

TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO THE PUBLIC

Governmental Affairs Legislative Questionnaire - Results

Prepared by Amy Loomis for the Morgantown Area Chamber of Commerce 11/27/2018

About:

On 11/7/2018, a Governmental Affairs Legislative Questionnaire was sent out to the Chamber Membership through ChamberMaster as an online survey. The questionnaire was crafted by the Governmental Affairs Committee to measure the member interest in legislative issues and to determine topics to ask a panel of legislators for the upcoming Legislative Preview. The issues covered in the survey were informed by a previous member survey and current legislative issues.

Reminders were sent via email on 11/21 and 11/26. The survey closed on 11/27. Of the 1,031 individuals who received the survey, 49 responses were received, a response rate of 4.7%.

The Survey:

Respondents were asked to indicate if they were a member of the Morgantown Area Chamber of Commerce.

68.7% indicated Yes

1.2% indicated No

As a small portion of respondents indicated 'No', the analysis below considers the responses as a whole (n=49). The Chamber may explore additional channels for communicating public surveys more widely.

Summary of Results:

For the issues presented, respondents indicated a level of importance on a 5-point likert scale. (1- Very Important, 2 – Important, 3 – Moderately Important, 4 - Somewhat Important, 5 – Not Important)

The summarized results below are ranked in order of importance as determined by survey respondents:

1. **Roads and Transportation** continues to be a top issue.
 - a. *Allocating funds to region and county road maintenance* is of great importance, with 75% of respondents indicating it was 'Very Important.'
2. **Economic Development** issues were of next greatest importance.
 - a. *Expanding addiction treatment and treatment facilities* was ranked 'Very Important' by 69% of respondents, and 'Important' by 21% of respondents. *Improving drug awareness, prevention, and recovery* was ranked 'Very Important' by 65% of respondents, and 'Important' by 29% of respondents.
3. Survey respondents want *Completion of all Roads to Prosperity projects within the region, with* rankings of 'Very Important' by 58%, and 'Important' by 25% of respondents.
4. **Higher Education**
 - a. *Recruiting and retaining top educators for K-12 and higher education* ranked 'Very Important' by 58%, and 'Important' by 23% of respondents, a similar ranking to Roads to Prosperity.
 - b. *Funding for post-secondary opportunities in trades education* ranked next at with 42% indicating 'Very Important' and 44% indicating 'Important'.
5. **Community Development issues and Promise Scholarship ranked similarly.**
 - a. *Improving government efficiencies through intergovernmental collaboration and agreements.* 50% indicated 'Very Important', 23% 'Important', and 23% 'Moderately Important.'
 - b. *Funding Promise Scholarship for post-secondary opportunities in higher education* had the broadest rankings in Higher Education. 42% indicated 'Very Important', 27% 'Important', and 19% 'Moderately Important.'
 - c. *Political autonomy of the local government through Home Rule Status (as opposed to State Rule)* ranked similarly to the funding of Promise Scholarships. 44% indicated 'Very Important', 21% 'Important', and 27% 'Moderately Important.'
6. Next, **Tourism** issues:

- a. *Expanded utilization of the river and riverfront* ranked 'Important' by 44%.
 - b. *Development of the five-county Mountaineer Trails Network* ranked 'Important' by 38%.
7. **All but one issue was ranked 0% 'Not Important'.**
- a. Responses to the *Development of the Appalachian Underground Storage Hub (The "Hub")*, the infrastructure for the development of future chemical plants were mixed, with 19% ranking the issue 'Not Important.' While ranked 'Very Important' by 33%, this issue received the greatest ranking of 'Not Important' and may indicate that public education is needed to better understand the issue.

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

1. Roads and Transportation

Key themes: road improvement, road maintenance, business recruitment / economic development, local government control, public and multimodal transportation

- we need to take care of the roads to the current businesses to ensure their success. ??how much would we spend to attract a company like Mylan?? why not spend money to improve their situation?? also, impossible to recruit to the hospitals and WVU with the current road conditions.
- The DOH continues to appear to be disorganized and lacking professional management. The lack of local control leaves local roads as orphans in the state where power is centralized in Charleston. The roads will never be improved if local control is denied.
- Roads need to be well thought through and not repeated (or have same mistakes repeated) i.e.: the new exit at UTC that will be redone due to traffic patterns
- Roads and road maintenance are not being administered correctly by DOH. Reopening of River Road must be a priority. The road already exists but needs maintenance and reopened to eliminate major traffic areas in the Westover area.
- We also need more comprehensive public transportation.
- MUST fix Spruce and Walnut if we want to be taken seriously as a successful region!
- Vital
- Roads continue to remain a top priority.
- There should be money for transit, pedestrian and bicycle transportation as well as roads for cars and trucks.

2. Higher Education

Key themes: k-12, trades education, post-graduation incentives

- Establishment of site(s) in Monongalia County for community college education and training programs.
- don't load questions. k-12 very important, high ed not moderately
- Promise scholarship needs to be somewhat needs based along with grades. I am aware that, in the past, people that were more than able to fund their higher education experience without taking out student loans used the Promise.
- I have a solution for the state to generate MAJOR TAX SAVINGS and I cannot get someone to sit down and listen to this NO COST solution to saving tax dollars paid out, increasing revenue and providing additional 'take home to every state employee'!
- We do a pretty good job currently
- This is a hot button issue and an opportunity to keep the youth here in the state if provisions requiring WV residency for a period of time, post-graduation. Extending to trades should be done ASAP
- I think many parties are already focusing on this - WVU and other organizations are doing good work here.

