

Chamber Mission

The mission of the Beckley-Raleigh County Chamber of Commerce is to build a vibrant community through programs of advocacy, public awareness, and policy development.

Government Affairs Division-Key Objectives

Communicate to elected officials our positions on legislative issues; offer assistance in monitoring business legislation; and to act generally as the liaison between government and the business community. Legislative Positions are available at www.brccc.com.

This will ensure that West Virginia's plentiful fuel and energy resources remain as important to the future of West Virginia as it has in the past.

Coal production is a cost-effective method for power plants. With new technologies in energy it is essential that our economy use every available resource we have to benefit the state. Coal and natural gas reserves are plentiful and will provide energy for a majority of the States for many.

Environment

Southern West Virginia is blessed with abundant natural beauty and outdoor recreation opportunities, and those blessings have been the catalyst for a thriving tourism industry. The Chamber recognizes that the sustainment and continued growth of our tourism industry is contingent upon the protection and preservation of our environment. Toward that end, the Chamber supports the enforcement of laws that prevent or retard the despoliation of our environment by unregulated garbage and litter, by improperly treated sewage and industrial discharge.

Government Modernization

The Chamber recognizes transformative change is taking place in West Virginia's economy. Demographic trends continue to show the average age of our citizens is increasing. Population growth remains stagnant to declining and the pool of K-12 and higher education students in K-12 continues to shrink. The era in which the framework of our West Virginia government was established simply is much different than the times in which our citizens now live.

These realities create growing challenges with our ability to adequately fund and provide government services. Yet, public policymakers have been amiss at evaluating, enabling and pursuing opportunities to modernize the structure and delivery of government services at all levels. Too often government innovation is stifled by archaic state code provisions and status quo leadership. The Chamber supports West Virginia and its citizens who will benefit by implementing policies and solutions that modernize the size and structure of our government and provision of its services. The principles of continuous improvement, streamlining and efficiency have already taken place in both the private sector and neighboring localities. Government modernization can create an atmosphere in which our citizens receive services faster, cheaper and better. While at the same time, modernization promotes a pro-growth economic climate.

Highway and Infrastructure Funding

The Chamber recognizes the critical role of highways and infrastructure in establishing the foundation for a vibrant economy. The people of our state have embraced the Governor's leadership in this area, and West Virginia is poised on the threshold of tremendous new investment in priority roadways.

The Chamber supports policy reforms that embrace

both proven approaches and new innovation which make roadway (and other infrastructure) construction, operation and maintenance timely and cost efficient. Sustainment of our existing highway network is of at least equal importance to the construction of new highways.

Public Employees Collective Bargaining

The Chamber strongly opposes any legislation that mandates taxpayer-funded entities to enter into collective bargaining agreements where wages, hours and working conditions are discussed.

Recreation and Tourism

The New River is one of the continent's oldest rivers with incomparable recreational and historical attractions, which, along with the Gauley River NRA and other National Park units in the area, account for more than \$79 million in economic benefits and 2,400 jobs.

The Chamber supports the establishment of a National Park designation for New River Gorge in a manner that retains and further promotes these remarkable attributes and uses will create additional economic benefits to the region and improve funding for management and development of the New River Gorge National Park.

Redistricting

The Chamber believes voters should pick their representatives and representatives should not pick their voters and calls for the Legislature to establish an independent redistricting commission ahead of the 2020 census. This commission should determine legislative districts that are not partisan in nature and closely adhere to existing county borders, municipalities and magisterial districts and communities of similar interest.

Substance Abuse/Rehabilitation

While the Chamber recognizes and supports the many steps that have been taken by the Legislature to address this issue, more work is needed. Substance abuse, legal and illegal is killing West Virginians and our future. Funding for treatment and recovery is a critical need that must be addressed.

The Second Chance for Employment Act is a step in the right direction. It allows someone who made a mistake to have an opportunity to put that mistake behind him/her and become an employable productive member of our society.

There are concerns the ten (10) year waiting period, and the fact that the underlying felony remains on the individual's public record, will prevent this act from becoming widely utilized and minimize its potential positive impact of enabling substance abusers and non-violent criminal offenders from becoming employable and productive members of society.

West Virginia has the lowest labor force participation rate in the nation. We must continue to explore every available avenue

to expand and educate our labor force. We must provide a dependable and skilled labor force if we are going to attract and maintain investments in our economy.

