

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?

With 24 years of success across multiple business sectors, I have learned to bring people together, find solutions, and deliver outcomes. The construction industry is a critical driver of our local and state economy and an important voice at the table. I would work with GCAP to understand the priorities of the construction industry and pursue legislation in Harrisburg that supports sustainable growth and development over the medium to long term. Short to medium term, investments in public education, infrastructure (roads, bridges, water supply and broadband internet) and renewable energy are among my top priorities as strategic enablers and drivers of economic growth and opportunity. All of these will continue to make Pennsylvania and our many communities attractive to entrepreneurs, business owners, professionals and working families, directly benefiting the construction industry through development and increased construction.

Economy

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

Many people and communities across our district and state are struggling, the victims of a shifting economy and a lost manufacturing base. I do not believe that we, as a state, can realize our potential and see the economic growth we desire, if so many are forgotten and left behind. Strategic investments in roads, bridges, agricultural processing facilities, and broadband internet will enable the revitalization of our small towns and rural communities by allowing businesses situated there to connect with new markets. These investments will also enable young adults and members of the workforce to access education and healthcare. I'd like to see us attract large corporate residents/taxpayers for new manufacturing, distribution or corporate facilities, but we absolutely need successful small and medium sized businesses to revitalize our towns. Many of Central Pennsylvania's small towns are beautiful, have affordable real-estate, and are in reasonable proximity to major population centers. They are ripe for the next phase of growth. Development of our renewable energy industry makes sense on multiple levels - high rates of job growth, reduced energy costs, and protection of Pennsylvania's significant natural/environmental assets. These are all key drivers of economic growth.

Workforce Development

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

I believe we need to expand access to technical and skills training. In the course of this campaign, I've spoken with thousands of people. I frequently hear "we need jobs, and we can't find them" but I also hear "we need employees, and we can't find them." Education is how we can bridge that gap. There is a market need for carpenters, masons, plumbers, etc. Four-year college degrees are not the only path to good jobs. We need to connect people to the skills training for the jobs available. Mentoring and apprenticeship programs can also help bring the next generation in to the industry. Since graduating from the Penn State Smeal College of Business with my MBA, I've mentored dozens of MBA students on their job and career search, and I've been proud to see those students go on to finding great jobs and achieving success.

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 stand with organized labor to protect Prevailing Wage. As a former union member, I understand the value a union provides to a worker. The union provided me with scaled pay, access to healthcare, and stability. Getting rid of Prevailing Wage puts wages at risk and makes an industry less attractive to young adults starting out in their working career.

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).

The law must protect local businesses and workers while supporting economic growth and efficiency. I look forward to learning more about GCAP's perspective on this issue.

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?

Having worked for years in foodservice and hospitality, I know what it means to put in a hard day's work and to place safety above all else. The success of a business depends on it. The opioid epidemic is ravaging our communities, and we need to take a multi-faceted approach to addressing it. We must continually work to reduce the stigma of substance use disorder and enable communities to help their members (and their families) who are struggling. The more people are forced to suffer in silence, to hide their problem, the more the people around them are placed at risk. I also strongly support expanding access to healthcare, particularly in our rural areas, and providing treatment to those that need it. Substance use disorder may require years of ongoing treatment for some. This is a non-partisan issue, and we must work together, across the aisle to reduce the risk to our communities and workers. This involves law enforcement, local government, medical care, mental healthcare and education.

General

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

The revitalization of our state's politics - an end to the era of dysfunction in Harrisburg, the renewed growth of our economy on top of next-generation industries, the restoration of our communities' access to opportunity through public education and the preservation of our most cherished rural traditions, such as family farms, hunting and fishing, volunteerism and mom and pop shops.