in Massachusetts

The Roundtable has long supported expanding the innovative practices at charter schools, which provide families with increased opportunities for their children.

MBR was proud to join the launch event at the State House in July as a member of the Great Schools Massachusetts Coalition. During a downpour outside the State House, Governor Charlie Baker said, "For too many children and families in Massachusetts, it has been raining for a very long time."

The coalition includes "a bipartisan group of parents, educators, community leaders, elected officials, education advocates, business community leaders, and other advocates for public charter schools" that launched a ballot campaign "to bring fair access to public charter schools to thousands of students in the Commonwealth." For more information visit the Yes on 2 Campaign website: [www.yeson2ma.com](http://www.yeson2ma.com).

**Strengthening education and workforce development remains a top priority for Roundtable members.**

## ECONOMY

### Bill on Non-Competition Agreements Does Not Pass Legislature

The Roundtable made a major pitch to leaders in the House, Senate and the Baker-Polito Administration to adopt compromise language regarding non-compete agreements put forward by the House of Representatives. The House bill included

significant new protections for low-income workers, added new restrictions on the duration of the agreements and prior notice given to employees before signing one, and included a "garden leave" provision that would have ensured employees were paid 50% of their salary while they were unable to work, as long as they didn't previously receive some mutually agreed upon compensation. **The House compromise legislation recognized that Massachusetts employers need flexibility and legal options to protect intellectual property, and protected the rights of both employers and workers.**

The Roundtable supported the House compromise bill. Ultimately, however, the House and Senate could not reach an agreement.



### Roundtable Member Jay Gonzalez and MBR Executive Director JD Chesloff Op-Ed on Early Education

Roundtable members voted unanimously during the March 2016 Board meeting to make improving early education and care a priority within MBR's education and workforce development policy advocacy. House Speaker Robert DeLeo convened a new Early Education and Care Business Advisory Group—that includes Roundtable member Jay Gonzalez and MBR Executive Director JD Chesloff—to begin providing systems and management expertise, strategic guidance, and data-based programmatic and financial advice focused on the critical needs of the early education and care workforce.

The MetroWest Daily News recently published an op-ed highlighting the challenges and opportunities associated with strengthening both the quality of early education and access to affordable programs. Here is an excerpt from the op-ed:

**"Why are business leaders beginning to see early childhood education as critical to workforce development? Because the data makes clear that it is.**

*Research shows that participation in high-quality, pre-K programs increases a child's likelihood of graduating from high school, graduating from college and being employed. If children start school ready to learn, they are twice as likely to read at grade level by age 8. If children read at grade level by age 8, they are four times more likely to graduate from high school. Those who participate in high quality early childhood programs are twice as likely to attend college.*

*In other words, quality early childhood education increases the talent pool available to meet employers' workforce needs. It also gives our children a better shot at succeeding in school and being qualified for good job opportunities that exist."*

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