

“Straight from the Horse’s Mouth: PA House GOP Policy Chair in Pittsburgh

By Eileen Anderson

Rep. Dave Reed the new chair of the PA House GOP Policy committee spoke at a recent meeting in Pittsburgh. I was very interested to hear Reed and he didn't disappoint. During his presentation he stressed government had to focus on its core functions. He also emphasized the number one goal is private sector job creation and all agenda items will be evaluated to determine if they enhance or hinder private sector job growth.

Reed has been in office in eight years. He said a lot has changed during that time and he noted there are now at least two dozen members in the 25 to 35 year old range. The Republican majority in the House is 112 to 91, the largest since the 1950s in the house.

“The biggest issue this year is the budget and there not many discretionary dollars to fight about.” He noted “All are nervous about the Governor’s budget address on March 8th.” The big drivers of the budget are education, corrections, and welfare/Medicaid spending.” He feels we will be in a good position to reprioritize spending, get rid of waste, fraud, and abuse and have a surplus in several years.

He noted the voters revealed during this year’s election cycle that they were tired of the tax-and-spend politics. With the unemployment rate still at 10% they want to try less government, less spending, more private sector investment and a return to the free market principles.

Q. Aside from the budget, what are some of the other priorities?

A. The House will be working on welfare reform, taxation, government efficiencies and the Marcellus Shale, and take a look at the sale of the state liquor stores. He emphasized “They must get it right and there must be enhancement of consumer opportunity.” Passage of the Fair Share Act is a “no-brainer” since that legislation has been passed twice before.

Q. What is the Pennsylvania’s stance on implementation of the new health care law?

A. There is so much uncertainty right now about the health care bill that it will not be a priority. The state will take a wait-and-see approach. The first step is to fix up the language at the federal level. When the bill is implemented it will have a significant impact on the budget.

Q. How can we help small manufactures get the help they need? They need a pool of workers willing to show up on time, consistently, able to pass a drug test and put in a good days work.

A. Tax credits to defray the cost of training would help. One of the problems is manufacturers have to pay a higher wages. Another is we have to get ride of the stigma around manufacturing and we can do that in the schools. Welfare reform will include random testing for those on welfare to make sure that there are not on drugs.

Q. What about legislative and government reform?

A. We will be addressing health insurance, per diems, use of state cars, staff cutbacks. The most important piece is to have transparency in government spending.

Editor's Note: Eileen Anderson is vice president of Red Clay Tile Works and SMC's Government Relations manager. She can be reached via e-mail eileenanderson@smc.org.