

POLICY POSITION

21. Sunbelt Research Coalition

Background

In April, 1981, members of the U.S. House of Representatives formed the Sunbelt Congressional Council. The Council constitutes 116 House members from 16 states.

The purposes of the Sunbelt Congressional Council are: (1) to assure the equitable distribution of federal funds throughout the entire United States of America and intrinsically therein to assure that the citizens of the states of the Sunbelt Region receive their equitable share of federally appropriated funds; and (2) to assure that the distribution systems of federally sponsored programs adequately meet the unique needs of the citizens of the states of the Sunbelt Region; and (3) to serve as a catalyst for providing members of the United States Congress with information on the present and future impact of federal policy decisions on the citizens of the Sunbelt Region.

In early 1985, the Council announced the formation of a task force to activate the Sunbelt Research Coalition, a private, Washington-based research institute that will study regional issues as they relate to the federal government.

Recommendation

The Southern Legislative Conference endorses the establishment of a Sunbelt Research Coalition which will study regional issues as they relate to the federal government.

Southern leaders have an unmet need for better information on the relationship between federal actions and the unique characteristics of our region. While governors and legislators have a variety of regional organizations helping them to understand problems, trends and opportunities within the region, none of these institutions has a primary focus on the actions of Congress and the federal executive agencies as they relate to the South. And, with the exception of the Congressional Sunbelt Council, none of these organizations directs its services primarily to the needs of Members of Congress.

The Sunbelt Research Coalition, as a partner to the caucus activities of the Congressional Sunbelt Council, will aid all of the Southern family of policy makers and particularly the Southern congressional delegation in making more informed and effective decisions regarding the future of our region.

We commend the Sunbelt Council for its initiative on the establishment of a research institute and offer our encouragement and support in bringing it to reality. Furthermore, we urge private corporations and foundations with an interest in the South to contribute to support the efforts of the Coalition.

Adopted by the Southern Legislative Conference on July 21, 1985.