

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

At the beginning of 2023, the Commonwealth welcomed a new Administration, celebrating an historic first of having an all women executive team leading Massachusetts. The Roundtable has worked closely with the Administration and Legislature toward our member-driven priorities around talent and competitiveness. This Mid-Year Highlights report summarizes some of the activities the team has been up to in the first half of 2023.

It's also been a period of change. I want to express my sincere thanks to former Roundtable staffers Lauren Jones, who earlier this year was named as the state's Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development, and Claire Cooper, who joined The Partnership as Vice President for Business Development. Both left an indelible impression on both me and the Roundtable and I am grateful for their friendship. And thank you to Tonja Mettlach, our new Executive Vice President, for hitting the ground running and for her partnership in making much of the progress in this report possible.

Thank you to the Roundtable members for your ideas and engagement on many of the biggest issues impacting the Commonwealth. We look forward to the work ahead and seeing you at upcoming events!



JD CHESLOFF



ADVOCACY AT THE STATE HOUSE

Using the Roundtable's [Talent Agenda](#) as a framework, and with our member-driven message, we have focused on engaging the Healey-Driscoll Administration and the Legislature on policy priorities, investments, and solutions that help attract, retain, develop, and diversify the Commonwealth's talent pool.

KEY PRIORITIES

- » **Education:** The Roundtable [testified](#) at a Joint Ways and Means Committee hearing supporting investments in early childhood education, early college, STEM education, career and technical education, and community college.
- » **Housing:** The Roundtable submitted [testimony](#) supporting the creation of a Housing Secretariat, supporting the "intentional focus on housing... and the promise it brings to address shared priorities such as increasing housing production, reducing regulatory barriers, and easing the path to homeownership." The Housing Secretariat was created effective June 1, 2023.
- » **Tax:** The Roundtable submitted [testimony](#) supporting the Governor's tax legislation as a starting point noting that "tax policies impact residents, workers, small businesses, and larger employers, and contribute to the cost of doing business in Massachusetts. Therefore, tax policy must be a key consideration in the state's short- and long-term competitiveness strategy to improve the state's attractiveness for both employers and employees, particularly in the wake of the passage of the constitutional amendment to increase taxes on income over \$1 million."
- » **Workforce:** The Roundtable submitted [testimony](#) in support of investments in the FY24 budget that center on attracting, retaining, developing, and diversifying our talent pool and pipeline to meet the needs of the current and future economy.

PERSPECTIVE FROM THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Massachusetts Can Win in the New World of Work

Building on the 2021 and 2022 Future of Work Surveys, the Roundtable in collaboration with McKinsey & Co., surveyed and interviewed members in April and May 2023 to gain the latest insight on the drivers influencing their talent and economic competitiveness. Two themes emerged from the [2023 Talent and Competitiveness Survey](#)—the economy and the workforce—and there are encouraging signs for both. Media coverage has included: [The Boston Globe](#) and the [Boston Business Journal](#).

69% of survey respondents say their ability to attract/retain diverse and world-class talent is the key factor to stay in the state

The survey highlights four key priorities for employers and the state:

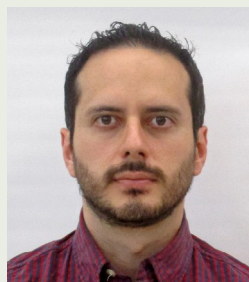
- **Invest in talent—the core of Massachusetts’ competitiveness:** For 69% of survey respondents, their ability to attract and retain diverse and world-class talent in Massachusetts is the key factor influencing their decision to stay in the state over the next 1–2 years.
- **Align skills training with employer needs:** The skills selected as “most critical” by respondents were problem-solving, creativity, critical thinking, team management, and interpersonal and emotional skills. On the other hand, less than 40% of respondents selected technical, software, or functional expertise as the most critical skills for their sectors.
- **Promote policies to attract and retain employers and employees to the state:** About 79% of respondents are concerned about inflation and a recession over the next 1–2 years, while 76% of those expect these to hurt their profits and 52% to impact their talent pipeline.
- **Keep experimenting with the new world of work:** The vast majority of respondents, 96%, allow some form of hybrid work, with only 4% requiring full in-person presence. With these changes, 47% of respondents plan to reduce their overall real estate footprint here, an acceleration compared to 36% in 2022.

