

JOINT LEGISLATIVE POLICY OF THE TRI-CITIES

BRISTOL ♦ KINGSFORT ♦ JOHNSON CITY



107TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SECOND SESSION

RECOGNITION OF AREA LEGISLATORS

- **Senators**

Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey (District 2)

Rusty Crowe (District 3)

Mike Faulk (District 4)

- **Representatives**

Jon Lundberg (District 1)

Tony Shipley (District 2)

Scotty Campbell (District 3)

Kent Williams (District 4)

David Hawk (District 5)

Dale Ford (District 6)

Matthew Hill (District 7)

Michael Harrison (District 9)



THANK YOU

For more than a decade, the cities of Bristol, Johnson City and Kingsport have jointly established a policy agenda for the purpose of providing a unified voice on issues directly affecting our citizens and the quality of municipal services we provide to our communities.

The achievement of these policy initiatives will enhance the collective health, welfare, safety, and prosperity of our residents making each and every one of tantamount importance during the Second Session of the 107th Tennessee General Assembly.

Allow us to take a moment to say “Thank You” for our past successes together, just this past Session with laws requiring all stand-alone opiate treatment centers to obtain a Certificate of Need from the state and bringing local communities into the process, as well as expanding access to farmers markets for those artisans who bake and produce certain home-made products.

And, above all else, thank you for your continuing commitment to the citizens of Bristol, Kingsport, and Johnson City.

AGENDA

Welcome and Introductions

- Legislative Policies
 - Education
 - Public Safety
 - Economic Development
 - Unfunded Mandates and Local Control
 - Transportation
 - Local Revenue

EDUCATION

Basic Education Program Formula Transparency

- *According to the Comptroller's office, there is no written procedure for calculating the BEP. As the BEP also remains stuck between funding models, this lack of transparency continues to be a concern.*
- *We urge the delegation to work towards greater clarity in the state funding model.*



Basic Education Program (BEP)

- *We support full funding of the BEP 2.0 as fiscal conditions allow.*
- *We oppose any change that would reduce state funding for localities that have traditionally supported K-12 education with additional local resources.*
- *We oppose indexing local education funding to inflation.*

EDUCATION (continued)



Dual Enrollment Tuition

- *We ask legislative consideration of reducing tuition for college-level course work undertaken by high school students on a high school campus or other off-college location.*
- *Clearly, dual enrollment holds the promise of reducing costs for the student and State alike by reducing the amount of time necessary to obtain a college degree and move into the workforce. Dual-enrollment further offers reduced overhead costs for community colleges*
- *Charging full tuition for dual enrollment courses only serves as a barrier to participation, while denying a head start on the future of these young learners.*



PUBLIC SAFETY

Synthetic Drugs

- *Increasingly, over-the-counter synthetic drugs are proliferating throughout our communities, seriously jeopardizing the health and safety of the general public.*
- *These completely untested products are designed to emulate illegal recreational drugs while giving the appearance of safety and public acceptance due to their wide storefront availability.*
- *Despite the Legislature's efforts, it now appears a broader approach is necessary, banning any formulations designed to emulate illegal recreational drugs*



PUBLIC SAFETY (continued)



Methamphetamine Clean-Up

- *It is the position of Tri-Cities that the clean-up costs incurred by the rampant manufacture of Methamphetamine continues to pose a major public health threat as well as jeopardizing local law enforcement budgets. It is the contention of the Tri-Cities that the state should maintain primary response and funding for the cleanup of illegal meth labs through the Tennessee Methamphetamine Task Force.*



State Support for Regional Fire Training Centers

- *We support the creation of regional fire training centers to serve volunteer and professional firefighters in Tennessee.*
- *We support State funding to assist local governments operating multi-jurisdictional fire training centers.*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Pre-Project Funding

- *The Tennessee Industrial Access Road Program and FastTrack Infrastructure Development Program require shovel-ready projects prior to funding.*
- *We encourage the programs be modified to provide for pre-project funding when local communities participate in funding the project.*

