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Q1

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

Government is not a job creator but can be either a job facilitator or job killer. The proper roll of government is to protect citizens and businesses and allow the free market and competition to thrive.

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?

I bring 27 years of the general practice of law, representing both individuals and businesses. I believe my successful legal experience (still ongoing) has helped make my community a better, safer and business friendly place. It has certainly helped in understanding, debating and passing legislation.

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 have coached Upward Bound basketball, served as president of the Fayette County Bar Association, served on a Christian school board and am a member of the Oak Hill Nazarene Church.

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?

Our state has too much dependence on government. The legislature must not keep luring people to depend on government. This can be done through policies, as difficult as it may be.

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.

We must address this issue and get this tax eliminated. I sponsored HJR 115 intending to repeal this tax through a Constitutional amendment yet make counties and school boards whole. I hope it gets more traction next year.

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?

Passage of HJR 115 is a very bedrock start. Pass and/or repeal policies so to make our state less dependent on government. Always try to reduce unnecessary regulations and taxes.

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?

Policies to make people more self reliant and less dependent on government. Also, we have passed a great many bills addressing this issue and we are seeing positive effects.

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?

Immutable qualities are and should be protected as people have no choice. However, individuals are free to make their own mutable choices but those choices should not equate to civil penalties and damages if someone else does not agree with those choices. For the latter, businesses and employers are almost always defendants and this will drive or keep them away.

Q9

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

Policies to enhance capitalism and the free market system will necessarily result in a diverse and skilled workforce. Included in these policies should be a better education system and technical college opportunities.

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 would need more information on this. However, I believe the WVMA is correct in pursuing a work group. This work group could lend significant support to the Legislature in passing, amending or refusing such a rule.

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?

One size does not fit all. However, in every situation, there must be reasonableness.

Q12

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

Manufacturing is the backbone of America. I support President Trump and his efforts to bring our manufacturing jobs back home.

Q13

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

Yes, in either forum.

Q14

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

Facebook, Twitter, votetomfast.com

Q15

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Tom Fast

Q16

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