Economic Development Planning Council

JD Chesloff was named to represent the Roundtable on the state’s [Economic Development Planning Council](#), a group convened every four years to “craft a strategic plan to guide the Massachusetts economic development policy.” In addition, the Council has formed various Working Groups to further its work. JD has also been asked to serve as “Captain” of the Climate Working Group and Tonja Mettlach has been invited to participate in the Higher Education Working Group. This is a great opportunity to advance the work of the Roundtable’s [Talent Agenda](#) and [Talent & Competitiveness Survey](#), and incorporate the competitiveness messages, ideas, and data from Roundtable members into the state’s economic development strategy.

ROUNDTABLE WELCOMES NEW POLICY FELLOWS

The Roundtable is thrilled to be hosting two policy fellows this summer. Please join us in welcoming Christian Rodas, Doctoral Candidate, UMass Lowell Global Studies Program and Rebecca Yemo, Doctoral Candidate, UMass Boston Global Governance and Human Security Program. Christian is a Civic Action Program (CAP) Summer Fellow and Rebecca was a CAP Summer Fellow in 2021 and is returning this summer as a Policy and Operations Fellow.



CHRISTIAN RODAS



REBECCA YEMO

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



CONNECTIONS & CONVERSATIONS

The Roundtable appreciates hosting forums that bring together members and colleagues from member companies on timely topics of importance to the business community. Thank you to all the guest speakers who joined the Roundtable so far in 2023 during monthly Open Forums and Board meetings:

- Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll
- Boston Mayor Michelle Wu
- Massachusetts Secretary of Administration and Finance Matt Gorzkowicz
- Massachusetts Secretary of Economic Development Yvonne Hao
- Massachusetts Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Lauren Jones
- Doug Howgate, Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation

EXPANDING THE TABLE

The Roundtable and our member companies continue to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace by:

- In January, the Roundtable was honored to serve as a member of the host committee for Latino Leaders' Magazine C-Suite and Board of Directors Forum, a program hosted to discuss advancement opportunities for Latinos on Boards and in executive leadership. Fellow Host Committee Members included Roundtable members John Capone from KPMG and State Street, represented by Yvonne Garcia, and the convening featured a powerful lineup of business leaders including Roundtable members Bob Rivers of Eastern Bank and Lucy Perez of McKinsey & Co., as well as Roundtable partner Phyllis Barajas from Conexión.
- In March, the Roundtable hosted Tanisha M. Sullivan, Esq., President of the NAACP Boston, at our monthly Open Forum. At the Open Forum, members learned about the NAACP National Convention being hosted in Boston this summer and opportunities for business community engagement.
- In April, the Roundtable participated in a discussion with the White House Task Force on New Americans (TFNA). The roundtable discussion focused on issues related to workforce training and development for refugees and new Americans, including increasing knowledge and skills, enhancing education and training opportunities, addressing barriers to employment, and expanding workers' rights education, all which is aligned with the Roundtable's Talent Agenda.
- The Roundtable continues to enjoy a collaborative personal and organizational relationship with Conexión, a professional development organization for mid-career Latina and Latino professionals. JD has served as a mentor in the program for the past five years, and this year has been paired with Haile Hernandez, the Head of Social Determinants of Health Strategy-Health Equity at Point32Health.

OPED AND BLOGS

Over the past several months, the Roundtable team has been active on our blog and submitting quotes and OpEds to various media outlets. A sampling of the important topics the Roundtable has been providing leadership on include:

- [Growing MA's Labor Market: Why Immigrants Should be Part of the Solution](#)
- [Perspectives from the Annual Meeting of State Roundtables](#)
- [Competitiveness is the Key: Here's What's Needed](#)

STAY ENGAGED!

Would you or your company like to engage on initiatives to support education and workforce development pathways that bring value back to your business? Ask the Roundtable for more information about:



Join a growing network of stakeholders dedicated to advancing pathways to college for high school students through Early College programming. Employer feedback and partnership is valuable!

Massachusetts Apprentice Network

Connect with employers with experience and best practices to help your business create, implement, scale, and promote apprenticeship models that work best for your company. You may also be eligible for state funding!

MASSTALENT

MassTalent: The recently launched [MassTalent](#) is a one-stop front door for companies to access multiple talent pipelines in high-growth industries like the life sciences, clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and healthcare.