

LODI CHAMBER
POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Electing a Strong Economy

How the Lodi Chamber PAC Evaluates and Supports Candidates

A Public Guide to the PAC's Purpose, Priorities, and Evaluation Process

The organized, nonpartisan voice of Lodi-area business at the ballot box.

The Lodi Chamber Political Action Committee supports or opposes candidates for City, County, and statewide office, as well as ballot measures that affect the business community. Every decision is based on business and economic impact, not political party or ideology. The PAC operates under California law and Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) requirements. It does not use Chamber general funds for candidate support and does not contribute to federal candidates.

Lodi Chamber Political Action Committee

35 S. School Street, Lodi, CA 95240 • lodichamber.com

Public Information Guide • Not legal advice

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Why the Chamber Has a PAC

For more than a century, the Lodi District Chamber of Commerce has served as an organized voice for the local business community.

Decisions made at City Hall, San Joaquin County, and the State Capitol directly affect the cost and opportunity of doing business in our region. They influence taxes, regulations, infrastructure, public safety, workforce development, housing, permitting, and many other issues important to employers.

The people elected to public office make many of those decisions.

The Lodi Chamber Political Action Committee, or PAC, gives members of the business community a lawful and transparent way to participate in the electoral process.

The PAC is separate from the Chamber's general operations. Through the PAC, voluntary contributors can support or oppose candidates and ballot measures based on their impact on Lodi-area businesses and the regional economy.

This guide explains what the PAC does, the principles that guide its decisions, and the process it uses to evaluate candidates and ballot measures.

It is designed to give Chamber members, candidates, elected officials, and the public a clear understanding of how the PAC makes its decisions.

The Question Behind Every PAC Decision

Will this candidate or measure help or hinder the ability of Lodi-area businesses to create jobs, invest, grow, and sustain economic opportunity?

The PAC evaluates business impact.

Not party.

Not ideology.

SECTION 1

What the Lodi Chamber PAC Is

The Lodi Chamber Political Action Committee is a voluntary, unincorporated political committee governed by its own Charter and Bylaws, adopted in February 2024.

The PAC is separate from the Chamber's general issue advocacy. The Chamber advocates for policies that support business and economic vitality. The PAC provides a separate vehicle for candidate endorsements and election-related financial activity.

Under its Charter, the PAC exists to:

- Establish and maintain an ongoing political campaign fund that is not controlled by a candidate and is not affiliated with a political party.
- Receive voluntary contributions from Chamber member companies and individuals who want to support a strong business climate.

- Support or oppose candidates for City, County, and statewide office, as well as ballot measures that affect the business community.
- Operate in compliance with California law and FPPC requirements, with support from an accountant and legal counsel.

Two Firm Limits

No federal candidates. The PAC does not contribute to candidates for federal office.

No Chamber general funds for candidate support. Candidate support is financed through voluntary PAC contributions, not the Chamber's general funds.

SECTION 2

Nonpartisan, Independent, and Business-Focused

Nonpartisan, but engaged

The PAC advocates for business interests. It does not advocate for a political party, candidates from a particular party, or an ideological agenda.

Candidates and ballot measures are evaluated based on their potential impact on the regional economy and business climate. Party affiliation is not part of the evaluation.

Independent and member-supported

The PAC is not controlled by a candidate and is not affiliated with a political party.

Contributions are voluntary. The PAC Committee determines how PAC funds are used under its governing rules.

Focused on business impact

PAC decisions must have a clear connection to employers, employees, investment, competitiveness, economic growth, or the cost of doing business.

When evaluating candidates, the PAC considers their records, stated positions, questionnaire responses, interviews, and other relevant information.

The goal is a consistent, fact-based process.

Credibility matters

The PAC's effectiveness depends on trust.

That means treating candidates consistently, using clear evaluation standards, managing conflicts of interest, documenting decisions, and applying the same business-focused principles over time.

SECTION 3

What the PAC Does

The PAC carries out its purpose through several types of activity.

Activity	What it means
Candidate Endorsements	The PAC may publicly endorse candidates for City, County, and statewide office whose records and positions demonstrate strong alignment with a healthy business climate.
Candidate Support and Opposition	The PAC may financially support endorsed candidates or oppose candidates whose positions would clearly harm the interests of local employers, subject to applicable California law and contribution limits.

