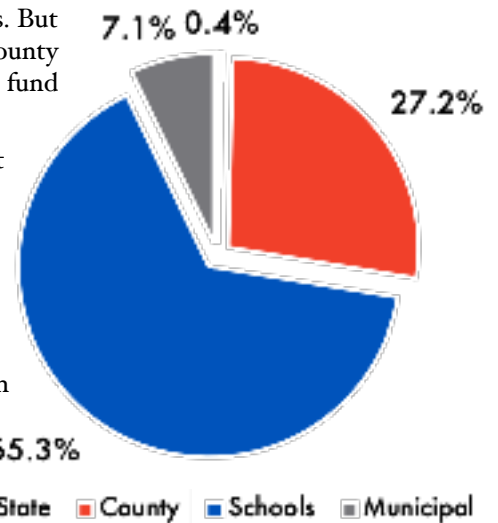




Amendment 1: Can Counties Withstand Its Impact?

It's all too easy to sugarcoat the prospect of any reduction in our personal property taxes. But the reality is that these tax dollars fund a multitude of county services and elected county offices. Simply put, Amendment 1 could have a detrimental effect on the tax dollars that fund our counties.

A major outcome of the 2021 Legislative Session was the passage of House Joint Resolution 3 (HJR3). This resolution, known as Amendment 1, will be placed on the November 2022 ballot, and if passed by voters, it will authorize a future legislature to eliminate, change, reduce or redefine personal property taxes. On average, the elimination of personal property taxes (including business & inventory and motor vehicle taxes) could result in an overall 20-30% budgetary loss. Such a loss would impact county law enforcement and public safety, fire and emergency response, health departments, courts, senior services, libraries, solid waste management, floodplain management, parks and recreation, local fairs and festivals, animal shelters and elections.



The Problems with a Proposed Remedy

Backfill, or the idea of making counties “whole” through a means other than personal property taxes, has been discussed and continues to attract various proposals. These proposals, however, fail to address two problems.

First, the currently proposed backfill level of 110% does not guarantee against a future legislature changing this level; once this section of code is opened, changes can be made at any time.

Second, the proposed backfill amount of 110% does not allow for growth, as counties would have no revenue mechanisms. To promote economic development, counties must provide essentials, such as water and sewer, in addition to amenities that are essential for siting new and existing businesses for job growth.

How We're Moving Forward

Amendment 1 would eliminate the current constitutional protections guaranteed to local government in the West Virginia State Code. As the primary stakeholder regarding Amendment 1, counties should be granted the opportunity to provide input and discussion on its potential fiscal impact on county government and its services.

CCA WV is asking to take part in discussions regarding any potential changes to county revenues. We will also be asking for specific plans on backfilling counties and how this will be accomplished.

We can all do our part regarding Amendment 1 possibly becoming law. Make sure your county employees and constituents are educated on all the services and programs that county government provides in your area and on the importance of reliable county funding!



Directors Discussion - Jennifer Piercy

It's been a while since our last newsletter, and I want to thank you all for your patience in receiving this most recent edition. I'm excited that this issue will catch everyone up with all that's going on this quarter!

One piece of important news is that we have a huge ballot initiative coming up this November! The status of the personal property taxes that fund so many vital county services is the focus of Amendment 1, which has been passed and will be decided by voters in only a matter of months. Should it pass, what might be the impact of this legislation? I want you to be informed about the scope and ramifications of Amendment 1, which is one of the highlights of this issue.

We are grateful that we have already received (or soon will receive) much-needed county funding from two national funding sources: the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). You can read more about the opportunities and priorities for the allocation of these funds in this issue.

We are well into 2022 with much on our plates to strategize and implement! Let's commit to work together, to partner with those who can help us meet our goals, and to move forward and make this year a truly great one for every county!



Commissioner Greg Puckett, NACo

In announcing his candidacy for 2nd Vice President of the National Association of Counties, Mercer County Commissioner Greg Puckett has stated, "It is an honor to commit my life to county government to be an advocate, and to advocate for others." Greg has indeed committed his professional life, in numerous capacities, to benefit county government and the various communities it serves.

In addition to serving as commissioner, Greg is a member of the CCAWV Legislative Committee. He is currently the executive director of Community Connections Inc. (CCI), the county's Family Resource Network, where he continually reaches across county and state lines to help guide the prevention and community-building process. He is also one of a team of local businesses and individuals passionately dedicated to revitalization and economic stabilization through the Princeton Renaissance Project (a partnership with the West Virginia HUB initiative).

Greg has and continues to promote NACo's work and service through a number of functions. He played an active role on the National Opioid Taskforce (a collaborative partnership with the National League of Cities), is vice chair of the Arts and Culture Subcommittee, and is past vice chair of the Juvenile Justice Subcommittee. Greg is also a member of NACo's Healthy Counties Initiative and serves as chairperson of the Mental Health Subcommittee within the Health Steering Committee. He is a charter member of the Economic Mobility Leadership Network and is chairperson of the Rural Action Caucus.

Follow Commissioner Greg Puckett on his website at gregpuckettwv.com.



