



2020 Government Affairs Survey Recap

Members Share Feedback On What Matters Most



Jezree Friend is the senior director of Public Affairs at the Manufacturer & Business Association. Contact him at 814/833-3200, 800/815-2660 or jfriend@mbausa.org.

The Manufacturer & Business Association is your voice on local, state and federal issues. Our Government Affairs Department monitors what is happening in Washington, D.C., and Harrisburg, alerts members to pending legislation and provides a powerful, unified voice for business.

However, we would not be effective if not for your participation to prioritize our efforts. Legislators regard us as experts on the issues facing our business community thanks to your input. Our *2020 Government Affairs Survey* establishes direction on the issues that matter most.

This year's participants included industry leaders in manufacturing, nonprofit, health care, logistics and professional services. To those members who participated in this year's survey, thank you!

Here is the pulse from our members:

When it comes to short-term business concerns, 74 percent of survey takers expressed the need for access to qualified workers. Other top short-term concerns included reducing Pennsylvania's Corporate Net Income Tax Rate and aligning the state's Section 179, immediate expensing

allowance for pass-through businesses, with federal tax law.

To get quality feedback from the membership, we purposefully allowed for open-ended comments. Many of those responses included frustration over the government's handling of the business shutdowns from the spring. In addition to those who found themselves forced to close at the government's hand, many others felt the ripple effect on their operations.

Some of the most notable responses came from our question, "What keeps you up at night?" Eighty percent cited the high cost of group health insurance. This is consistent with last year's survey and further validates our efforts to advocate cost reducing association health plans. Significantly, 62 percent of members are concerned about the regulatory culture and 52 percent are concerned about an increase to the minimum wage.

Participants also revealed an overwhelming response to the need for a skilled workforce and concern the governor would implement another shutdown or further restrictions on their business.

With many employers expressing their frustrations with rising health insurance costs, we asked what steps they have been taking to keep it manageable. The top response was to share the cost increase with employees followed closely behind by moving to higher deductible plans. Our survey also indicated these increases have affected about one-third of employers' ability to provide raises or bonuses for their employees.

Good news: Jobs are available.

According to our members, 87 percent said if the right workers were available, they would hire more employees in 2021. Fifty-five percent of survey takers indicated they would hire one to five employees, and 19 percent responded they could hire eleven or more should they find the right talent.

Since most manufacturing jobs pay higher entry level wages than other industries, about half of our survey takers were not concerned with a minimum wage increase. However, for those that it will affect, the top two responses were to reduce employee benefits and automate where possible. This should concern lawmakers when considering these policies.

Wrapping up our list was the effect and concern that legalizing marijuana would have on business. More than half (54 percent) indicated this was a concern. Specifically, there is worry about what is not included in these policy conversations. Insurance liabilities, safety fears, inability to test in real-time if an employee is impaired, employer employment rights and worker motivation were reoccurring trends in the feedback from our members.

The MBA's *2020 Government Affairs Survey* qualifies the effects of public policy on our membership and serves as one of our most useful tools to develop policy positions. Our Government Affairs team plans to use this information to increase our effectiveness to support pro-business policies. ■

To learn more, visit the *Government Affairs* page on www.mbausa.org or contact us at 814/833-3200.