

Private sector, government working together benefits taxpayers

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During the Coronavirus Pandemic, Governor Wolf issued an Executive Order to shut down all non-life sustaining businesses in Pennsylvania.

The General Contractors Association of Pennsylvania (GCAP) was torn internally, with one faction thinking that this shutdown was necessary and another group that thought it was too excessive and businesses should still operate. Despite this conflict among our leadership and members, we had complete consensus that the health and safety of our workforce is our top priority.

Instead of advocating for construction to reopen, GCAP got to work on what we agreed on and in late March we published the **Construction Industry's COVID-19 Response Plan**. It was a comprehensive safety plan with proper social distancing, PPE requirements, sanitizing, etc. I believe we were the only construction-related organization that did not lobby to reopen. Because the health and safety of the worker was extremely important to us, I believe we gained the trust of Gov. Wolf and that's why I believe he used our safety plan to create his construction guidelines. (Governor Wolf's press release.)

Heading into 2020 no one could have foreseen the conditions that we find our Commonwealth in. Unemployment is through the roof. Tax coffers are projecting shortages in the BILLIONS. Yes, it's true, COVID-19 has steered us into uncharted times.

Citizens in this Commonwealth need public services now more than ever. From the nursing home residents to the young school kids looking for their next meal and to every age in between, Pennsylvanians are hurting. We cannot leave our neighbors stranded and simply chop out needed services in this year's 2020/2021 budget negotiations.

However, what can happen is that a thorough review of all expenditures can make sure tax dollars are efficiently spent. Our Commonwealth is fortunate to have dedicated and intelligent legislators from both sides of the aisle involved in this review process. Additionally, much like Gov. Wolf turned to the private sector in creating the Commonwealth's safety guidelines, the legislature should continue to look to the private sector to incorporate proven best practices to improve the way our government operates. Each industry sector should join the process to help our Commonwealth.

When it comes to construction, Senate Bill 823 is a vehicle that can address construction procurement reform. This legislation, which has a diverse coalition and also has labor support, can save our Commonwealth 10% on public construction. Pennsylvania is the only state in the country that mandates an inefficient process known as the multiple prime delivery method. Now is the ideal time to address inefficiencies in our procurement process on behalf of taxpayers.

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