Activity	What it means
Ballot Measure Positions	The PAC may support or oppose local and statewide ballot measures that materially affect businesses or the regional economy. These may include tax, bond, regulatory, infrastructure, or other measures with a clear business impact.
Voter Education	The PAC may help members of the business community understand how candidates and ballot measures relate to issues that affect economic opportunity in the Lodi area.

What the PAC Does Not Do. It does not contribute to federal candidates. It does not support political parties or partisan slates. It does not improperly coordinate its activities with candidate campaigns. It does not use the Chamber's general treasury for candidate support. The Chamber may conduct separate nonpartisan activities, such as candidate forums that provide equal access to candidates; those activities are conducted under the Chamber's own rules and remain separate from PAC endorsement and financial activity.

SECTION 4

The Issues That Guide Us

The PAC starts with issues, not personalities or political parties. Candidates and ballot measures are evaluated against principles that reflect the Chamber's longstanding focus on business growth, economic competitiveness, responsible government, and a strong local economy.

Guiding principle	Why it matters to Lodi-area business
1. Free Enterprise and Competitive Markets	A healthy private sector creates jobs, investment, and opportunity. Lodi's retailers, restaurants, wineries, farms, manufacturers, logistics companies, professional services firms, and other employers depend on fair and competitive markets.
2. Economic Growth and Investment	Public policy should support responsible economic growth and encourage businesses to invest in the region. A growing economy also strengthens the tax base that supports public services and infrastructure.
3. Competitive and Responsible Tax Policy	Taxes should be fair, transparent, predictable, and competitive. New or increased taxes should receive careful scrutiny, and voter approval requirements should be respected.
4. Regulatory Efficiency and Predictability	Regulations should accomplish legitimate public goals without creating unnecessary costs or uncertainty. Businesses need clear and stable rules so they can plan, invest, hire, and grow.
5. Workforce Development	Employers need access to skilled and work-ready employees. Strong partnerships among businesses, schools, workforce organizations, and training providers help create career opportunities while strengthening the regional economy.
6. Infrastructure Investment	Reliable roads, utilities, broadband, water systems, and public facilities are essential to commerce. Quality infrastructure also helps Lodi compete for investment and supports the region's role in agriculture, manufacturing, logistics, tourism, and other industries.
7. Housing Supply	Housing is also a workforce and economic competitiveness issue. Employers are better able to recruit and retain workers when employees have access to appropriate housing within the region.
8. Public Safety	Safe neighborhoods and commercial districts support customers, employees, residents, property owners, and investment. Public safety is a basic requirement for a healthy business climate.
9. Government Accountability and Fiscal Oversight	Public resources should be managed responsibly. The PAC values transparency, strong financial controls, accountability, and measurable results.
10. Tourism and Hospitality Promotion	Lodi's wine country and visitor economy support businesses, jobs, and local tax revenue. Policies affecting tourism, hospitality, and related taxes should support a competitive and sustainable visitor economy.
11. Agriculture and Agribusiness	Agriculture is a defining part of the regional economy. The PAC considers issues such as water reliability, reasonable regulation, infrastructure, and market access that affect farms and agribusinesses.

Guiding principle	Why it matters to Lodi-area business
12. Downtown and Commercial District Vitality	Downtown Lodi and the community's other commercial districts are important economic and community assets. A strong business environment should support their continued vitality, investment, and appeal.
13. Innovation and Entrepreneurship	New businesses and new ideas strengthen the economy. Entrepreneurs should have an environment where they can start businesses, solve problems, create jobs, and grow.

Where These Issues Are Decided

The PAC focuses on the offices and measures where these issues are decided and where local employers are affected: City, County, and statewide. Federal candidates are outside the PAC's scope under its Charter.

Jurisdiction	Representative issue areas
City of Lodi	Municipal budgets and finance; taxes and fees; development and land use; permitting; electric, water, and sewer utilities; public safety; homelessness response; downtown vitality; and tourism.
San Joaquin County	Transportation; workforce development; land use; agriculture; regional mobility; and policies affecting major regional industries.
State of California	Employment law; workers' compensation; taxation; environmental regulation; housing; water; groundwater; and energy policy.

Issues Outside the PAC's Scope. The PAC focuses on issues with a meaningful connection to business and the economy. It generally does not engage in social, cultural, religious, partisan, or ideological disputes that do not have a clear business impact. If a ballot measure or policy has a significant effect on the cost, operation, or feasibility of doing business, the PAC may consider it even when the broader public debate extends beyond business issues.

