

2023 Washington, D.C. Fly-In



For the first time since the pandemic, the nation's capital was open for business without COVID restrictions. The Cobb Chamber took full advantage by bringing a delegation of 40 business and community leaders to the Hill for meetings with our congressional delegation and members of the federal government Sept. 13 – 15, 2023.

This document highlights the accomplishments that our participants achieved during our time in the nation's capital. It is our hope that you will share with your team to illustrate the return on investment for your participation.

Collaborating with our members, the annual Washington Fly-in is one of the best examples of how the Chamber advocates and works in partnership to enhance our state's business climate. During our time together on "The Hill," we jointly present our federal legislative agenda as approved by the Cobb Chamber Board of Directors. Our goal is to help our attendees make valuable connections with members of Cobb County's congressional delegation, federal officials, and each other. This annual trip is one of the many ways the Chamber presents a united voice for Cobb's business community to our elected officials and civic leaders at the local, state, and federal levels.

The Chamber cannot provide opportunities such as this without the support and investment of our sponsors. We thank Freeman Mathis Decisions and The Home Depot for being our co-presenting sponsors. In addition, we thank Cumberland Community Improvement District and Town Center Community Improvement District for their transportation sponsorship and the following event and program sponsors: Arylessence, Croy Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology, Kennesaw State University, Lockheed Martin, Metro Atlanta Chamber and RaceTrac.

2023 Event Recap

While in Washington D.C., the Cobb Chamber delegation exhibited a strong commitment to representing our 2,700 member organizations comprehensively. Their efforts encompassed a range of critical issues, including fostering a resilient economy; responsible investments in infrastructure and transportation enhancements; a renewed focus on healthcare options for businesses; as well as safeguarding the vitality of our military resources and the continued support of the surrounding defense community.

During meetings with elected officials and federal agency representatives, Chamber President & CEO Sharon Mason and 2023 Board Chair Greg Teague, along with fellow Chamber delegates, effectively conveyed the essential messages outlined in our 2023 Federal Legislative Agenda. Moreover, they provided copies of this agenda to key personnel within the offices of senators and congressional members, fostering productive discussions. Below, we summarize the feedback and communication received from members of our congressional delegation.

Wednesday, September 13

KICK-OFF LUNCHEON

Upon arrival in D.C., the delegation met at The Willard Hotel for a networking luncheon to meet attendees and hear remarks from Greg Teague, Sharon Mason and our two CID Executive Directors Kim Menefee and Tracy Styf. Amanda Seals, Cobb Chamber's Executive Vice President of Advocacy and Government Relations, set the tone for the upcoming two-days of meetings.

Fresh off the August recess, the Congress was working hard on 12 appropriations measures as well as the reauthorization of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The time spent in our nation's capital city would include commentary about how the Congress could possibly shut down if a budget agreement was not reached by the start of its new fiscal year – Oct. 1.

GEORGIA CHAMBER WASHINGTON, D.C. FLY-IN

After lunch, the Cobb Chamber delegation headed straight to the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center to join the Georgia Chamber for its Washington, D.C. Fly-In meetings. The agenda included:

- Transportation & Infrastructure Federal Update by U.S. Representative Mike Collins (GA-10), U.S. Representative Sam Graves (MO-06), Moderated by: Seth Millican, Executive Director, Georgia Transportation Alliance
- Supply Chain Update by Andrew Petrisin, Supply Chain Advisor, U.S. Department of Transportation
- National Security in the Present Social, Political & Economic Environment by U.S. Representative Austin Scott (GA-08)
- Remarks from U.S. Senator Reverend Raphael Warnock (D-GA)
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce Political Update by Ashlee Rich Stephenson, Senior Political Strategist & Consultant, Political Affairs & Issue Advocacy, U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce Legislative Update by Ron Eidshaug, Vice President & Chief of Staff, Government Affairs, U.S. Chamber of Commerce



FLY-IN RECEPTION AND DINNER

The day of travel and back-to-back speakers concluded with the annual Cobb Chamber Reception and Dinner for members of our congressional delegation and staff. This year, the group dined at The Monocle, the closest restaurant to the U.S. Capitol building with a 50-year history.”

