



CONTACT: Micah Hirschfield
Vice President, Communications
(713) 844-3642 – Office
(713) 899-2395 – Mobile

NEWS RELEASE

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GHP BOARD OF DIRECTORS PASSES RESOLUTIONS VITAL TO BUSINESS COMMUNITY

FREE TRADE AND EDUCATION AMONG ISSUES CONSIDERED

HOUSTON – The Greater Houston Partnership’s (GHP) Board of Directors met today to consider several resolutions deemed vital to the Houston business community and GHP’s ten county region.

Resolutions on free trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, and Korea, the Debit Interchange Fee Study Act of 2011, and incentive-based momentum points funding for community college institutions were among the resolutions passed by the Board.

GHP’s Board of Directors passed a resolution by unanimous consent supporting congressional ratification of the Free Trade Agreements (FTA’s) signed by the United States with Colombia, Panama, and Korea. These FTA’s will eliminate tariffs and other barriers to U.S. goods and services, expand trade between the United States and each of the signatory countries, and potentially create jobs. GHP is taking a delegation of local business leaders to Panama later this month to enforce our support of this resolution.

GHP’s Board of Directors discussed and passed a resolution in support of the Debit Interchange Fee Study Act of 2011 which delays implementation of the Durbin Amendment, a provision in the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010. The Durbin Amendment allows Congress to place a cap on interchange fees for debit cards. GHP supports delaying the implementation of the Durbin Amendment and authorizing the Federal Reserve to examine the true impact that the amendment would have on the nation’s payment system. The Greater Houston Partnership believes that further information is needed to determine exactly how the Durbin Amendment will affect the banking industry, the business community, and consumers.

(more)

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1200 SMITH, SUITE 700, HOUSTON, TX 77002 | PHONE: 713-844-3600 | FAX: 713-844-0200
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By unanimous consent, GHP's Board of Directors passed a resolution that supports a system of momentum points to fund student progression toward success in community colleges, where community colleges are funded at 100 percent of the formula with the opportunity to earn additional incentive points for meeting established criteria. Since three out of four college freshmen in Texas enroll at community colleges, GHP recognizes that community colleges must first be fully funded and then provided with additional funding as they increase their student success rates.

The Board also recently passed a resolution electronically by email urging the federal government to grant conditional lawful permanent residency to certain noncitizens to allow them to enlist in the United States Armed Forces, and urging the federal government to award lawful permanent residency to these immigrants upon completion of four years of honorable military service. A vast majority of these individuals could be long term Texas residents who have been educated in Texas. Similar legislation has been supported by other chambers of commerce and the U.S. military.

The Keystone XL Pipeline Project delivering crude oil from the Canadian oil sands and from growing U.S. mid-continent production facilities to the Gulf Coast where the majority of the U.S. refining capacity is located has been fully endorsed by the Board. The Keystone XL Pipeline Project will supply roughly half the amount of oil the U.S. currently imports from the Middle East or Venezuela strengthening America's energy security according to a study by the Perryman Group.

Other resolutions passed by GHP's Board of Directors during today's meeting or electronically by email recently included:

- A resolution in support of Proposition 12 Bond Issuance
- A resolution in support of legislation that provides limited liability for certain public utilities
- A resolution congratulating the Texas A&M Women's Basketball Team for winning the 2011 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Women's Basketball Championship.

John Hofmeister, founder and chief executive of Citizens for Affordable Energy and a former Chairman of GHP, was the Board meeting's luncheon speaker.

For more information on the resolutions passed by GHP's Board of Directors or an interview with Jeff Moseley, President and CEO, GHP or Larry Kellner, Chairman, GHP's Board of Directors, please contact Micah Hirschfield, Vice President, Communications, at (713) 844-3642.

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The Greater Houston Partnership is the primary advocate of Houston's business community and is dedicated to building regional economic prosperity. It represents 10 counties: Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, San Jacinto and Waller. With more than 2,100 Member organizations, GHP represents approximately one-fifth of the region's work force. Visit GHP at houston.org.

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