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Q1

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

I believe government should work hand-in-hand with companies to ensure a successful and vibrant economy.

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 4 years of legislative experience by being one of the most pro-business lawmakers in the House.

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.

Putnam County Chamber of Commerce

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?

A shrinking economy is the biggest threat. We need tax reform, legal reform, regulatory overhauls, occupational licensure changes, and a skills-oriented education system.

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 am a strong supporter of eliminating these taxes.

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 need a site-development program, workforce development and training is critical, liability protections for COVID-19, and expanding our Opportunity Zone program.

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?

Cannabis has shown great promise in helping people ween off drugs. Expanding Medicare & Medicaid in a fiscally responsible way to fully reimburse addiction recovery centers & hospitals for long-term treatment is also needed. We also need to examine the feasibility of using mental hygiene orders for addicts.

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?

There is no other Republican in the state of West Virginia who is a bigger defender of civil rights than me. Even when the far right attacks me for it, I still stand for what is right. I will fight to make sure every person feels welcome to live, work, and raise their families here regardless of their race, gender, nationality, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Q9

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

I am currently leading the way to require that every high school senior complete the FAFSA before they can graduate. This is has shown a 10% or greater bump in the number of applications for 2 and 4 year colleges in other states that have done this. Many students feel hopeless and don't know they qualify for very much financial aid & scholarships.

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 hold the same opinion as your organization on this 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?

I will only propose policies that have the approval of the business community. A good example of this is when I cosponsored the 2020 solar energy bill. We can move society forward while still protecting our manufacturing jobs. I trust the experts in the chemical & energy industries to give me their professional opinions.

Q12

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

The region that I represent has more manufacturing companies than most other parts of our state. My family's companies employ 600+ workers, so I understand the difficulties that businesses have to go through to exist here. My goal is for our state to be more competitive at attracting and retaining industry so your members and our companies can stay here.

Q13

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

Absolutely.

Q14

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

@Higginbotham4WV is my Instagram and twitter.

My Facebook page is just "Joshua Higginbotham"

Q15

Name

Joshua Higginbotham

Q16

Office Seeking

House of Delegates - 13th District

Q17

Party Affiliation

Republican

Q18

District

13

Q19

Email

JoshHigginbotham@icloud.com

Q20

Phone

3048811864

Q21

Address

Address

Address 2

City/Town

State/Province

ZIP/Postal Code

93

Richard Drive

Poca

WV

25159
