

2019 UCC Legislative Survey

Q1. What political or community issues are of most concern for your business? Select the top 3.

Answer Choices	District	w/o District	Rank	Diff
K-12 Education	57.3%	29.4%	4	-27.9%
Employee Attraction/Retention	35.7%	38.5%	1	2.8%
Healthcare Costs/Access	34.6%	33.7%	3	-0.9%
Transportation & Infrastructure	26.4%	36.3%	2	10.0%
Affordable Housing	19.1%	20.8%	7	1.8%
Regional Growth	18.9%	28.4%	5	9.6%
Property Taxes	17.5%	20.3%	8	2.8%
Barriers to Entering the Workforce	16.5%	23.7%	6	7.2%
Income Taxes	15.8%	17.0%	9	1.3%
Opioid Crisis	9.9%	11.8%	11	1.9%
City/County Budgets	9.9%	11.2%	12	1.3%
Tariffs and Trade Barriers	8.6%	13.6%	10	5.0%
Permits & Licensing	6.0%	10.3%	13	4.3%
Legal Climate	5.4%	7.5%	14	2.1%
Other (please specify)	7.9%	10.3%		2.4%

Q2. In general, which level of government are you most familiar with?

Answer Choices	District	w/o District	Diff
Federal (President, Congress)	47.6%	39.3%	-8.3%
Local (City / County councils)	27.2%	36.2%	9.0%
State (Governor, General Assembly)	23.5%	22.2%	-1.3%
Other (please specify)	1.8%	2.3%	0.6%

Q3. The unfunded liability in the state pension system continues to rise, despite efforts to close it. Failure to fix the problem will mean higher business taxes and less investment in education, infrastructure, and public safety. The General Assembly should close the state pension system to new employees and offer them a 401(k)-style plan (while continuing to honor the commitments to current employees).

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Average	Enthusiasm
w/o District Responses	60.4%	18.8%	20.8%	3.58	39.6%
	72.0%	16.2%	11.8%	3.92	60.1%

Q4. Local governments, school districts, and special-purpose districts should be allowed to leave the state pension system, provided they are responsible for their unfunded liabilities.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Average	Enthusiasm
w/o District Responses	49.8%	24.3%	26.0%	3.31	23.8%
	59.0%	23.8%	17.2%	3.61	41.7%

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Q5. Our state's average teacher salary in 2017 was \$48,769 -- \$2,200 less than the Southeastern average and \$10,000 less than the national average. The General Assembly needs to take immediate action to close that gap and (once again) increase teacher pay to the Southeastern average.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Average	Enthusiasm
w/o District Responses	89.9%	5.4%	4.7%	4.54	85.3%
	83.0%	9.3%	7.6%	4.25	75.4%

Q6. To help alleviate the teacher shortage, the Commission on Higher Education should give colleges and universities more freedom to innovate teacher education.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Average	Enthusiasm
w/o District Responses	78.1%	13.4%	8.5%	4.06	69.6%
	80.1%	14.5%	5.5%	4.12	74.6%

Q7. High-achieving school districts should be given more freedom from state requirements to better address the needs of local schools.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Average	Enthusiasm
w/o District Responses	73.0%	13.7%	13.3%	3.94	59.7%
	70.9%	16.3%	12.8%	3.88	58.2%

Q8. Three different state agencies -- with accountability to three different boards -- share roles in teacher recruitment, retention, and education. The General Assembly's oversight committees should examine the responsibilities, roles, and expectations of these groups to ensure they are aligned to maximize the investment in teacher education.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Average	Enthusiasm
w/o District Responses	87.0%	8.4%	4.6%	4.3	82.5%
	86.5%	10.2%	3.3%	4.3	83.2%

Q9. As we increasingly lean on our state's technical colleges for workforce development, the General Assembly should provide more funding for the salaries of technical college instructors.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Average	Enthusiasm
w/o District Responses	77.9%	16.1%	6.0%	4.04	71.9%
	73.9%	18.7%	7.4%	3.97	66.5%

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Q11. Some groups are promoting more participation in retirement plans following a federal deregulation earlier this year. These groups want the General Assembly to pass legislation requiring small businesses to offer a state-sponsored retirement account for their employees. The Coalition should support this legislation.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Average	Enthusiasm
w/o District Responses	21.7%	27.7%	50.7%	2.56	-29.0%
	16.5%	22.1%	61.4%	2.31	-44.9%

Q12. The General Assembly should eliminate our \$70 billion in sales tax exemptions (which include food, medicine, electricity, etc.) in order to lower the overall sales and income tax rates.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Average	Enthusiasm
w/o District Responses	32.1%	24.1%	43.8%	2.83	-11.7%
	32.8%	22.2%	44.9%	2.83	-12.1%

Q13. South Carolina should eliminate the corporate income tax as part of a broad tax reform package.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Average	Enthusiasm
w/o District Responses	21.6%	32.5%	45.9%	2.67	-24.3%
	28.5%	28.9%	42.6%	2.82	-14.1%

Q14. New state regulations should consider the impact on the broader state economy, rather than just the fiscal impact to the state budget. Regulations with a significant impact should have a waiting period before being approved by the full General Assembly.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Average	Enthusiasm
w/o District Responses	67.3%	27.6%	5.1%	3.79	62.2%
	68.4%	25.5%	6.0%	3.81	62.4%

Q16. Which barriers to joining the workforce have the most impact on your business? (Select all that apply.)

