

Governmental Affairs Questionnaire - Results

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About:

On 7/10/2018, a Governmental Affairs Questionnaire was sent out to the Chamber Membership through ChamberMaster as an online survey. The questionnaire was crafted by the Governmental Affairs Committee and measures member interest in governmental affairs topics to determine interview questions for candidates vying for public office. Reminders were sent via email on 7/19 and 7/23. The survey closed on 7/23. Of the 1,056 individuals who received the survey, 79 responses were received, a response rate of 7.48%.

The survey:

Respondents ranked the following topics, indicating "1" for most important and "7" for least important. The topics are ranked below per relative placement (see Appendix).

1. Roads and Transportation
2. Higher Education Funding
3. Future Funding for PEIA
4. Use of Surplus Money
5. Tourism Funding
6. Incentives for Government Efficiencies
7. Immediate Court of Appeals

Respondents were also asked to rank and define an 'Other' topic.

Other

1. Health and Human Services
 - a. (1) Addiction treatment
 - b. (1) Services for the poor
 - c. (4) making sure that women's health is protected, including the right to abortion, defending same-gender marriages and LGBT rights generally
 - d. (unranked) Drug awareness, prevention, and recovery.
 - e. (unranked) Welfare/Government assistance reform and requirements. Opioid Epidemic.
2. Economic Development
 - a. (1) Economic Development - new & existing businesses
 - b. (3) Business Growth
 - c. (unranked) Job Creation/developing an employable workforce.
3. Community Development
 - a. (1) Better community recreation options throughout the county.
 - b. (2) Any type of funding that can beautify our town and give it some more "charm"
 - c. (6) Competitive Broadband Expansion
4. Efficiencies
 - a. (2) Unfunded Liability for major Cities in WV

- b. (4) Use of tax dollars and the manner in which we are taxed

Respondents were asked to provide additional comments for the topics presented:

1. Roads and Transportation

- Better enforcement of state regulations (truck covering loads)

Better maintenance and upkeep -- attention to all parts of the county

The DOH needs to be held accountable to attend to the needs of the residents in this county and not just other parts of the state

We can not improve other industry (like tourism) without creating safe, effective, and attractive transportation structures (this is both roads and sidewalks)! We need to make the whole county more usable to bikes and walking.

- Complete the "loop" around Morgantown
- Continue heavy emphasis on road improvements. This includes the Sunnyside area where many streets and alleys have not been paved in 3 or 4 decades. Re-do the paving of Third Street. It is atrocious!
- Efficient usage of government funding to expand roads infrastructure in a manner that increases public safety and economic competitiveness.
- Everyone knows roads are in sorry shape. As delegates, we pass all complaints to the district office. We hear that the DOH is hampered by a lack of staff and funding. Workers are underpaid, which is why so many jobs are unfilled. We need to improve the salary schedule and find ways to fund it. We have learned that roads in the county are on a schedule for repair, usually three years. We would like to have enough funding to attend to roads annually or as needed.
- everyone's favorite- and I would include transit incentives
- Fix Valley View Ave.
- Get the Road Bond projects completed! Include an I-68 to I-79 northern connector. Get the local sales tax in place for additional projects.
- Goes without saying.
- Increase taxes on gas. Equitable solution.
- Infrastructure investments are critical, period.
- I've seen several of the roads that Parrotta Paving has been working on and the amount of workers just standing around is obscene at one site I counted 14 Parrotta workers standing watching two people work - this is at every road work site that I've driven through. I can only imagine that these jobs would cost our city MUCH less if the company selected to complete them had a leaner more efficient crew. Our hard earned tax dollars are being wasted on people standing around watching one or two work.
- Maintenance funding, as distinct from new projects
- make this a focus moving forward. Can't grow unless we have the infrastructure to support it from a business perspective
- Morgantown area roads are the worst in the state, and we have the most growth and prosperity... dosnt make sense.
- Must improve the quality of the roads