Tax Reform

The work of Joint Select Committee on Tax Reform should continue. The committee must look at ways to ensure that state taxes are fair and competitive with neighboring states and provide for stable and predictable sources of revenue for government. Any reforms proposed must be carefully planned so they do not significantly harm education and/or essential local government funding.

Reaching your representatives and how the Chamber can help

Make Correspondence Easy

Keep contact information on hand at work, where you probably spend much of your time. Enter fax and phone numbers and email addresses in an easy-to-activate database. Don't struggle: a brief letter of concern can influence as well as a dissertation.

Use the Chamber as a Megaphone

Our Chamber is the region's strongest business voice, representing nearly 700 member businesses. It quickly draws the attention of legislators and other officials.

Use Your Member Influence

Chamber functions provide a forum in which you may discuss public policy with the most influential members of our society. Formally or informally, it's a good way to express your opinion and educate others. Reporters routinely contact the Chamber to discuss public policy issues.

"Call to Action"

Our strongest means of communication is the "Call to Action." During such a call, members immediately begin to fax and email representatives to express their opinions on particular issues.

The Legislative Positions & Guide to Utilizing Your Representatives is produced yearly by the Beckley-Raleigh County Chamber of Commerce. Contact the BRCCC at: (304) 252-7328, 1-877-987-3847, (304) 252-7373 fax

Legislative Representatives

WEST VIRGINIA GOVERNOR

Governor Jim Justice

1900 Kanawha Blvd., East
State Capitol Building 1
Charleston, WV 25305

governor@wv.gov
1-888-438-2731
(304)558-2000
(304)342-7025 fax

U.S. SENATORS

U.S. Senator Joe Manchin, III common_sense@manchin.senate.gov
306 Hart Senate Office Building manchin.senate.gov
Washington, DC 20510 (202)224-3954 Washington, DC
(202)228-0002 fax DC

U.S. Senator Joe Manchin, III (304)342-5855 Charleston, WV
900 Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 629 (304)343-7144 fax WV
Charleston, WV 25302

U.S. Senator Shelley Moore Capito (202)224-6472 Washington, DC
172 Russell Senate Building (202)224-7665 fax DC
Washington, D.C. 20510

U.S. Senator Shelley Moore Capito (304)347-5372 Charleston, WV
500 Virginia Street, East (304)347-5371 fax WV
United Towers Suite 950
Charleston, WV 25304

U.S. Senator Shelley Moore Capito (304)253-7853 Beckley, WV
220 North Kanawha Street, Suite 1 (304) 253-7862 fax WV
Beckley, WV 25801

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Congresswoman Carol Miller (202)225-3452
1605 Longworth HOB
15 Independence Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20515

Congresswoman Carol Miller (304)250-6177
307 Prince Street
Beckley, WV 25801

Congresswoman Carol Miller (304)522-2201
845 5th Avenue, Suite 314
Huntington, WV 25701

WEST VIRGINIA SENATORS - 9TH DISTRICT

Rolland Roberts
West Virginia State Senate
W223 State Capitol
Charleston, WV 25305

WEST VIRGINIA HOUSE OF DELEGATES - 27TH DISTRICT

WEST VIRGINIA HOUSE OF DELEGATES www.wvlegislature.gov
212-M State Capitol
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East
Charleston, WV 25305

District 27
Joe Ellington
John H. Shott
Eric Porterfield

District 28
Roy Cooper
Jeffrey Pack

District 29
Brandon Stelle

District 30
Mick Bates

District 31
Christopher Wayne Toney

District 32
Tom Fast
Kayla Kessenger
Margaret Staggers

RALEIGH COUNTY COMMISSION

Linda Epling, Commissioner ralcom@raleighcounty.com
Byrd E. White, III, Commissioner
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116 1/2 N. Heber Street (304)255-9146
Beckley, WV 25801 (304)255-9166 fax

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MAYOR OF BECKLEY

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Beckley, WV 25802-2514 (304)256-1750
(304)256-1816 fax

How A Bill Becomes State Law

STEP 1: PREPARING A BILL

Anyone can propose a bill to a legislator. As many as seven of the 100 delegates and all 34 senators may sponsor. To ensure proper form, it must also pass legislative council or the Office of Legislative Services.

After a draft is prepared, the sponsor submits the bill to the chamber's clerk, who assigns a number and presents it to the House Speaker or Senate President for reference to a committee.

STEP 2: COMMITTEE STUDY

Small groups of delegates are assigned to standing committees to examine bills in detail. After study, the committee files a written report, rejecting the bill or allowing it, or a committee substitute, to pass with or without amendment or recommendation. Some bills die in committee because of limited time.