Congressman Barry Loudermilk and former Georgia Congressman Kwanza Hall along with the following staffers mixed and mingled with Cobb’s business delegation.

Chief of Staff and Legislative Directors:

- Anna Cullen, Office of Senator Ossoff, Legislative Director
- Josh Delaney, Office of Senator Warnock, Legislative Director
- Rob Adkerson, Office of Congressman Loudermilk, Chief of Staff
- Dominic de Bernardo, Office of Congresswoman Greene, Legislative Director

Additional Congressional Staff:

- Chris Devine, Budget and Appropriations Director, House Transportation, and Infrastructure Committee
- Joe Herrbach, Legislative Assistant, Office of Senator Warnock
- Eric Johnson, Senior Advisor, Military Affairs, Office of Congressman Loudermilk
- Travis Loudermilk, District Director, Office of Congresswoman Greene
- Gavin Thompson, Field Representative, Office of Congresswoman Greene

We thank our reception sponsor, RaceTrac, and dinner sponsors Arylessence and the Metro Atlanta Chamber along with Freeman Mathis Decisions and The Home Depot, our presenting sponsors, for an amazing night of great food, laughter, and fellowship.



Thursday, September 14

The day started early for our delegation with breakfast and meetings at The Willard prior to heading to the House side of the U.S. Capitol building for a day full of meetings.

MAJ. GEN. C. MCCAULEY VON HOFFMAN



The first speaker of the day was selected to complement our Team Dobbins' efforts. While Lt. Gen Healy, our usual host in Washington, D.C. was at NATO, he sent Maj. Gen. C. McCauley von Hoffman to meet with us. She is the Deputy to the Chief of Air Force Reserve, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Virginia, who serves as the Principal Adviser on Reserve matters to the Secretary of the Air Force and Air Force Chief of Staff. She facilitates matters pertaining to the oversight of Air Force Reserve appropriations for personnel, operations and maintenance, and construction programs for a force of more than 70,000 personnel.

During her time, she discussed the rally in the Pacific, a training activity for the USAF with five C-130s in training mode in preparation for future threats. In addition, she touched upon the recruiting and retention efforts of the USAF and the reserves as service in all branches of the U.S. military is on the decline. She covered the topic of China and the threat the military is watching closely from supply chain issues to controlling ports and international influence.

In response to questions from Greg Teague and Pam Younker, she discussed the need for new C-130Js along with the Chamber's position on advocating for the availability of TRICARE Reserve Select Insurance for Air Force Reservists, who are also federal civilian employees, which comprises a large portion of the population in Cobb County.



SARA JORDAN Director of Intergovernmental Affairs for Infrastructure Implementation for the White House

Due to conflicts with the ongoing appropriations negotiations, a few of our speakers scheduled for Thursday were switched out. However, their substitutes did not disappoint. First up, Sara Jordan, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs for Infrastructure Implementation for the White House, replaced Ryan Berni, Senior Advisor in the same office, covered implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), aka Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). She fielded questions from Cobb DOT Director Drew Raessler in applying for grants under the IIJA, as well as gave tips to members of the audience as to what the White House would be looking for in community applications such as creating access to neighborhoods and communities in the region.



U.S. Capitol Meetings

The late morning and afternoon were spent at the U.S. Capitol as Congressman Barry Loudermilk reserved one of the committee rooms for our speaker series. We express gratitude to him and his staff for the red-carpet treatment they give our delegation year after year.

CONGRESSMAN BARRY LOUDERMILK

During the dinner gathering the previous evening, our delegation had the opportunity to engage with Congressman Loudermilk and several of his key staff members in a relaxed setting. However, during our time with him at the Capitol building, Congressman Loudermilk provided a comprehensive briefing on the issues he is actively addressing, in addition to an update on the current developments within his district.