Answer Choices	Responses	w/o District	Diff
Technical Skills	43.1%	49.9%	6.8%
Soft Skills	37.2%	43.9%	6.8%
Childcare	36.5%	32.8%	-3.7%
Transportation	25.7%	33.9%	8.2%
Criminal Records	16.7%	24.0%	7.3%
Drug Tests	14.1%	21.1%	7.0%
Housing	14.1%	15.1%	1.0%
Other (please specify)	16.9%	12.6%	-4.3%

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Q17. The South Carolina Supreme Court recently gutted business legal protections that apportion liability in certain business lawsuits. The Court reinstated the "plaintiff chooses" rule, which allows a plaintiff to sue only the defendant with the deep pockets in cases involving multiple parties, meaning even though a business may be relatively blameless for injuries, a business may be responsible for 100% of the financial burden. The Upstate Chamber Coalition should work with business partners and proponents of reform to re-institute these "joint and several" protections for businesses.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Average	Enthusiasm
w/o District Responses	62.4%	31.0%	6.7%	3.79	55.7%
	71.9%	23.0%	5.2%	3.98	66.7%

Q18. As many as 8,000 Upstate residents qualify for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) program. Our state prohibits them from obtaining state licenses to work (such as for nursing, teaching, real estate, etc.) South Carolina should allow these students to get state licenses to work in licensed professions.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Average	Enthusiasm
w/o District Responses	66.3%	14.8%	18.9%	3.75	47.3%
	65.5%	13.9%	20.6%	3.74	44.9%

Q19. The General Assembly should approve the use of marijuana for medical purposes, joining 29 other states (including Ohio, Florida, Arkansas, Oregon, and California).

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Average	Enthusiasm
w/o District Responses	63.3%	14.2%	22.4%	3.63	40.9%
	63.4%	14.3%	22.3%	3.65	41.1%

Q20. A joint committee of the General Assembly is investigating the sale of Santee Cooper - the state-owned electric utility. The Coalition should support the orderly sale of Santee Cooper to a private entity while also supporting efforts to stabilize utility rates in our state.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Average	Enthusiasm
w/o District Responses	64.6%	27.3%	8.1%	3.77	56.5%
	69.3%	23.2%	7.5%	3.88	61.8%

Q22. International trade supports more than 60,000 Upstate jobs. The Coalition should promote international trade agreements that will grow our export economy.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Average	Enthusiasm
w/o District Responses	89.3%	8.9%	1.9%	4.3	87.4%
	90.8%	7.0%	2.2%	4.37	88.6%

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Q23. Congress needs to provide certainty to the 700,000 undocumented young adults (8,000 in the Upstate) that were protected by DACA and allow them to work in the United States legally.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Average	Enthusiasm
w/o District Responses	63.6%	13.5%	23.0%	3.67	40.6%
	63.4%	12.8%	23.8%	3.65	39.6%

Q24. The Coalition should oppose expanded tariffs with our allies (i.e. Canada, Japan, Europe).

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Average	Enthusiasm
w/o District Responses	52.1%	25.2%	22.7%	3.52	29.4%
	53.7%	20.9%	25.4%	3.52	28.3%

Q25. China is South Carolina's #1 trading partner (as opposed to the rest of the nation where Canada or Mexico is the top trading partner). The Coalition should oppose expanded tariffs with China.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Average	Enthusiasm
w/o District Responses	42.1%	28.8%	29.1%	3.23	13.0%
	44.0%	22.6%	33.4%	3.2	10.5%

Q27. Which Upstate Chamber Coalition chamber do you associate with most?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Greenville Chamber	53.31%	795
Spartanburg Area Chamber	10.93%	163
Greater Greer Chamber	7.66%	114
Greenwood Area Chamber	7.10%	106
Simpsonville Area Chamber	6.54%	98
Anderson Area Chamber	3.91%	58
Oconee County Chamber	2.63%	39
Greater Easley Chamber	2.15%	32
Laurens County Chamber	1.44%	21
Cherokee County Chamber	1.28%	19
Clemson Area Chamber	0.96%	14
Fountain Inn Chamber	0.72%	11
Other (please specify)	1.36%	20
	Answered	1491

Q28. How many people does your organization employ in the Upstate?

Answer Choices	Responses	w/o District	Diff
251+	45.4%	22.0%	-23.4%
0-10	22.8%	35.4%	12.7%
51-250	16.4%	16.8%	0.4%
11-50	15.5%	25.8%	10.3%