2022-2023

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Jennifer Piercy, Executive Director

Contact Us



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Longtime Commissioner Nancy

Cabell County Commissioner and CCAWV Vice President Nancy Cartmill passed away on Tuesday, February 15, 2022. On behalf of CCAWV, we want to express our deep sympathies to her family.



Nancy was an inspiring public servant and a committed leader in her local community and across West Virginia. Her contributions, dedication, and perseverance to all she served were unsurpassed. Her laughter, smile and kindness were among her greatest qualities.

Nancy was active in CCAWV for many years, serving on several committees and in leadership roles. In addition to being our vice president, she had served as a board member, legislative chairperson, and president. We will always cherish Nancy's gift of leadership.

Recovery Funding for Our Counties

The Covid pandemic resulted in an ongoing health care crisis that has impacted the economy of every West Virginia county. A major way in which Congress has responded to the pandemic is through the passage of the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA), which delivered \$350 billion in recovery funds to state, local, and Tribal governments across the country.

The National Association of Counties (NACo) was instrumental in ensuring that West Virginia counties would receive their funding directly. Each county has received half of their designated funds, with the remaining half to be delivered during 2022.

ARPA funds are broadly designated by Congress to be used for:

- *Replacement of lost public sector revenue, using this funding to provide government services up to the amount of revenue lost due to the pandemic.*
- *Responding to the far-reaching public health and negative economic impacts of the pandemic by supporting the health of communities, and by helping households, small businesses, impacted industries, nonprofits, and the public sector recover from economic impacts.*
- *Providing premium pay for essential workers, offering additional support to those who have and will bear the greatest health risks because of their service in critical sectors.*

These funds can also be spent on specific infrastructure projects, and CCAWV has focused its attention on working with counties to make investments in various projects, which may include:

Water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure; making necessary investments to improve access to clean drinking water; support of vital wastewater and stormwater infrastructure; the expansion of affordable access to broadband internet.

We will continue our work with counties throughout 2022 to allocate ARPA funding in ways that are best suited to the needs of local communities. Please contact our office with any questions or to further discuss your allocation of ARPA funds.



Saving feels better.

The National Association of Counties (NACo) has enhanced the Live Healthy Discount Program to deliver greater healthcare savings to county residents at NO COST to the county.

No-cost Prescription Discount Program.

- Save an average of 30%* at more than 66,000 pharmacies nationwide

Low-fee health discounts nationwide.

- Provides 24/7 telemedicine service and save 15% to 75% on vision services, hearing aids and screenings, diabetes supplies, prepaid lab work and more

Low-fee dental discounts nationwide.

- Save 15% to 50% on check-ups, cleanings, fillings, crowns, x-rays, root canals and more at over 110,000 participating providers



To learn more and enroll your county, visit NACo.org/Health

*This is not insurance. Savings may vary by drug and by pharmacy. The Prescription Discount Card is operated by CVS Caremark®. The Discount Medical Organization for NACo Health and Dental Discounts is Alliance HealthCard of Florida, Inc. All rights reserved.
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The weekly meetings of our legislative committee bring together members from 12 counties who review legislative updates and work diligently toward finalizing policy and legislative recommendations for our board. At its January 2022 meeting, the CCAWV Board of Directors accepted the legislative platform recommended by our legislative committee.



This platform is extensive and includes policy statements and priorities that reflect the major issues currently impacting our counties that can be addressed through legislative action. CCAWV is committed to pursuing this platform in its entirety through enhancing essential partnerships with our legislators and other key entities.

Regional Jail Costs

CCA WV will continue to work with the WV Legislature and the WV Regional Jail Authority to identify additional revenue sources and jail population reduction methods in a unified effort to maximize the efficient use of tax dollars for incarceration of regional jail inmates.

Fiscal Issues

CCA WV is supportive of initiatives that have a positive effect on county funding, allowing counties to generate their own funding needs and oppose those initiatives that take funding away from county programs and services.

Unfunded Mandates

In these challenging economic times, CCA WV will defend against unfunded mandates legislatively or administratively passed on to local governments. CCA WV will evaluate and determine our position on any legislation that affects county finances.

Substance Abuse Treatment

Substance abuse is an extremely critical problem and impediment to the workforce in WV, and a major factor in the escalating burden on our criminal justice system. CCA WV supports efforts to increase and enhance available treatment.

Legislative Priorities

Support of Requesting in Statute the creation of a Regional Jail Task Force (through legislation) that would bring stakeholders to the table to develop a method to redirect the Regional Jail Bonds revenue to help eliminate increases to the Regional Jail per diem rate.

Support legislation that will allow counties to enact a permissive, local 1% county sales tax.

Support legislation to allow counties to advertise by Class I or Class II; and/or set a government rate for newspapers to charge counties; and request Senate/House Resolution to study advertising costs to local government.

Support legislation to eliminate the property roll back tax calculation. This would eliminate the section of code that requires a reduction (roll back) in the regular current expense levy rate when the appraisal of property values

results in a tax increase of more than 103% of the prior year projected property tax revenues.

CCA WV Supports

Legislation that would allow for permissive Amusement Tax for counties to offset county expenses, including regional jail fees and emergency services protection.

A pay raise bill/legislation, if tied to mechanism provision, as with previous legislation supported by CCA WV.

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