



Contact:  
Patrick Sheehy, President  
Tennessee Business Roundtable  
(615) 255-5877  
[psheehy@tbroundtable.org](mailto:psheehy@tbroundtable.org)

640 Spence Lane, Suite 250  
Nashville, TN 37217  
<http://www.tbroundtable.org/>



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Tennessee Business Roundtable Marks 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

*Executive business group founded in 1983 hailed by Tennessee Governors for policy leadership*

**Nashville, TN, December 19, 2018** – Business and political leaders joined the Tennessee Business Roundtable (“TBR”; “the Roundtable”) today in celebrating the nonprofit state business policy organization’s thirty-fifth anniversary by recalling the group’s formation, policy achievements and outlook for the future.

On December 19, 1983, a group of seven prominent state business executives, led by former state Finance Commissioner Bill Sansom, announced the formation of the Roundtable for the purpose of promoting and protecting free enterprise in Tennessee, and held the organization’s first Board meeting. U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander (R-Maryville), who was then serving his second term as the 45<sup>th</sup> Governor of Tennessee, recently recalled the motivations which led to TBR’s establishment:

“I frankly thought that the existing business organizations were too narrowly focused on their own specific interests, which is understandable. But I thought we needed a business organization focused on a broader set of issues which would help make Tennessee a better place to live and work, such as improving our schools and building the best four lane highway system in the country. I asked Bill Sansom of Knoxville, the former finance commissioner, and others to create the Tennessee Business Roundtable, and they did. I’m grateful for all that they’ve done, and I wish them success in the years to come.”

Founded on the belief that Tennessee’s vibrant economic climate is driven by an educated, healthy populace and sound state fiscal policies, the TBR has worked with Alexander, his successors and Tennessee General Assembly leaders to drive pro-business public policies.

“The Tennessee Business Roundtable has been a great partner over the past eight years, helping us implement some groundbreaking policies and programs, such as Drive to 55, Tennessee Promise and Tennessee Reconnect,” said current Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam (R-Knoxville). “I congratulate this important organization on its 35th anniversary and encourage the members to keep providing a voice for Tennessee’s business community in support of public education and other policies that benefit all Tennesseans,” Haslam added.

Now comprised of over fifty companies doing business in over a dozen industry sectors and hailing from all three Grand Divisions of Tennessee, the organization has pursued its Mission of optimizing the quality of life and well-being of all Tennesseans by convening business leaders and strategic thinkers

who develop and seek to implement public policies that enhance Tennessee's vibrant economic climate.

"Over the last thirty-five years, Tennessee has achieved meaningful gains in education, workforce development, and quality of life for its citizens," observed TBR 2018 Chair Anthony C. Kimbrough, CEO of Farm Bureau Health Plans of Columbia, Tennessee. "Some of that progress has not been easy, and we're proud that our Roundtable's proactive voice has made a difference at critical stages of the policy efforts that have produced those gains," he added.

Kimbrough also pointed to the Roundtable's unique relationship with executive leaders in Tennessee state government as a key to its success. "Tennessee has been blessed with some strong political thinkers and doers at all levels of government, and we like to think that TBR has played a pivotal role in helping them think and do things that are tremendously helpful to Tennessee." Former Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen (D-Nashville) endorsed Kimbrough's sentiments:

"During my eight years as Governor, the Tennessee Business Roundtable was a reliable thought partner on issues ranging from TennCare reform to workers comp reform. I especially appreciated the Roundtable's focus over the years in education and workforce development. Our partnership in the Tennessee Diploma Project led to higher academic standards in K-12 classrooms across the state -- and eventually made Tennessee the fastest-improving state in the history of the Nation's Report Card. I congratulate the Roundtable's leadership and membership on 35 years of advancing sound public policies and look forward to seeing how the organization works with Gov.-elect Bill Lee and future governors."

As the Roundtable marks its thirty-fifth anniversary, Kimbrough says he and TBR's member executives are firmly focused on achieving the organization's vision for Tennessee.

"Our state's future challenges will continue to center around many of the things about which our Roundtable members have always been concerned—quality of life, jobs and economic achievement," Kimbrough observed. "While the hopes, needs and goals will remain the same, the challenges will present themselves in new ways, so the ways in which our business community contributes toward meeting them must continue to evolve," he continued, adding, "TBR will bring together a mix of wisdom, business acumen and executive leadership to meet them, and will remain a dynamic force that brings together executives who have Tennessee's best interests at heart."

#### ABOUT THE TENNESSEE BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE

To optimize the quality of life and well-being of all Tennesseans, the Tennessee Business Roundtable (TBR) develops and seeks to implement public policies which enhance our state's vibrant economic climate. Founded by prominent Tennessee business leaders in 1983, and dedicated to the belief that an educated, healthy populace and sound state fiscal policies are the primary drivers of Tennessee's vibrant economy, TBR seeks to be the most respected & influential policy voice for Tennessee's business community. Learn more about the Roundtable online at [www.tbroundtable.org](http://www.tbroundtable.org).

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