A substantial portion of the discussion revolved around the House's concerted efforts to address the issue of regulatory overreach by federal agencies. This has led to a proliferation of bureaucratic hurdles that impact the operational efficiency of businesses and local government entities. Congressman Loudermilk delved into the regulatory concerns articulated by Ron King, representing Capital City Bank, offering a thorough analysis of these complex challenges.



Furthermore, Congressman Loudermilk addressed the matter of the Research and Development (R&D) tax credit, a topic that has garnered significant attention from the Chamber and key businesses in attendance, including Global Payments and Arylescence. Notably, Congressman Loudermilk is actively collaborating with his colleagues to develop a bipartisan solution to the R&D amortization issue. In September, the House is crafting a new, clean legislative proposal with the shared objective of achieving passage by the conclusion of the calendar year.

CONGRESSMAN RICH MCCORMICK

Bouncing between committee meetings and votes, Cobb's newest Congressman joined the group to discuss issues that he has been working on since being sworn into office. With his appointment on the House Armed Services Committee, Team Dobbins Co-Chair Pam Younker addressed several key needs of our military and defense community, including supporting current and future mission opportunities, opposing continuing resolutions for the federal budget, and supporting updating the latest aircraft needs.



U.S. SENATOR JON OSSOFF

Senator Ossoff joined the group after lunch and hit upon a variety of topics that he and his staff are tackling on behalf of the state. He applauded the Skilled Workforce Act and how Georgia is already leading the way with its technical college system and college and career academy network to educate and train the next generation of workers. He touched upon the dynamics in Washington, D.C. with the current dynamics in the House but stressed the bipartisan nature of the Senate. He reiterated the work he and his colleagues are doing to pass the 12 appropriations bills needed to keep the government open and funded.

Stephen Vault of Wellstar on behalf of the healthcare partners on the trip thanked the Senator for his efforts on the budget and stressed the need for the bipartisan delay of the Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) cuts scheduled to begin in October, as the Medicaid DSH program is critical to maintaining access to essential care for low-income, uninsured, and Medicaid patients.

Other topics discussed included the IIJA and the projects coming to the county through those funding mechanisms; new mission sets for Dobbins AFRB and insurance for our reservists; and bipartisan efforts in the senate to address the R&D tax credit issue.



CONGRESSMAN DREW FERGUSON

A seventh generation Georgian, the delegation had an opportunity to hear for the first time from Congressman Drew Ferguson. Congressman Ferguson holds pivotal positions on the House Ways and Means and House Budget committees, both of paramount importance to our county's interests.

The Congressman shared with the group areas around workforce development and how social security and Medicare funding will only get worse if people are not earning a paycheck. He highlighted how the American tax code gives us a global advantage as we have cutting-edge investments in innovation and R&D. He focused on how

our economy is drastically changing as we introduce more digital technology, and there is a strong need to update the current tax code to catch up with our new economy, but to also keep it as American as possible. He highlighted how there are some in Congress and the administration that wish to conform to a global tax code, which in his opinion would be detrimental to our advancement.

Congressman Ferguson entertained questions from the audience including Sheriff Craig Owens who asked for his thoughts on public safety spending. He touched upon the current mental health crisis and how jails are also becoming the next health care system. Coleman Lofin with Mauldin Jenkins addressed the R&D tax issue, and Congressman Ferguson agreed that it needed to be addressed by uncoupling the current House posture of pitting the Childcare Tax Credit against the R&D tax issue. He closed the conversation with his thoughts about the pending government shut down and the courageous measures that needed to be taken by Congress to fund the military and keep the lights on.



EVAN WESSEL AND LANDON BAILEY

Our final speakers for the trip filled in for Jean Roehrenbeck, acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs, U.S. Department of Transportation, who was diverted due to budget negotiations. Evan Wessel currently serves as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs at the U.S. Department of Transportation. Wessel previously held the position of Senior Advisor for Intergovernmental Affairs at the White House and was also the Deputy Director at the Democratic Mayors Association. Before that, he was the Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs Director for Pete Buttigieg’s presidential campaign. Landon Bailey has served as the

Specialist Assistant for Governmental Affairs at the U.S. Department of Transportation for two years. Previously, he served as a Scheduler for the House of Representatives and as the Executive Assistant/ Deputy Scheduler in the Senate.