SECTION 5

How the PAC Evaluates Issues and Ballot Measures

Before supporting or opposing a ballot measure, the PAC considers how the proposal could affect local businesses and the regional economy. The same framework can also help identify the issues used to evaluate candidates. The framework provides consistency and helps document the PAC's reasoning. It is a decision-making tool, not an automatic formula. The Committee may reach a different conclusion when circumstances warrant it, provided the rationale is documented.

Criterion	What it measures
Business Impact	How broadly and significantly would the proposal affect local businesses?
Economic Impact	Would it support or hinder regional growth, investment, and the tax base?
Employment Impact	How could it affect job creation, job retention, hiring, or labor costs?
Competitiveness	Would it make Lodi and the surrounding region more or less competitive with other locations?
Cost Burden	Would it create taxes, fees, compliance expenses, or other operating costs for employers?
Local Relevance	How directly does the issue affect businesses in the Lodi area?
Regulatory Complexity	Would the proposal create unnecessary administrative burdens, uncertainty, or litigation risk?
Public Safety and Infrastructure	How would it affect public safety, transportation, utilities, water, or other infrastructure businesses depend on?
Strategic Importance	How closely does the issue align with established Chamber priorities and the PAC's business-focused mission?

Issue and Ballot Measure Tiers

After considering these factors, the PAC may place an issue or ballot measure into one of four categories.

Tier	What it means
Priority	The issue has a significant business impact and may warrant active engagement and PAC resources.
Engage	The issue warrants a formal position and an appropriate level of PAC involvement.
Monitor	The PAC will continue tracking the issue and may become involved if circumstances change.
Likely No Position	The issue generally falls outside the PAC's priorities or does not have a strong enough business connection to warrant involvement.

Two Rules Always Apply. An issue without a demonstrable connection to business is set aside, regardless of how it might otherwise score. Ballot measure positions and significant financial commitments require full Board approval and, for election-related matters, legal review.

SECTION 6

How the PAC Evaluates and Endorses Candidates

Candidate endorsements are among the PAC's most important decisions.

For that reason, the PAC uses a deliberate and consistent process. Qualified candidates in a race are given the same opportunity to participate and are evaluated using the same business-focused criteria.

The purpose is not to reward political allies or punish opponents.

The purpose is to determine which candidates are most likely to support an environment where Lodi-area businesses can invest, create jobs, grow, and contribute to a strong regional economy.

The Candidate Evaluation Process

- 1. Identify Relevant Races.** The Committee identifies City, County, and statewide races where the outcome could materially affect the business community. Federal races are excluded under the PAC Charter.
- 2. Invite Candidates Equally.** Qualified candidates in the race receive the same written questionnaire under the same terms. Questions are based on the Chamber's business and economic priorities.
- 3. Offer Interviews on Equal Terms.** Candidates may be invited to meet with the Committee to discuss their views and answer questions.
- 4. Review the Record.** The Committee may consider candidate questionnaire responses, candidate interviews, voting records (when applicable), publicly stated positions, relevant experience, and demonstrated understanding of the business community.
- 5. Rate Five Business Factors.** Each candidate is evaluated using the same five-factor scorecard. Party affiliation and ideology are not scoring factors.
- 6. Deliberate and Decide.** The Committee discusses the candidates, considers the scorecard and supporting information, addresses potential conflicts of interest through disclosure and recusal, and votes on an endorsement recommendation.
- 7. Disclose and Report.** PAC expenditures are made using PAC funds and reported as required by applicable California law and FPPC rules.

The Five-Factor Candidate Scorecard

Each factor receives a score from 1 to 5 (1 = unfavorable or unknown; 5 = strongly favorable). The five scores are added for a maximum score of 25. The factors are not weighted. The scorecard informs the Committee's judgment but does not replace it.

