CHAMBER ENDORSEMENT POLICY
(2021)

ENDORSEMENT PROCESS:

*Please refer to the draft endorsement timeline for specific timing on the following...

1. **Endorsement Sub-Committee Creation:**
   1. Prospective/aspiring Endorsement Sub-Committee members must fill out an application (provided by the Chamber) to address any potential conflicts of interest that MAY disqualify them from being able to participate.
   1. The final Endorsement Sub-Committee Roster will be approved by the Government Affairs Committee (GAC).
   2. Conflict of Interests to include:
      1. Serving on or being paid by a candidate’s committee or campaign staff.
      2. Failure to compile satisfactory remarks on a previous Endorsement Sub-Committee by: not meeting the minimum requirements, submitting responses late, or failing to provide assessments for all candidates being assessed during a previous election.
   1. If a conflict of interest arises, Endorsement Sub-Committee Members may be removed by the GAC or asked to recuse themselves by the GAC from the assessment of the candidate(s) associated with the race of the candidate with which they may have a conflict of interest.
   2. The Endorsement Sub-Committee is open to volunteer participation from Chamber members in good standing and must be confirmed by the GAC.

2. All approved Endorsement Sub-Committee Members must attend an initial training (provided by the Chamber and/or the GAC Chair) on how to do a professional and appropriate review of candidates’ responses.

3. A forum will be created by the Chamber to allow for the free sharing of ideas and announcements in real time among the members of the Endorsement Sub-Committee. This forum may be in-person, virtual, or a hybrid to allow for Sub-Committee members to engage successfully.

4. No member may be added to the Endorsement Sub-Committee once assessment of candidates has begun or until assessments have concluded.
5. Approved members remain on the Sub-Committee until otherwise stepping down or being removed by the GAC.

2. **Endorsement Sub-Committee Preparation**
   1. The GAC will work with the Chamber to determine which regional offices are up for a vote this cycle and compile a SUMMARY LIST of positions that may affect regional businesses.
      1. Offices to be considered are those overlapping East County Chamber service areas. Such as (BUT not limited to):
         1. City Council – El Cajon, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Santee
         2. Schools & College – East County Elementary and High School Districts, Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District
         3. Water Boards – Helix, Otay, Padre Dam, Lakeside
         4. State Assembly
         5. State Senate
         6. House of Representatives
         7. Grossmont Healthcare District
         8. Board of Supervisors - Covering East County specifically
   2. A summary list will be posted on the Govt. Affairs section of the website and sent to Chamber members during the question discovery process (detailed below).

3. **Member Input and Engagement**
   1. The Chamber staff will reach out to all Chamber Members and ask them what ONE question they would like to ask candidates during this election year (they may specify a specific role or level of representation if they so choose).
   2. The Chamber staff will compile responses over a 4-week period and create a summary list (removing duplicates but accounting for repeats - i.e., noting which questions were asked multiple times and how many but not listing them out repetitively in the summary).
   3. The GAC and/or Endorsement Sub-Committee may use this summary to determine what question(s) to ask of candidates. This task may be taken up by the GAC but also may be assigned to the Endorsement Sub-Committee by the GAC.

4. **Question Review**
   1. The GAC (or Endorsement Sub-Committee, if assigned by the GAC) will review the summary list of questions gathered from the general membership - provided by the Chamber staff.
   2. After reviewing the summary list, a summary list of the TOP question(s) members submitted (questions may be distilled from a group of questions, combined to include more facets or a single subject, and/or rephrased to
be more inclusive of broader perspectives). Specific questions pertaining to specific offices may also be added and asked of specific candidates running for a particular office.

3. The GAC may also add their own question(s) as they deem appropriate or relevant to the Chamber’s goal of fostering a healthy business climate.

4. A final list of question(s) will be approved by the GAC (or the Endorsement Sub-Committee if assigned by the GAC to do so).

5. Some questions not used in the application can be used if the GAC plans to meet and interview the candidates.

6. The same question(s) need to be used/asked of candidates running for the same office.

7. Question(s) should (a) reflect the desires of members (i.e. they should see their voice in the questions), and (b) set candidates up well to respond to questions that lift them up and they get excited to respond to (i.e. not questions that intentionally make them feel “pinned against the wall” or “feet to the fire”).