This dynamic staff duo fielded questions about the implementation of various grant programs of interest to our county government and our CID partners.

LOCKHEED MARTIN FLIGHT DEMONSTRATION CENTER – CRYSTAL CITY

The day ended with a phenomenal opportunity provided by our partners at Lockheed Martin. A huge thank you goes to Andrew Dill, Director of Government Relations for Lockheed Martin, for planning this event. We were joined by Marietta Plant Director Rod McLean, vice president and general manager for Lockheed Martin’s Marietta site, and Don “Bobo” Schilpp, legislative affairs director for Lockheed Martin along with Congressman Rich McCormick, his deputy chief of staff Al Chaul, Eric Johnson (Loudermilk), as well as other Lockheed Martin invited congressional staff guests.



Friday, September 15

On the optional extra day of the Fly-In, remaining participants toured the National Museum of African American History before returning home.

Once again, we want to give a huge recognition of gratitude to our sponsors who invest in advocacy at the Cobb Chamber and help to make this trip possible.



**Save the date for the 2024 Cobb Chamber Washington, D.C. Fly-In
Tues, Sept. 10 – Thurs, Sept. 12, 2024.
*Please note – we are shifting to midweek to ensure access to Congressional Members.***

Thank you to our 2023 Washington, D.C. Fly-In Sponsors

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Thank you to our 2023 Washington Fly-In Attendees

Laura Austin, Old Mountain Contracting Company
Eric Bosman, Kimley-Horn
Chris Britton, Brasfield & Gorrie, LLC
Leanna Brown, Metro Atlanta Chamber
Andrew Dill, Lockheed Martin
Ashley Jenkins, Gas South
Dana Johnson, Cobb Chamber
David Jones, Cobb County Sheriff's Office
Ron King, Capital City Bank
Sheri Lee, Premier Regulatory Consulting, LLC
Coleman Loftin, Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC
John Loud, LOUD Security Systems, Inc.
Sharon Mason, Cobb Chamber
Kim Menefee, Cumberland Community Improvement District
Lori Miller Burns, Arylessence Inc.
Michael Oduselu, Axis Companies
Samuel Olens, Dentons US LLP
Craig Owens, Cobb County Sheriff's Office
Trey Paris, Freeman Mathis Decisions
Drew Raessler, Cobb County Department of Transportation

Bert Reeves, Georgia Institute of Technology
Eva Rigamonti, RaceTrac, Inc.
Adam Ross, Cumberland Community Improvement District
Joseph Santoro, Council for Quality Growth
Mike Schroeder, 1885 Grill
Amanda Seals, Cobb Chamber
Monique Sheffield, Cobb County Government
Sean Stewart, Kaiser Permanente
Katie Stone, Global Payments
Tracy Styf, Town Center Community Improvement District
Scott Sweeney, Georgia Department of Education
Casey Tanner, Kennesaw State University
Greg Teague, Croy Engineering, LLC
Stephen Vault, Wellstar Health System
Andrew Walker, Colliers
Gretchen Walton, Cobb County School District
Pamela Younker, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta

Cobb Chamber 2023 Federal Legislative Agenda

Emerging from the pandemic, Cobb County's business community continues to prove its resilience and adaptability to ongoing and unpredictable change. While Georgia continues to be the number one state for business for the ninth consecutive year, our members face inflationary pressures, workforce challenges, ever-evolving patterns of consumer behavior, and a more complex federal regulatory landscape.

The 2023 Federal Legislative Agenda for the Cobb Chamber represents our commitment to advance a vibrant and thriving economy by enhancing the business climate and quality of life for Cobb County, the region, and the state of Georgia. Most of our members are small businesses, and our agenda addresses critical concerns from over 2,700 member organizations representing over 18,000 business leaders. As a member of the Georgia Congressional Delegation, your attention to these issues is vital. We thank you for serving our county, state, and nation.