- Obvious infrastructure issues.
- Our roads are a disaster this needs to change at once.
- Our roads are a standing joke nationally. This is one of the first impressions that can help recruit and retain talent to our area.
- Our roads are terrible, please make efforts to fix roads that are most traveled instead of roads that are not. Don't just patch holes, pave the entire road.
- Our visitors are very dismayed at the condition of our road system
- Roads and infrastructure (bridges, intersections, etc.) maintenance and renewals are critical. For example: River Road must be reopened.
- Roads MUST get immediate attention for repair and winter clearing. I live in PA and it is a night and day difference coming into WV any time of year!
- The roads in this county are horrible. The road leading to my business is so bad it is starting to affect my business. Not only do they not fill in the potholes, they won't even trim the brush or clean the ditches.
- This has been well discussed. But roads are critical. No infrastructure no growth!
- Too many side roads in Mon County are detrimental to vehicles, outer county roads should be evaluated and fixed
- What plan(s) do you have to (a) ensure the road bond money is spent appropriately and without waste/abuse, (b) the DOH has the flexibility to staff itself at appropriate levels to meet the ongoing maintenance requirements, and (c) ensure funds are allocated amongst the various districts in a fair and equitable manner?
- Where are all the tax dollars being spent, because it is not on the roads and hasn't been for quite some time? I just don't understand how I can pay so much in taxes and ride around on such horrible roads.

2. Higher Education Funding

- A very serious problem. Higher education funding has been cut the past 4 years, resulting in higher tuition for the students. This was due to the refusal of the leadership to consider any new revenue measures. Last year, the Governor's revenue plan, that would not have increased taxes for average citizens, died in the Senate.
- Again, we are an education county, and we need to be sure that WVU is fully funded
- Education is the key to our future. We need to provide more money to higher education, not less.
- Enhanced funding, particularly to larger institutions.
- First thing people from out of town who move here look at is our schools
- Funding higher education has to be a major priority. Recruiting and retaining top educators will trickle down into our students performance. They will set the bar (education) to which our greatest asset (children) will be focused on achieving.
- Get rid of outdated colleges and universities that are barely surviving and losing money.
- I would have ranked this higher in importance if I knew that alternative avenues of education would be a part of the discussion and not just college.
- Is this in reference to how to fund the Promise Scholarship or additional funding for higher education? If there is a discussion centering Promise Scholarship, which I am a proponent of, have we looked at including an agreement that this scholarship is contingent on them working in the state of WV for a determined amount of years post graduation or that scholarship will need repaid? I would like to hear a candidate elaborate on what their plan would be for encouraging careers in the trades - currently our only focus is pushing these kids toward college for a \$100,000 education to come out and make \$35,000 a year, when there are innumerable opportunities for electricians, contractors, painters, plumbers, etc with little to no debt incurred.
- Not a high priority
- Pierpont is slated to be free for WV HS Graduates at some point. This opportunity at other colleges/training programs past HS would change the make up of our economy.
- Providing inexpensive higher education and keeping those students who graduate in the area.
- The State has to rally around creating, maintaining and/or enhancing the funding necessary for higher education. This is an important industry in itself for the entire state which drives commerce.
- This is so IMPORTANT! As a new mom, I am seriously considering homeschooling because our public school system is a joke.
- We need to help the children, but we also need funds for training adults to go on to another field.

3. Future Funding for PEIA

- A long term, structural fix must be found.
- Education should be viewed as the foundation to growing the economy and developing the state. Poor education due to limited or subpar quality undermines the attempt.
- Future funding is critical to keeping our teachers, and administrators feeling that their insurance cost our at a minimum adequate.
- If they try to cut too much out of PEIA our insurance is next.

- Members need to pay more, just as the rest of us do.
- PEIA will need more dedicated funding such as (pop/sugar tax implementation or increase)
- Preference for funding out of general revenue as most dedicated funding streams are too volatile
- Secondary to infrastructure and economic development projects. Get rid of outdated colleges and universities that are barely surviving and losing money. Redistribute those dollars to fund PEIA.
- Teachers should do like the rest of us, pay their fair share for health care benefits. People also need to consider the fully-funded retirement benefits they receive.
- The committee must put a proposal on the table soon. Even if we have jobs in our state, if PEIA is not good then people and businesses will leave state. So many people rely on PEIA.
- Very essential that the state find a solution to this problem. New revenue options need to be considered.
- Very important to not only pay state employees fairly, but also provide them adequate and just health insurance for themselves and immediate family
- We are an education county and need to support teachers.

4. Use of Surplus Money

- Capital improvements rather than rebates to taxpayers. Lots of deferred maintenance in system.
- I am still in disbelief that we used our surplus to revamp the front of the courthouse square. When we've already spent so much on the old post office to move that majority of the offices out of that building and no one uses it. No amount of scenery will attract people to spend time there because we allow the homeless to loiter and peddle for money. When I sit and look at all of the taxes I pay out and how those funds are appropriated it is discouraging.
- I would have to be educated on this matter. In my mind there government should run at a 0 balance no more, no less. Excluding an emergency fund excess money should be returned to the citizens.
- Not important.
- Rainy day fund would be of benefit
- Should go to roads or PEIA
- The legislature voted to devote a portion of surpluses to PEIA. An effort was made to devote entire surpluses to PEIA, a good idea that did not pass. The use is set forth in other law, requiring a portion to general fund and a portion to the rainy day fund.
- The projects we want to complete will cost us more the longer we wait.
- Use this for the road repair/maintenance!
- Use to invest in projects creating ROI.

