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Q1

Describe your overall philosophy toward the role of state government as it relates to business and industry.

Federal, state, and local government should provide just enough regulation to protect society and the citizens while allowing businesses the freedom to manage their businesses as they see fit.

Q2

What do you bring to the office you seek? Specifically, what have you built, improved, or changed for the benefit of your community or business?

In 2009, I started my business, A.J. Burk, LLC formerly Mountaineer Welding Services, LLC, and have grown it to 50 employees performing work in the energy and utility construction sectors across the state. I also own and manage a small real estate development company, Ri Co Properties, LLC that works in both residential and commercial real estate. Locally, I have volunteered in our youth soccer program for over four years serving as a coach and board member and recently being certified to referee in 2019. Thru my soccer board membership, with assistance from my company, we established the Lewis County Soccer Complex in Jane Lew, WV. I also serve as the associate pastor and board member at Cornerstone Community Church in Upshur County with a congregation size of 250 people. Lastly, my wife and I are foster parents and we are currently in the process of adopting our first child in the months to come.

Q3

Please list any groups, associations, or non-profits in which you are an active member or volunteer such as civic groups, labor organizations, advocacy groups.

I am an active member of the Contractor's Association of WV with my main focus of working with other contractors in the state to educate and train our youth on industry jobs and technical skills. I also serve on the board of The 180 Center, Inc., a faith based addiction recovery program that operates sober living homes to assist recovering addicts as they regain their lives, families, and careers.

Q4

West Virginia is facing many challenges. What do you consider to be the most important and critical challenge that threatens our state and what is your plan to alleviate this threat?

As I see various obstacles in front of us, but I would consider drug addiction to be the largest threat to our state but I will answer it below. So with that said, the second biggest threat is our infrastructure. In a society driven by technology, we are still plagued with inadequate and inefficient internet service and cell phone service. We also have failing roads and bridges that limit travel and growth. Identifying the problem is the first step, finding the solution is always more complex but fixing the infrastructure takes a priority shift. We must shift sustainable funding and resources to combat these issues. As every county is different and unique throughout the state, we must work with local government to establish areas of need and importance. These areas should include industrial parks (present and planned) along with key residential areas so not only do we attract large businesses in the industrial areas but we also attract supporting businesses along with housing opportunities for their families.

Q5

During the 2020 Legislative Session, SJR 9 and SB 837 moved in the West Virginia Senate, but fell short of the votes needed to move to the House of Delegates. The intent of the effort was to allow West Virginians to vote on a constitutional amendment to phase-out/repeal of manufacturing inventory, machinery, and equipment tax, business inventory, and tax on passenger vehicles while making local governments and schools whole. Please describe your ideas for addressing this issue which requires a change to the West Virginia Constitution.

I believe anytime that you can cut any business taxes that it is a good thing. When companies are spending less on taxes, they are spending that money on creating more jobs and investing in more equipment which creates further tax revenue and economy growth. But, we must ensure that we are not cutting these taxes too quickly and creating a void in tax revenue for the state and county governments. I would propose in the cutting of these taxes to be a process with a certain percentage drop over a period of years allowing for the void of cut taxes to be filled with the other tax revenue generated from the tax break.

Q6

What ideas do you have to help build our state's economy and improve West Virginia's position in competing for investment and job growth?

We must focus on our strengths as a state and then build diversity from them. What are those strengths? Natural Resources along with our blue collar population are what our state was built upon. We have an abundance of oil and natural gas lying below us, we have large seams of coal buried in our mountains, and we have lush forests of trees ready to be harvested. We have the ability to be unique and provide our country with their essential needs and supplies if we will foster an environment where we cherish what we have instead over regulate them and push them aside. Forests can be turned into paper, oil into gasoline, natural gas into power, and coal into steel if we will provide the economic environment and emphasis on these areas. We need to invite and pursue natural gas processing facilities, steel mills, paper mills, petrochemical facilities, and the like to our state. Let's sell our products and build an economy on what we already have.

Q7

Use of and addiction to opioids in West Virginia and our region have reached crisis levels. This is a problem being recognized not only at the state level, but at the federal level. What ideas do you have to help stop this devastating trend in our state?

This epidemic is exactly as you say, a crisis. It is overwhelming our schools, flooding our correctional facilities, destroying our families, and over working our law enforcement. It is using large amounts of tax revenue and not getting anywhere. I propose an aggressive approach to begin to see a difference. This is a long term investment so at first it will take more resources and more tax revenue but the goal is to see a difference over time, not immediately. My proposal includes harsher and more severe punishment for "dealers" (for ex: those receiving drug manufacturing or delivery charges) along with adequate resources to our local communities to fight the epidemic. These resources would include adequate funding and training for local law enforcement along with abundant recovery facilities and programs to help struggling citizens. Further, we must invest in educating our youth on the damaging effects of drug addiction hoping to trend the next generation away from their use.

Q8

Racial justice and equity, LGBTQ rights and gender equity are important factors for many current West Virginia employers, companies that consider moving to our State, and employees who may consider relocating to West Virginia. How would you address these issues to recruit and retain companies and employees for whom this is a priority?

Racial and gender equity are currently protected by Title VII and rightfully so. These are God given traits that are not a choice by any man or woman and so should be protected as they are. Further, adding any LGBTQ wording to state or federal non discrimination law would then elevate those lifestyle choices above other lifestyle choices which would be destructive to employers and businesses. God given traits and lifestyle choices must be separated. With that said, I do not support and will not support any legislation supporting LGBTQ as I believe it to actually be harmful in nature causing abundant law suits against businesses thus being counter productive in attracting new businesses to our state.

Q9

What are your specific ideas related to developing a diverse and skilled workforce in West Virginia?

Everything flows from education. We must improve our educational system to allow it to produce skilled workers. We can not wait until children become adults and then train them. Our educational system needs to be more focused on creating and developing diversely skilled adults than getting high scores on federal testing.

Q10

The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection proposed a rule for the 2021 Legislative Session to adopt a portion of US EPA recommended human health criteria which established limits for certain environmental permits. The WVMA is actively involved in ongoing discussions related to these criteria and supports the WV DEPs approach to establish an active work group to further evaluate these important measures. Please describe your position on the proposed rule.

I find myself somewhere in the middle of this proposal. I understand by changing regulation or over regulating industry could be damaging to companies so we must not allow environmental agencies to control industries. But as a government, I understand the responsibility to protect our citizens and environment from harmful chemicals. I agree with the approach to further investigate and study the data and findings as new technology does change the information and outcome. However, I would only support a phase in process of any new regulation that would be necessary instead of quick and large change to adhere to. Smaller changes over a period of years would be easier to manage and accommodate than a large change at one time.

Q11

Please describe policies that you believe may be helpful in balancing state regulations and environmental rules while maintaining a competitive atmosphere for industrial job growth and investment?

DNR, DEP, EPA, Amry Corp, DOT, DMV, and countless other tax funded government agencies are over regulating our state and creating an environment where nothing can be productive or efficient. This must end and I propose less agencies dictating what happens in our state and how it happens. I fully understand that there must be policy and safe guards in place but there is no need for so many. We must define the lines of authority in these agencies and remove those agencies that our no longer productive and needed. If there is a federal program already established, no need for a state level and vice versa.

Q12

What would you like to share with our members that we have not asked?

N/A

Q13

Would you be available for an interview remotely or in person?

I would be open for either scenario.

Q14

Where may the WVMA follow you on Social Media? Please list social media handles including Facebook, Twitter, and others.

Facebook: Burkhammer for Delegate

Q15

Name

Adam Burkhammer

Q16

Office Seeking

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Q17

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