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**Q1**

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

It's no different than my philosophy on the role of federal government as it relates to business and industry. I believe in a free market economy, which is a system based on supply and demand with as little of government control as possible. We do have to keep employees safe and protect the environment but beyond that, the government needs to pretty much stay out of the way. I don't believe in high corporate or business and occupation taxes. I believe in a fair system where everybody pays a fair share of the taxes. With a fair system of taxation, all that the government should do in reality is control the tax rate and I believe the lower the tax the better. More money in the marketplace creates a stronger economy and a stronger economy creates more tax revenue. There have been times in history when higher tax rates have produced lower tax revenues, and some other times when lower tax rates have produced higher tax revenues.

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**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'm seeking my second term in the House of Delegates. During my first term I supported legislation that improved the business climate in West Virginia. I was also Mayor of the town of White Hall for six years. When I took over as mayor, the Town Council was in process of taxing businesses out of existence. I stopped an increase of fire fees on commercial property that would've raised them by 1,000 per cent. I fought against a push by several members on Council who wanted a business and occupation tax (worst tax in the world) and won. I fixed it so that this tax could never be implemented in the town under current State Code. I pushed for the creation of a TIF district and succeeded. I've been given credit by the developer (Biafora Holdings) of Middletown Commons in White Hall for helping create a business-friendly environment, which has been instrumental in the renovation of the old Middletown Mall. White Hall is a prime location for a large commercial hub and is destined to become a main player in Marion County once again because of my intervention.

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**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.

Fairmont Rotary, Fairmont Lions Club, White Hall Kiwanis, Valley Falls State Park Foundation, Marion County Historical Society

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**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?

Because of the economic impact brought on by the Coronavirus, the budget may be the biggest challenge to legislators this coming legislative session. My first year in the legislature (2017), we were looking at a \$400 million deficit. The newly elected Governor, who was a Democrat at the time, was pushing for higher taxes to fix it. The Republican majority in the House fought hard against attempts to impose higher taxes on business and citizens. We were successful and we also proved we were right in doing so. In the following fiscal year, the economy began improving, revenue began climbing, and the deficit was erased. The budget is going to be challenging again in 2021 and I have the experience, but we can't panic like the Governor did in 2016 when he first took office and introduced his tax proposals. My overall plan would be to reduce taxes and maintain the current budget (even if it means dipping into the rainy-day fund) and assist businesses with tax relief or credits to help reduce the unemployment numbers and restart the economy.

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**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'm all for eliminating this awful tax. However, I don't like the way that was being proposed in the Senate during the last session. I don't like increasing other taxes, such as sales tax and tobacco tax, to eliminate another tax. To eliminate this tax, I would propose to model it after the idea used when creating TIF districts where increases in property tax, which is called an increment, are put into a special development fund for that area. However, instead of putting the increase of inventory tax into a fund, use the increment as a form of a tax credit toward the inventory tax. Then slowly phase it out over time. This idea would encourage business and industry to increase their equipment, machinery and inventory knowing that they wouldn't have to pay taxes on the increase and lowering their taxes at the same time. The counties would benefit from the increase of property tax, which would take place due to the construction of facilities to house the added inventory and equipment.

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**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?

Both history and contemporary data show that countries prosper more when there are stable and dependable rules, under which people can make investments without having to fear government intervention. Our founders based our system of government upon a free market. Because of their wisdom, our country has evolved into the richest nation the world has ever known. Three main things we need are improvements in (1) our tax structure, (2) our infrastructure, and (3) our educational system. Tax cuts are good for the economy. Time and time again, it has been proven that when income tax was cut for the rich, the rich ended up paying more in taxes because their income and profits grew. We need to remove the business inventory, machinery, and equipment tax but not replace it with another tax. We need to eliminate the local Business and Occupation taxes levied by Municipalities. We need to either phase out or lower the income tax. If we replace any taxes, we need to replace them with broad-based low-rate taxes. Location we got but we need good roads in order to travel in and through the state. We need a good educational system from grade schools to our universities. Young executives who are starting out look for good schools when they locate their families. Universities and colleges are also a good resource for industries who want to do research.

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**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?

Unfortunately, there's no one magic bullet to stop the epidemic. If there was, it might be simple. It basically needs addressed in three ways: prevention, treatment, and recovery. However, there's no one size that fits all. Also, each of these three areas may need addressed separately. The first step would probably be to divide these three areas into three separate task forces. Also, the State may need to be divided up into regions. Regions should be based not on geographic size or population but on need. Then form and fund these task forces to put together such things as research-based prevention programs, addiction treatment programs, and addiction recovery programs. We may need to contract with nonprofit organizations to oversee each area. We need more treatments centers such as Recovery Point West Virginia. After recovery we need a large variety of training programs in order to give these recovering addicts a skill. We could utilize our community and technical colleges for this.