Factor	What it looks at	Score 1–5
1. Business Climate and Jobs	Does the candidate support an environment where employers can grow, hire, invest, and compete?	
2. Taxes, Fees, and Fiscal Responsibility	Does the candidate support fair and transparent taxation, responsible public spending, and voter approval requirements?	
3. Regulation and the Cost of Doing Business	Does the candidate support clear, reasonable, and predictable rules that businesses can understand and plan around?	
4. Local Engagement and Knowledge	Does the candidate understand Lodi-area businesses, employers, and economic issues? Is the candidate willing to listen and engage with the business community?	
5. Accountability and Effectiveness	Does the candidate demonstrate transparency, credibility, sound judgment, and an ability to achieve results?	
TOTAL	Sum of the five factors	/ 25

From Score to Endorsement

Total	Recommendation	What it means
20 to 25	Endorse	The candidate demonstrates strong alignment with business and economic priorities and is a strong candidate for PAC endorsement and support.
14 to 19	Consider	The candidate demonstrates favorable but mixed alignment. The Committee considers the full record and determines whether an endorsement is appropriate.
Below 14	No Endorsement	The candidate does not demonstrate sufficient alignment on business impact for an endorsement. In clear cases, the PAC may also consider opposition.

Nonpartisan Guardrails

- Every qualified candidate in a race is invited and evaluated on the same terms.
- Candidates are judged on business impact, not political party or ideology.
- Direct candidate support or opposition is financed through PAC funds, not Chamber general funds.
- The PAC does not contribute to federal candidates.
- The PAC does not support political parties or partisan slates.
- The scorecard guides the process; the Committee makes the final decision based on its documented judgment.

SECTION 7

Governance, Structure, and Compliance

The PAC's structure is intended to promote accountability, legal compliance, and clear separation from the Chamber's general operations.

Who Serves on the PAC

- The PAC Committee consists of three to five members appointed by the Chamber Board of Directors. At least three Committee members are active members of the Chamber Board.
- The Committee elects a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary/Treasurer for one-year terms.
- The Chamber CEO serves as an ex officio, non-voting member.
- Committee members serve without compensation. Members disclose potential personal or business financial conflicts and recuse themselves when required.
- No candidate for or holder of state elective office serves when doing so would cause the PAC to become a "controlled committee" under California Government Code § 82106.

Legal Compliance

The PAC operates under applicable California law and FPPC regulations. It retains an accountant and legal counsel to assist with compliance, including contribution limits, recordkeeping, and required campaign finance reports. The PAC's fiscal year runs from January 1 through December 31. Contributions are voluntary and, once received, become the property of the Committee.

Relationship Between the Chamber and the PAC

The Chamber's Government Relations & Public Policy Guide governs the Chamber's issue advocacy. It does not modify the PAC Charter.

Candidate financial activity is conducted through the PAC. The Chamber's own election-related activities are limited to nonpartisan, legally reviewed activities approved by its Board.

This separation allows the Chamber to advocate on public policy while providing the business community with a separate, governed vehicle for candidate and election-related activity.

Why the Separation Matters

The Chamber needs to be able to work productively with public officials and advocate consistently for the business community. The PAC has a different role. It allows voluntary contributors to participate in elections through a separate political committee with its own governance and legal requirements. Keeping these roles clear helps protect the credibility and integrity of both organizations.

SECTION 8

Support the PAC and Strengthen the Business Voice

Strong public policy starts with informed participation.

The PAC is funded entirely through voluntary contributions from people and businesses that want to strengthen the voice of Lodi-area employers in the electoral process.

There are several ways to participate.

- **Contribute.** Voluntary PAC contributions provide resources to support candidates and ballot measure positions that advance economic opportunity and a strong business climate.
- **Share Your Experience.** Tell the Chamber about the issues affecting your business. Experiences with permitting, taxes, workforce challenges, infrastructure, regulations, public safety, and other issues help the Chamber and PAC better understand what local employers face.
- **Participate.** Take part in Chamber candidate forums, questionnaires, public policy discussions, and other nonpartisan opportunities to learn about the people and issues shaping the local economy.
- **Stay Informed and Vote.** Local, County, and state elections influence many of the decisions that affect the cost and opportunity of doing business here. Learn about the candidates and measures, understand their potential impact, and participate in the process.

To learn more about the Lodi Chamber Political Action Committee or how to support it, contact: Lodi District Chamber of Commerce, 35 S. School Street, Lodi, CA 95240, lodichamber.com.

THE LODI CHAMBER POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Nonpartisan. Independent. Business-focused. Supporting a strong business voice at the ballot box.

PUBLIC INFORMATION NOTICE

This guide provides a general summary of the PAC's purpose, priorities, and evaluation process. It is intended for public information and is not legal advice. Election, campaign finance, lobbying, and tax requirements are fact-specific and may change over time. The PAC confirms current requirements with qualified legal counsel and its accountant before taking action and operates under applicable California law and Fair Political Practices Commission requirements.