3. Tourism

Key themes: economic development, public recreation, attraction

- Expanded use should be for PUBLIC and accessible to as many people as possible -- this includes free or low fee use. Riverfront should not be clogged with private development that can only be accessed by those who can afford it.
- Different job and revenue source. Great avenue for diversity of revenue
- The riverfront will be a primary factor in attracting and keeping the people we need in this area.

4. Economic Development and Workforce Participation

Key themes: marijuana, environmental impact, opioid treatment facilities, workforce development

- We need to legalize Marijuana in this state for additional revenue.
- What are our legislators planning to do to support implementation of our medical cannabis program? As our state is breaking under the weight of the opiate epidemic and its social and economic consequences, the July 2019 implementation date of the legislation that passed is rapidly approaching with no clear plan for how to fix the obstacles keeping WV patients from safe and legal access. Licensing and infrastructure are of the utmost importance if the will of the people is to be honored and followed through.
- Please prioritize the environmental impact before proceeding
- We DO NOT need the pollution that will come with the HUB! We'll make our riverfront better and ruin those downstream!?
- We are making progress
- I don't want Chemical Plants in our area at all. There are too many risks and with recent changes to the EPA, there is very little regulation or consequences to companies like this. We cannot afford to be someone's dumping ground with the diseases and the environmental impact that may follow.
- Qualified employees are becoming more difficult to find. Adequate training and apprenticeship programs are needed.
- More than treatment, we need a temporary holding facility so that people who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol do not have to be transported to the regional jail at high cost.

5. Community Development

Key themes: local government control

- Critically important to consider ways to control our own affairs, especially in light of the lack of any Majority Delegates or Senators. We will now have absolutely no pull to bring bills forward in Charleston
- Pass legislation to allow counties to take control of local roads.
- My knowledge of the "Home Rules" program is limited. My initial concern is "who" it empowers and how much power the public has to choosing them.
criticalresponsetrainingwv@gmail.com
- We have higher priorities but long term this needs addressed
- Home Rule remains the best hope of municipalities trying to serve as economic engines of the region.

6. Other Questions of Comments

Key themes: constitutional amendments, local government, government efficiency and financial responsibility/transparency, public safety, statewide ordinances.

- I am concerned with amendment one being a bridge to making abortion illegal.
- our eyes into what was going on at the State level while the Legislature was in session was Joe Statler. This is true in my experience as a Board Member and I hear the same from County Commissioners. Someone needs to step up in our current contingency to be that voice.
- The state's lack of response to the missing thousands of dollars in liquor tax revenue for Mon County is a reflection and example of how concentrating power in Charleston is a major barrier to fixing local problems, such as deteriorating roads.
- Is it possible to add language to Amendments to be voted upon during elections that simplifies the legalese of the item? The two items during the mid-term elections were not well publicized and I am concerned that people maybe did not vote the way they would have if the language was easier to understand. I realize the legalese is important but could there not be a summary i.e.: Yes means-----; No means-----
- Morgantown is an economic driver for the northern corridor of WV and needs allocated resources to continue.
- Please get me a sit-down meeting with the proper financial people to hear how this can save the state money!
- Anti-vaccination efforts need to be repulsed. There is a reason that Vaccine preventable diseases should be advocated for and made part of schools. There is no room for philosophical waivers when it comes to protecting the public's health.
- How do you all feel about the current discussions pertaining to the Cheat Lake area incorporating and forming their own municipality?
- What would be the penalty of local government or private citizen groups to improve our roads? Our state has abrogated their duty to fix our roads properly. The state is holding Monongalia County residents hostage. We should start a private GoFund Me campaign to hire our own road construction firms.
- Improve FEMA grant funding and accountability. Hold legislators responsible for the fraud and waste of taxpayer's dollars.

- To attract industry, and because it is the right thing to do, there should be a statewide non-discrimination ordinance to include sexual orientation, marriage, and gender identity.

Appendix.

Frequency of ranking by topic. (n=49)

	1 (Very Important)	2 (Important)	3 (Moderately Important)	4 (Somewhat Important)	5 (Not Important)
Roads & Transportation					
Allocating funds to region and county road maintenance	75%	15%	4%	4%	0%
Completion of all Roads to Prosperity projects within the region	58%	25%	4%	10%	0%
Higher Education					
Recruiting and retaining top educators for K-12 and higher education.	58%	23%	15%	4%	0%
Funding Promise Scholarship for post-secondary opportunities in higher education.	42%	27%	19%	6%	2%
Funding for post-secondary opportunities in trades education.	42%	44%	10%	2%	0%
Tourism					
Development of the five-county Mountaineer Trails Network.	21%	38%	27%	13%	0%
Expanded utilization of the river and riverfront.	27%	44%	21%	6%	0%
Economic Development and Workforce Participation					
Improving drug awareness, prevention, and recovery.	65%	29%	6%	0%	0%
Expanding addiction treatment and treatment facilities.	69%	21%	4%	4%	0%
Development of the Appalachian Underground Storage Hub (The "Hub"), the infrastructure for the development of future chemical plants	33%	23%	19%	2%	19%
Community Development					
Political autonomy of the local government through Home Rule Status (as opposed to State Rule)	44%	21%	27%	6%	0%

Improving government efficiencies through intergovernmental collaboration and agreements.	50%	23%	23%	0%	0%
---	-----	-----	-----	----	----