

Making Massachusetts More Competitive

Throughout the 2023–2024 legislative session, Roundtable members have made it clear—through surveys, conversations, and actions—the state’s high cost of living and doing business, and the troubling outmigration trends, are negatively impacting the state’s competitiveness.

At the Roundtable, our public policy priorities and advocacy continue to address these trends in pursuit of our mission of making Massachusetts the most desirable place to live, work, and do business. The policy priorities summarized here are designed to improve Massachusetts’ competitive position in a global economy.

We are grateful for the leadership and engagement of Roundtable members as we continue this work.

Housing

Housing Bond Bill: The Governor signed the largest housing bond bill in the state’s history, a priority of the Roundtable this session. The nearly **\$5.2B bill** will support the production, preservation, and rehabilitation of more than **65,000** homes statewide over the next five years.


 MORE THAN
65,000
 HOMES

Education and Workforce

Early Education Investments: Historic investments in early childhood education were made, as well as the creation of a new public-private partnership program—developed by the Roundtable and the **Massachusetts Business Coalition for Early Childhood Education**—designed to support employers in providing quality care options to their employees.

In-state Tuition: A Roundtable-supported proposal was passed to allow in-state tuition to immigrants without legal status who have attended a Massachusetts high school for at least three years and graduated or obtained their GED here.

Workforce Development:

Roundtable advocacy in partnership with leading workforce and education coalitions helped to ensure continued investments for student pathways, job training, incumbent worker upskilling, and more resources, especially for unemployed and underemployed jobseekers.

“We must collectively commit to solutions to address the mounting cost pressures, the persistent outmigration of our talent, and demographics that show slowing population growth in our state.”

JD Chesloff, CommonWealth Beacon

Opposition to MCAS: The Roundtable collaborated with business groups, employers, and other stakeholders in opposition to a proposal to eliminate MCAS as a graduation requirement.

Taxes

Tax Bill: This session, the Commonwealth passed its first tax relief bill in 20 years. The final bill, which the Roundtable supported, included changes to help businesses and families address competitiveness and affordability issues.



AMPLIFYING THE EMPLOYER VOICE

Boards, Commissions, and Coalitions

The Roundtable represented members on important boards, commissions, and coalitions on issues impacting talent and the state's competitiveness including:

- ClimaTech Advisory Board
- Commission on Energy Infrastructure Siting and Permitting
- Economic Development Planning Council
- Energy Transformation Advisory Board
- Free Community College Advisory Committee
- MA Alliance for Early College
- MA Apprenticeship Network
- MassHire State Workforce Board
- MassSkills Coalition
- Special Legislative Commission to Study Poverty in the Commonwealth
- Student Pathways Coalition
- Workforce Solutions Group

In addition, the Roundtable was named to three additional commissions in the FY25 budget:

- Community College Performance Funding Formula Review Commission
- Early Education and Care Data Advisory Commission
- Task Force to Improve the Quality and Affordability of Higher Education in the Commonwealth

Media/Communications

OpEd: **Competitiveness is the key: Here's what's needed**, Commonwealth Beacon (JAN 2023)

OpEd: **Massachusetts can win in the new world of work**, Commonwealth Beacon (JUNE 2023)

OpEd: **Foreign-educated immigrants can strengthen the Mass. economy**, Commonwealth Beacon (OCT 2023)

Co-authored OpEd: **The moral and economic case for addressing health inequities**, Boston Business Journal (OCT 2023)

Co-authored an OpEd: **Business community ready to help on housing crisis**, Commonwealth Beacon (JAN 2024)

Co-authored OpEd: **Getting sidelined talent into the game**, Boston Business Journal (JAN 2024)

OpEd: **Bet on Massachusetts**, Commonwealth Beacon (MAY 2024)

Co-authored OpEd: **Why it is urgent for Mass. employers to build new talent pipelines**, MassLive (July 2024)

LOOKING AHEAD

While the formal legislative session has come to an end, work remains on two Roundtable priorities that have not passed the finish line. We will continue to work with legislative leadership and the Healey-Driscoll Administration to support the passage of the **Economic Development Bill** and a critical **Siting and Permitting Bill**.