Airport Development

- *We request development of new incentives focusing on the State's commercial service and general aviation airfields that represent unique opportunities for the recruitment of highly-skilled and high-paying positions in the aviation and aerospace industry.*
- *We continue to support funding to improve an additional one mile of State Highway 75 from the current project's termination at the Airport Parkway overpass to a point east of the Northeast State Community College campus*



UNFUNDED MANDATES AND LOCAL CONTROL

Unfunded Mandates

- *We support the enactment of legislation barring any State mandate without corresponding State funding to support the mandate and support legislation already introduced that meets that test.*

Local Control

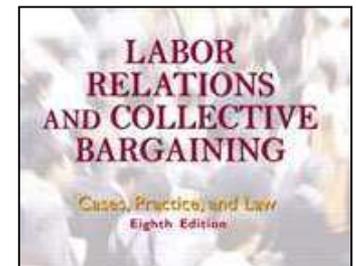
- *We support the principal of local control and oppose any action to diminish local autonomy in the provision of utility services, emergency services, economic development and other services provided by local government.*

UNFUNDED MANDATES (continued)

AND LOCAL CONTROL

Collective Bargaining

- *We oppose any state legislation that would allow local government employees the right to strike or collectively bargain over wages, benefits, or conditions of employment, even if limited in application.*
- *We oppose federal legislation or any act mandating collective bargaining, and if passed, request that Tennessee challenge the federal law as an infringement on state sovereignty.*



TRANSPORTATION

I-81 / I-26 Interchange Reconstruction

- *We support reconstruction of the substandard I-81/I-26 interchange which features difficult merging movements given high tractor trailer volumes and short ramps.*



Local Option Gas Tax

- *We support legislation creating a local option gas tax of up to five cents per gallon with two-thirds majority vote required for local passage. Such funds would be dedicated to local partnerships with the Tennessee Department of Transportation and Counties to accelerate high-priority State highways, provide industrial access/job creation and maintenance of local roads.*

TRANSPORTATION (continued)

Transportation Challenge Grants

- *We support legislation creating Challenge Grants through the Tennessee Department of Transportation for less populous cities and counties willing to fund a larger share of the project cost for road projects on the state route system within their community.*

Open Container Bill

- *While Tennessee prohibits open alcohol containers for motor vehicle operators, Tennessee has foregone more than \$90 million in federal transportation funding since 2004 because passengers are still permitted open alcohol containers in a moving vehicle. Given particularly tough transportation funding scenarios, we urge the Delegation to support Open Container legislation this Session.*



TRANSPORTATION (continued)

TDOT Capital Funding

- *Tennessee is a leader when it comes to fiscal responsibility, particularly on the issue of limiting debt-financing. However, given a heavy backlog of highway projects, historically-low interest rates and an ultra-low overall capital burden on the State, we urge consideration of expanded incremental capital financing within the Transportation budget to accelerate critical road projects.*



TRANSPORTATION (continued)



Rail Passenger and Freight Service

- *We support passenger and intermodal freight rail as a means of reducing overseas dependency on foreign oil while easing traffic congestion and pollution.*
- *We support the establishment of direct intermodal rail service between Bristol, via Knoxville and Chattanooga and Memphis, to facilitate the movement of passengers and freight across the state, eliminating significant numbers of semi-trucks and other vehicles that neither originate nor terminate within Tennessee.*
- *We encourage TDOT to coordinate with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation to incorporate rail service between both states as well as supporting the goals of the six states Memorandum of Understanding for the I-81 Regional Commerce Corridor.*



LOCAL REVENUE

State Shared Taxes

- *We oppose any reduction in state-shared tax revenue as it places additional burdens on local taxpayers, reduces basic governmental services provided to the community, and increases the likelihood of public sector job losses at a time when service demands continue to grow.*

Single Article Sales Tax Cap

- *In past years, local governments were locked out of any increase in the single-article cap, a policy shift that threatens the already narrow revenue base available to local governments. Restoring the local right to the single-article increment will provide flexibility and alternatives other than property taxes, remembering that the State captured the local tax increment (from \$1,600 to \$3,200) on any single article sold for use in balancing the state budget in 2002.*



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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!