5. Tourism Funding

- Community Library/Science Museum together. Take the Wharf District and combine buildings/build to have Spark! and the Morgantown Library come together to meet needs of community.
- Go check out Knoxville, TN -- specifically their urban wilderness trail and their blue trail -- there needs to be a comprehensive recreation plan for our community that ties in many of the beautiful places we have within the county. We need to do more to draw people to this community because of the potential outdoor recreation options available in the county and in close proximity. This could be an income generator.
- Good if it gets positive ROI.
- how do we prioritize where to make these investments?
- In our current predicament, West Virginia has to redirect funding into new ways to promote the natural beauty of the state. While this may draw those that have visited our state before over and over again. We also have to invest in firms and people that have ideas that are outside the norms, that may seem eccentric. Their are ideas that we can capture, cultivate, thus making it our very own gem. Obviously, this does not come with out funding.
- Increase the hotel/motel pass through tax to create to funds necessary with a responsible budget created first.
- Increased funding for tourism can provide a boost for the state economy. Tourism offers an opportunity that has been long neglected.
- Need to enhance funding options at both state and local levels.
- Our town has more than enough tourists, the word of mouth alone gets people here. Football games do this, we do not need to spend tax dollars on it.
- The 8:1 return on investment is compelling. This is a huge, untapped opportunity for West Virginia.
- This will benefit small businesses, create jobs, etc.
- We are the tourism state, that is our present and will be our future, we must be aware of the fact that the citizens of West Virginia must be responsible and hold the powers that be, responsible also
- We need funding to reach out other states and make them see what we have here.

6. Incentives for Government Efficiencies

- Cut the number of counties and municipalities in half.
- Follow successful formulas from other areas.
- If local government officials would check their egos at the doors, governments could save taxpayers money by increasing efficiencies, eliminating duplication of services.
- I'm uncertain based on the wording what this is referencing - Is this indicating incentives to government employees for making more efficient decision making? If so, that should be implicit in their duty to their constituents and should not be further rewarded.
- Increased incentives and funding options for local government consolidations
- Law requires periodic performance audits of every agency by the legislative auditor's office, to assure that agencies are doing their job and operating efficiently. Receiving and reviewing the

performance audits is one of the most important duties of the Committee on Government Organization on which I serve.

- Make rewards for doing a good job in a reasonable time and for saving us money. This may be starting another project that is waiting for funding
- Must get rid of the waste, e.g. state owned vehicles
- Not a high priority
- Not sure what the proposals are but in theory shouldn't we strive to be efficient in all things? Especially the affairs of the people, who have put their trust in their elected leaders.
- Oxymoron in general, however, more production from the public sector employees is mandated.
- We have too many municipal governments and boards of education for too few people across the state. What plan(s) do you have to help incentivize the consolidation of these entities to help increase efficiency and therefore decrease the cost to the taxpayers?

7. Immediate Court of Appeals

- An Intermediate Court of Appeals is essential to due process and confidence of the business community and citizens in our court system.
- Don't see the need
- Efficiencies must be created to allow for more speedy hearings and decisions.
- Not interested
- There is no need for such a court. There is no "glut" as stated by the state chamber. Appeals to the supreme court are at the lowest level in years, especially for civil cases. The only result would be to create a few cushy jobs for lawyers and would be a waste of taxpayer money, \$11.2 million that could be better spent.
- This is a waste of time and money.
- Unfamiliar with the topic.
- Waste of time, money, and energy! It will create more opportunity for appeal, more wasted legal dollars, and be a waste.
- We need to have justice quickly and not draw appeals out for years.

8. Other

- No Comments.

Appendix.

Frequency of ranking by topic. (n=89)

Rank	Roads and Transportation	Immediate Court of Appeals	Future Funding for PEIA	Tourism Funding	Use of Surplus Money	Incentives for Government Efficiencies	Higher Education Funding
1	64	6	18	11	11	12	21
2	8	1	15	16	24	10	16
3	2	14	7	18	21	16	13
4	2	23	14	10	7	13	9
5	0	8	10	6	3	13	7
6	0	5	7	8	6	5	3
7	2	8	4	3	3	4	3
Relative Placement	1	7	3	5	4	6	2