

GCAP's 2018 Candidates' Questionnaire

Dear Senatorial Candidate:

As a candidate for Pennsylvania State Senate in the 2018 election, the General Contractors Association of Pennsylvania (GCAP) is interested in learning more about you and your stance on issues affecting the construction industry. The information that you provide will be shared with members of GCAP and other construction industry stakeholders.

GCAP is an organization representing the memberships of General Building Contractors Association (based in Philadelphia), Keystone Contractors Association (based in Harrisburg), and Master Builders' Association of Western PA (based in Pittsburgh). Collectively, GCAP represents over 600-plus commercial construction companies based throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Since 1953, GCAP has been a strong, unified voice in Harrisburg representing major contributors to employment and economic growth in Pennsylvania.

As for completing this questionnaire, please feel free to answer the questions on these pages, adding pages as needed for expanded comments, or you may submit your answers on a separate document included with this questionnaire. Responses can be sent to: sethkohr@keystonecontractors.com or by mail to General Contractors Association of PA, 20 Erford Road, Suite 310, Lemoyne, PA 17043.

We would appreciate responses by Friday, August 31, 2018.



Candidate's Signature: _____

Introduction

As leaders representing the commercial construction industry, GCAP is interested in hearing your legislative priorities. Why should the construction industry show support for you?

The construction industry should show support for my campaign because I am a firm believer in the importance of infrastructure in our state, not just as a talking point but as a real legislative priority. Too often politicians talk about funding infrastructure, but then refuse to pay for it. The fact is that infrastructure is an investment. It costs capital, but like any investment, a prudent one will pay dividends for years to come. Projects like the Southern Beltway cost a great deal now, but will ultimately pay for themselves with increased development and support for a broader tax base.

As a real estate attorney, I am a big believer in development as an economic driver, but too often I see projects slowed down by red tape and bureaucracy. The complaints are consistent: from the architects to

the developers to the contractors, everyone says the same thing. We need to streamline the licensing, permitting, and approval process to make sure the same standards are being used across municipalities, and jurisdictions. This will greatly reduce the burden on developers and allow them to use the same processes statewide. Additionally, making this process digital and online will save the government and industry thousands of dollars in costly fees.

Economy

Everyone benefits from a strong economy. How can your priorities grow the economy in Pennsylvania?

I believe one of the best ways to grow the economy in Pennsylvania is to invest in our people. This means making sure our schools are properly training the workers of tomorrow. This means making sure our universities don't leave their graduates with a mountain of debt. This means lowering the barriers to home ownership and reducing the taxes paid by homeowners. We need to make sure we have a strong social safety net so that entrepreneurs can take the risks that ultimately grow our economy in ways we never imagined.

Every politician will say they want a strong economy, but a key question is whom the economy is strong for. A strong economy for banks and big corporations doesn't mean that workers are seeing the same benefits, and it is important that we keep this in mind when looking at ways to create a strong economy. I believe we need to make sure we're not losing sight of the least in our society when looking at ways to build the economy. Leaving people behind only compounds the problem and builds resentment.

Workforce Development

The construction industry workforce in Pennsylvania is currently facing some challenges to attract workers. How would you address this issue?

First, we need to address the stigma around college vs. the trades. Too many parents see themselves (and their child) as a failure if the child doesn't go to college, and that is a shame. We have too many people with useless degrees working for low wages in retail or food service, and the only thing they have to show for their degree is a pile of debt. The fact is that a construction worker, plumber, or other skilled tradesperson will make way more in their life, and be a much more productive member of society than the college-educated barista.

I feel that the best way to change this stigma is through better education of parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and industry. Parents need to know it's a great thing for their child to work in a skilled trade, and that the upsides are endless. Teachers and guidance counselors need to be educated in the benefits of the trades; in the same way universities sell the benefits of a college education.

Additionally, it appears every legislative session that Prevailing Wage is under attack. Lowering workers' wages may not be an ideal approach to attract future workers. Where do you stand on Prevailing Wage?

I am a strong supporter of prevailing wage, because it one of the few mechanisms we have to make sure our local contractors aren't being underbid by out-of-state, fly-by-night operations. I will be a supporter of prevailing wage as your next state senator.

Construction Practices

GCAP believes in having the freedom of choice concerning construction delivery method. The Separations Act is an archaic mandate enacted in 1913 that only allows for one delivery system – Multiple Prime Delivery. Due to the inefficiencies of Multiple Primes, this delivery system is only required in three states; meanwhile 47 states, the federal government, and the private sector all benefit from choice in construction delivery. What are your thoughts on the modernization of the Separations Act? (Since this is such an industry-specific question, please do not hesitate to contact GCAP for additional information on this topic).

I would be open to modernization of the Separations Act, (along with many other pieces of legislation still on the books from the 1900s) to help industry grow. As I've mentioned before, we see way too much red tape on projects that ultimately end up costing the taxpayers in delays and increased overhead.

While I'm not familiar enough with the specifics of "Multiple Prime Delivery" to speak on it at great lengths, I am a big believer in trusting experts and friends in the industry who say this is an out-of-date and archaic process. I will work with industry and regulators to find a compromise that works for everyone, with the end goal of opening up delivery systems and reduce costs.

GCAP members are renowned for having a safety-first mentality. Due to the opioid epidemic, construction workers and the general public are put in harm's way. How can you help on this issue?

I am going to be a champion on the opioid epidemic, having lost my mother, aunt, and brother to overdoses. It is absolutely true that those struggling with addiction make for less safe work environments and potential danger to workers and the public. Nobody should be working around dangerous machinery while under the influence of drugs.

At the same time, we need to provide workers with a way to re-enter the labor market after their treatment for addiction. Too often they are left with a criminal record and no gainful employment, compounding the same problems that lead to their initial treatment. I believe that we need to have a workforce that can reintegrate those in recovery and give them the tools they need to be successful at work and at home.

I want this to be a partnership that looks very specifically at jobs, oversight, and training to ensure that everyone is protected and benefiting from this arrangement. It won't be easy, but it's the right thing to do.

General

If you win this election in 2018, what will your legacy be 20 years from now?

I want my legacy to be one of a hard-working Senator who reached across the aisle to find common-sense solutions to many of our state's pressing problems. I want to be seen as a reformer, someone who took on the corrupt practices of Harrisburg and instituted real, meaningful reforms on gerrymandering, term limits, perks, and campaign finance. More than anything though, I want to be seen as a fighter for the small guy, the family who can't make ends meet or the student struggling to pay for college. I have been there, I know those struggles, and I want to have our state give a helping hand to those most in need.