FOSTERING A RESILIENT ECONOMY

- Oppose legislation that increases inflationary spending levels, imposes tax increases, including increases in marginal tax rates, inheritance taxes, and capital gains, or that would negatively impact economic growth, job creation, and competitiveness.
- Support legislation reducing the cost of time, resources, and regulatory constraints on small businesses.
- Oppose programs that create obstacles for companies seeking to attract and retain essential workforce talent.
- Support using robust, peer-reviewed science and risk-based determinations in legislation and regulatory policies.
- Support liability protection legislation for businesses against frivolous lawsuits
- Support apprenticeship and job training programs that incentivize employment and better prepare our citizens for future workforce challenges.
- Support federal funding for community-level grants that assist entrepreneurs and small business start-ups.
- Support policies and legislation that provide equal tax treatment for brick-and-mortar and online retailers.
- Support tax policy and legislation allowing manufacturing and technology companies to deduct their research and development expenses in the year incurred.
- Support policies that keep energy safe, reliable, and affordable.
- Support policies that combat organized retail crime and counterfeit goods.
- Support Congressional action to increase the human, physical, and technological resources along the southern border and at our ports of entry.
- Support instituting modern, effective, and efficient employment verification reforms.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION

- Support federal funding for Cobb County projects to improve mobility for our county, the seven cities in Cobb County, the Cumberland Community Improvement District, the Town Center Community Improvement District, and the Gateway Marietta Community Improvement District.
- Support efforts to sustain and enhance investments in transportation to move goods and people efficiently and effectively.
- Support policies that encourage the growth and modernization of telecommunications and energy infrastructure.
- Oppose unnecessary regulations to infrastructure projects that include federal funding.
- Support the streamlining of competitive grant program application processes to better direct projects of local priority to the most competitive grant applicant.
- Support policies that streamline federal oversight and regulatory processes for federally funded projects.
- Support legislation allowing greater flexibility in federal funding programs for multimodal options incorporating highway and transit elements.

Cobb Chamber 2023 Federal Legislative Agenda (cont.)

HEALTHCARE

- Enable greater flexibility for businesses as they offer health care coverage to their employees.
- Support full tax deductibility of health plan premiums for individuals and businesses.
- Support adding full tax deductibility of health plan premiums for business owners.
- Support workforce development efforts to assist hospitals with the national healthcare workforce shortage.
- Support the expansion, offering, and enrollment in diverse coverage options like association health plans to decrease costs and increase access for small businesses.
- Urge Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) to account for inflation in FY24 to assist with the continuing strain on healthcare resources, such as hospitals and long-term care facilities, and the healthcare workforce.
- Support the bipartisan delay of the Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) cuts scheduled to begin in October, as the Medicaid DSH program is critical to maintaining access to essential care for low-income, uninsured, and Medicaid patients.
- Oppose any significant changes to the 340B Drug Pricing Program, which has provided financial relief from high prescription drug costs to hospitals that treat a high volume of indigent and Medicare/Medicaid patients.

SAFEGUARDING DOBBINS AIR RESERVE BASE AND SUPPORTING GROWTH OF OUR MILITARY AND DEFENSE COMMUNITY:

- Support the current missions and resources on and connected to Dobbins Air Reserve Base, as well as support for future mission growth.
- Support efforts to relocate the U.S. Army Reserve's 81st Readiness Division unit to Dobbins Airforce Reserve Base.
- Support passage of the FY 23 NDAA (National Defense Authorization Act)
- Oppose continuing resolutions for the Federal Budget approval. Budget continuing resolutions do not provide adequate payroll funding for our Reservists.
- Support full adds for C130J and F-35 aircraft that provide over 16,000 direct and indirect GA jobs.
- Insist on a full, fair, and best-value competition for the Air Force's new air refueling tanker program.
- Support the availability of TRICARE Reserve Select Insurance for Air Force Reservists, who are also federal civilian employees, which comprise a large portion of the population in Cobb County.
- Support increased pay for our troops and the modernization of our U.S. Armed Forces.

