

# Davidson addresses Darke County Chamber

Discusses COVID-19, privacy, election

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By Nathaniel Kubik - DarkeCountyMedia.com



Congressman Davidson

DARKE COUNTY - Rep. Warren Davidson (R), who represents Ohio's 8th U.S. Congressional District, attended the annual Darke County Chamber of Commerce State of the Nation legislative information event last Friday, and responded to questions concerning the CARES Act, taxes, government surveillance, diversity and inclusion, and current events. Due to COVID-19, the event was held virtually.

Sharon Deschambeau, President of the Darke County Chamber of Commerce, was recognized for her exemplary work in the Darke County community. Deschambeau will be retiring in November after serving 13 years as president of the chamber.

Following Davidson's initial introduction, the rest of the meeting was reserved for a Q&A session with the congressman. Though a range of questions were asked, the primary focus seemed to be CARES Act spending, and how local businesses and governments will receive their portion of state CARES Act funds. Davidson, who recently introduced

the Flexibility for States and Localities Act in the House, noted that he believes states need more flexibility in how they are able to allocate CARES Act funds. The Flexibility for States and Localities Act seeks to address these issues outright, and, generally speaking, will allow state governments to distribute funds in a way they previously were unable to.

"The feedback (from local governments) was that local governments are slow to get the money from the state," said Davidson. "I spoke with the governor, state treasurer, and state auditor and they all highlighted the urgency of flexibility, because the great news is that the COVID-direct expenses for the state and for the vast majority of local governments has not been nearly as big as we feared it would be. So, this money was sent to the states with a tight set of parameters where it can be used (COVID-19 direct expenses) and it has to be used by Dec. 31. Since May we have been working to provide flexibility... and there is a pretty good consensus around the country when I talk to other representatives, they all have ideas on how to get this flexibility done, but, frankly, for Speaker Pelosi, she has rejected those ideas, including some similar ones from Democratic members."

Regarding CARES Act funding, Davidson continued to speak on house proposals for a second round of COVID-19 relief.

"The goal for them (Democrats) is to get more spending for states and localities, and providing flexibility takes away from the urgency," noted Davidson. "The idea that it would help solve a problem takes away from the solution they (Democrats) want, which is a lot more spending. And that's one of the sticking points we've had in negotiations with Speaker Pelosi, and while she is publicly postured that she is negotiating, she hasn't really moved a serious bill at all."

After CARES Act spending was discussed, questions shifted to taxes and business development in the area. Davidson discussed tax codes for businesses and spoke on taxing developments in Congress leading up to new year.

“One of the big things that we did get done during some of the negotiations of the year was the qualified improvement deduction.” said Davidson. “Let’s say someone puts freezers into a restaurant, or something, that was deemed as part of the real property, and you had to depreciate it over 39 and a half years, but those aren’t 39 year investments, they’re sometimes not even 15 year investments. We got it, at least, back down to 15 years, but it has still been difficult to get technical corrections.”

The next question concerned privacy and surveillance, and how the government is working to protect the Fourth Amendment rights of U.S. citizens. Davidson noted that people initially think about the Constitution in terms of a collection of activities, such as freedom of speech, press, religion, and the right to bear arms. But, as Davidson reminded, the fourth amendment protects the privacy of U.S. citizens.

“It (the Fourth Amendment) has been pretty highly abridged,” said Davidson. “President Trump has drawn a lot of attention for his claims that his campaign had been spied against. Now, with some of the declassified documentation, if you don’t want to call it spying, you can at least say the federal government was monitoring everything that was happening that they could get their hooks on with his campaign. So, the fact that some of these same programs were used to target the President has turned it into a more partisan issue, but, thankfully, we’ve been able to build a coalition of conservatives and progressives who are traditional, free-speech Democrats, who see that spying on American citizens is wrong. In our view, it is an undue infringement on fourth amendment rights, and I don’t see it as a partisan issue, I say that’s the whole point of the fourth amendment, no citizens should be subject to warrantless surveillance. I hope it highlights that we do need a comprehensive privacy law.”

Last month, President Trump issued Executive Order 13950, which is combating race and sex stereotyping, and imposing requirements for federal government contractors to review the content of their employee diversity and related training programs. This was also put out by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to notify businesses, and it has come home to Darke County because the Darke Co. Chamber of Commerce is considered a vendor of Whirlpool Corporation.

Davidson explained that the Executive Order has been construed as the President blocking people from teaching about the value of diversity and inclusion. He noted that the President’s order was geared towards removing the teachings of critical race theory, and promoting teachings of diversity and inclusion. As it relates to Darke County, this order has prompted a number of businesses to highlight their diversity and inclusion programs.

To conclude, Davidson was asked about the upcoming election and what he believes the outcome will be. “I got to spend most of the day a while ago with the President and I’ve been out campaigning to help take back the house,” said Davidson. “Personally, I believe the President can win the election, but I’ve also heard his debate performance hurt his chances, so hopefully he will get another live, in-person debate that he can come out a little stronger in. Truly, at this point, the number of people who are undecided has to be minute. In the end, I think it’s more likely than not the President will win, the Senate will confirm Judge Amy Coney Barrett before the election, and the Republicans will take back the house.”

The Darke County Chamber of Commerce thanked Davidson for attending the meeting and discussing federal issues as they relate to Darke County and the surrounding areas. If you have any questions about local business, the Darke County Chamber of Commerce can be reached at 937-548-2102.