STEP 3: FLOOR ACTION

If the committee presents the bill, the clerk will provide a summary on the floor and place it on a calendar for consideration. Toward the end of the session, a rules committee prioritizes remaining bills, adopting a "Special Calendar" for the most urgent.

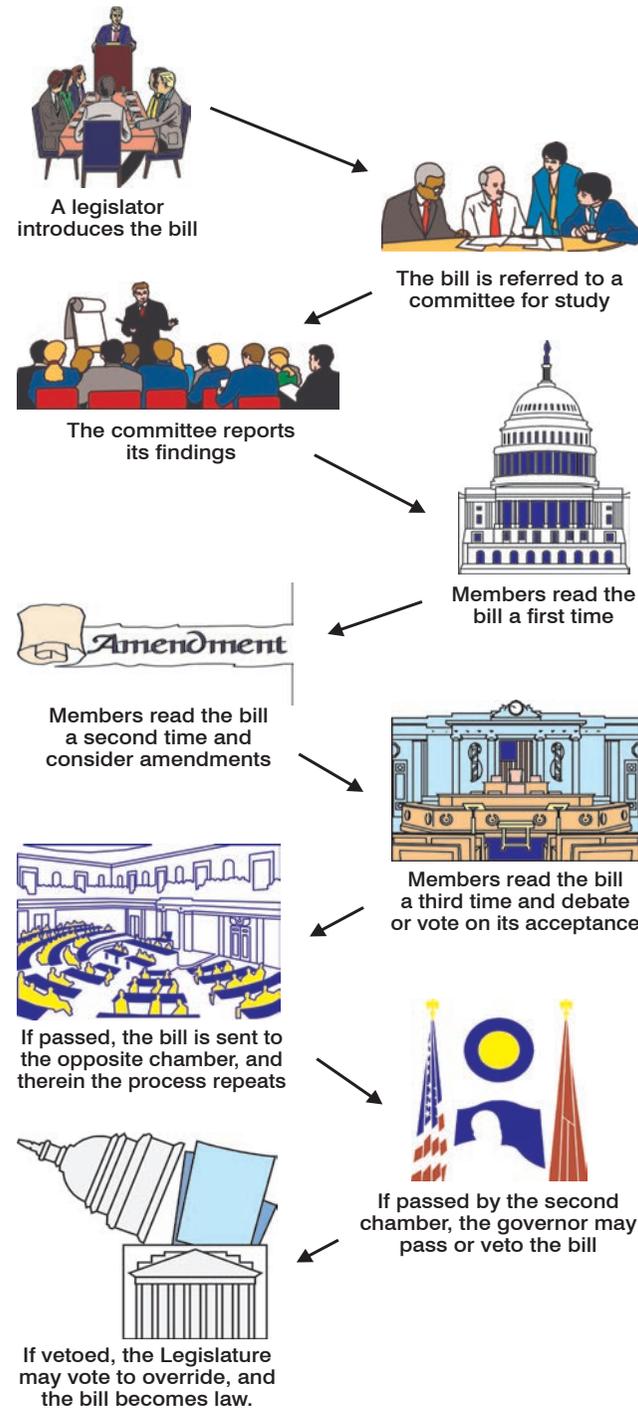
Your bill will be read three times – first to alert the membership, then for a vote on committee and individual amendments, and finally for a vote on passage. If passed, it will be sent to the opposite house, where the process repeats.

If the second house passes the bill, it will be sent to the governor for approval. If the second house makes changes, the first house must concur. If the houses cannot agree, a conference committee of an equal number of members is named. If the committee reaches an agreement, both chambers must adopt their report and vote again on passage. If it cannot agree, another committee may be named, or the measure may die when the Legislature adjourns.

STEP 4: GUBERNATORIAL ACTION

If the bill passes both chambers, the governor has five days to approve or veto while the Legislature is in session and 15 days to act otherwise. (The governor must act within five days on budget and supplemental- appropriations bills, irregardless.)

If the governor does not act, the bill automatically becomes law. If he vetoes, a simple majority in both houses may pass the bill. (A two-thirds majority in both houses is needed to override budget and supplemental-appropriations vetoes.)



Monitoring Your Bill

The Legislature's Reference & Information Center provides ready access to bill status and calendars for both houses and can provide copies of bills. For information, call (304) 347-4836, or visit www.legis.state.wv.us



**Beckley-Raleigh County
Chamber of Commerce**

legislative positions

