

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thanks to delegation for all its good work

Sometimes I think that people underestimate the complexity of the legislative process. When candidates run for election, we choose them based on their ideas and our contact with them as individuals. And sometimes we live with an impression if an individual gets elected, she/he will be able to change things—perhaps even right away.

This year I had the opportunity to support one of our City Council resolutions offering Morgantown as a potential site for working on changes in how we use our state constitutional provision for home rule for West Virginia cities. Working on this involved a lot of contact with each one of our local legislators, and I was impressed by every one of them individually and all of them together.

They worked as teams in both Houses. Each one of them contributed different strengths to the process. And each one of them remained results-oriented so that when flexibility was required in working out a solution that would work for the majority, they did excellent work without compromising the overall purpose of the legislation. They worked diligently for long hours both in and out of session, with their committees and in communicating with their constituencies. It is not an easy job, but I believe that each one of our local legislators is very skilled, very committed to the work, and enjoys it!

I have worked with legislative bodies at several times in my life, but I have never been so aware of how important it is to keep in mind that laws are made by groups and not by individuals. Law-making works best when it is a “collective people process” and not one dominated by dogmatic ideologies, blind loyalties and moneyed-influence.

Every year there are hundreds of bills which come before the Legislature for consideration. It takes lots of careful homework, good relationships, good communication and good leadership to do a good job in shaping a productive outcome of a legislative session.

And so, Sens. Michael Oliverio, John Blair Hunter and Roman Prezioso and Delegates Barbara Evans Fleischauer, Alex Shook, Charlene Marshall and Bob Beach, thank you for all your excellent work on behalf of giving Morgantown an opportunity to be one of the cities which can do a better job in addressing local problems by demonstrating home-rule solutions. Thank you, too, for putting us in touch with Sen. Ed Bowman, chair of the Senate Government Organization Committee, and Delegate Carrie Webster, chair of the House Judiciary Committee.

A big thank you, too, to local Conference Committee members Fleischauer, Shook and Oliverio. And thank you Gov. Joe Manchin, for supporting the vision to work on the home-rule issue. We, on the Morgantown City Council, will do our best to warrant the trust placed in West Virginia cities to improve our communities and, by doing so, our state as well.

Don Spencer

City Council member

Morgantown