5. Candidate Endorsement Application
   1. The application for endorsement must be on a prominent location on the Chamber website (main page), sent to Chamber members, and distributed via media.
   2. Candidates will be able to request an endorsement from the Chamber by filling out an endorsement application.
   3. Candidates may also be encouraged to request an endorsement by the Chamber and/or one of its members.
   4. The Chamber will supply an assessment (questionnaire) form which shall include the question(s) derived from the review and approval process detailed above and as approved by the GAC.
   5. The GAC may assign all the question(s) to candidates or invite candidates to select a preferred question to respond to. This determination will be made by the GAC.
   6. Candidates may submit their responses to the Chamber through the provided online and/or paper application by the deadline.

6. Endorsement Committee Final Review
   1. After responses are collected (when the deadline has passed), the Chamber staff will compile the summary written assessments in a timely manner, organize them, and submit the responses to the Endorsement Sub-Committee for them to review.
   2. The Endorsement Sub-Committee will review candidate responses and use a rubric approved by the GAC to determine the quality of responses.
      1. Each Sub-Committee member will do their own assessment and fill out their own rubric for each question from each candidate. Sub-Committee members must provide a summary written assessment of the responses of the candidate they are
recommending for endorsement (must include at minimum 25 characters).

2. Grading (can be changed by GAC based on needs):
   1. Excellent
   2. Satisfactory
   3. Average
   4. Unsatisfactory
   5. Poor

3. Rubric (can be changed by GAC based on needs):
   1. Addresses the question with clarity.
   2. Understands the need for economic growth
   3. Shows an understanding of East County needs.
   4. Shows the experience and knowledge needed to make decisions for East County.
   5. Further comments from the assessor (optional)

3. The Endorsement Sub-Committee Chair will submit sub-committee member summaries to the Chairman of the GAC, the Chairman of the Board, and the Chamber CEO.

4. Responses received after the deadline will not be reviewed or posted unless otherwise overturned by the Board (requiring a 2/3 vote to allow a candidate to be assessed after the deadline, by which they would need to be assessed by the endorsement committee based on their responses to the questionnaire).
   1. This measure is in place to discourage any actions that would overturn previously announced endorsements and to retain the integrity of the endorsement process.

5. The GAC will approve and submit endorsement recommendations for each office being considered to the Chamber Board.

7. Measures and Propositions
   1. The Endorsement Sub-Committee may also be tasked (by the GAC) to assess propositions and measures.
      1. If assessment of propositions and measures are assigned to the Endorsement Sub-Committee, assessments will be determined by a recommendation of “for” or “against” and assessors shall provide a written explanation as to their determination (comprised of a minimum of 25 characters per summary response of each proposition/measure).
      2. If assessment of propositions and measures are assigned to the Endorsement Sub-Committee, then results shall be ratified by the GAC and the Board (respectively) before being officially finalized and announced along with endorsement results to members.

8. Board Ratification
1. The Chamber Board will finalize these endorsement proceedings by ratifying the recommendation of the GAC and by officially endorsing the leading candidates in each race being assessed by vote.

2. The overturning of any endorsement must be approved by a 2/3 vote of the Board of Directors.
   1. This measure is in place to discourage any actions that would overturn previously announced endorsements and to retain the integrity of the endorsement process.

9. Chamber Final Announcement
   1. The Chamber will compile and post final and official endorsements on the website.
      1. Individual rubrics and/or summaries will be kept private to protect the privacy of the Endorsement Sub-Committee members.
      1. A list of the Endorsement Committee members will be available upon request to any member in good standing or candidate who filled out an application for endorsement.
   2. The Chamber will notify members of official endorsements via email/social media, etc. once results have been identified.
   3. Candidate responses to the question(s) may be shared with Chamber members.
   4. The Chamber will notify candidates of the final endorsements once results have been ratified by the Chamber Board.

10. Endorsement Event
    1. The Chamber shall host an event and invite endorsed candidates to be present, where members may be able to meet and connect with endorsed candidates.
       1. This measure is in place to provide direct, tangible and meaningful benefit to endorsed candidates.

**TIMELINE:** Attached in separate document.