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**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?

According to a recent corporate survey concerning site selection in Area Development magazine, these factors mentioned are not among the top 28. Also, in another survey, West Virginia was ranked fifth out of fifty states overall for being the most racially integrated in 2019. It would be nice to be first, but we're way ahead of neighboring States like Pennsylvania (44th) and Ohio (36th). With that said, it still important that employees in West Virginia, regardless of a person's race, color, religion, national origin, or sex, that they should feel comfortable in their workplace. Employees are already protected by state and federal laws. We have to be careful as to how we try and fix something that may not be broken. I don't want to place more burdens on businesses with more regulations and opening them up to more lawsuits. I believe most companies don't want that. I would be for increasing the budget of the Civil Rights Division if the Attorney General felt that he needed it to combat racial injustice and discrimination. I also would be open to any suggestions from the Attorney General's office to improve State Code.

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**Q9**

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

Diversity is key for a company's bottom line. According to Forbes, diversity means diversity of minds, ideas, and approaches, which allows teams to find a solution that takes into account multiple angles of the problem, thus making the solution stronger, well rounded and optimized. Senate Bill 1 that was passed in the 2019 session and created the West Virginia Invests Grant Program is a great start in creating a skilled workforce. In 2018, I introduced HB4244 that would grant tax credits to businesses that financially supported students enrolled in the state's community and technical colleges and hire them after graduation. I support things that promotes training and improving our workforce capabilities.

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**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'm not sure which rule this question refers to because the WV DEP is proposing changes in seven rules for 2021. However, this is my position on Environmental Protection: In 2019, the United States was the number one reducer of emissions in the world. President Trump rolled back 95 unnecessary environmental rules that were imposed under the Obama Administration. I agree with the environmental policy of the Trump Administration, which is: "Americans have long been told that our country is running out of energy, but we now know that is wrong. America's energy revolution has produced affordable, reliable energy for consumers along with stable, high-paying jobs for small businesses—all while dropping carbon emissions to their lowest level in 25 years. American energy policy must balance environmental protection with economic growth in order to encourage innovation, discovery, and prosperity."

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**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?

For many on the left, environmental damage has become the catch-all excuse to justify new taxes and regulation. Putting a price on environmental damage makes sense only if there is actual environmental damage. The legitimate concern is that the left invents environmental concerns to justify new taxes. Also, environmental regulations can be excessive. In many cases regulations pose very high costs with a very low success rate. Regulations should be the last resort. I believe that a better approach to environmental policies should be based on a the Free-market environmentalism concept, which argues that the free market, property rights, and tort law provide the best means of preserving the environment, internalizing pollution costs, and conserving resources. The role of government should be to define property rights, reform tort law where it's fair to both parties, and to offer incentives to promote environmental stewardship.

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**Q12**

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

I received your endorsement in 2018 and I hope to receive it again. Unfortunately, I lost a close election (73 votes). I'm running again in District 50 (a three-member district) of the West Virginia House of Delegates and my chances of winning back my seat in this election are very good. Especially since two out of the three incumbents are running in other races. I'm sure you endorsed my campaign last time based on my voting record while I was in the House. I assure you that my stand on issues have not changed since that time. Thank you for your kind consideration.

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**Q13**

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

Yes. My cellphone number is (304) 694-3535.

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**Q14**

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

- My Website: <https://electguyward.com>
  - My LinkedIn Account: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/guy-ward-a8587965/>
  - My Facebook Page: [https://www.facebook.com/GuyWardHouseofDelegates/?eid=ARDpG2fKywqNzpYzsB9Mv0KREmV3PdJy1MV\\_huTYSnQbVuFc576rjW9byJSz2\\_ZmkrxNtrOFFJITDrF](https://www.facebook.com/GuyWardHouseofDelegates/?eid=ARDpG2fKywqNzpYzsB9Mv0KREmV3PdJy1MV_huTYSnQbVuFc576rjW9byJSz2_ZmkrxNtrOFFJITDrF)
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**Q15**

Name

Guy Ward

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**Q16**

Office Seeking

West Virginia House of Delegates, District 50

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**Q17**

Party Affiliation

Republican

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**Q18**

District

50

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**Q19**

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**Q21**

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