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**COMPLETE**

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Page 1

**Q1**

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

I believe that the state must do what it can to encourage business and industry to locate and function within our borders. While keeping in mind that some rules for workplace safety are absolutely necessary, the state should allow business to operate with as little regulation as possible.

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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 have been an educator for almost 20 years. I have had many current members of our business community come through my classroom. As a teacher of civics, I feel I have helped to instill a sense of civic duty in many of them.

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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.

I am the president of the Marshall County Chapter of the American Federation of Teachers. I serve on the AFT-West Virginia state Executive Board. I am a member of the Sons of the American Legion, as well as a member of the VFW Auxiliary, and the West Virginia University Alumni Association.

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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?

Our infrastructure is extremely outdated. We need a long term plan to be implemented to improve our roads, water and sewage lines and our access to broadband internet. The lack of good infrastructure and the slow pace at which anything is getting done had hampered our ability to attract out of state business. It also hurts the ability of our own home-grown entrepreneurs to grow or expand their own business ideas.

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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.

If there was a dedicated revenue source, which guaranteed a way to make up for the loss of revenue from the phasing out of the taxes, I would be supportive of the idea. As an educator, the short-term losses for my local school district stood to be over \$10 million. Without a guarantee that the funds would be replaced, I was hesitant to support the effort.

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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?

It all starts with giving the economy a jolt with jobs by beginning to rebuild the crumbling roads, replacing the outdated water lines and expanding the reach of the internet within our state. These jobs will pay for themselves in the long run. It can also encourage business development within our state and that can bring business from out of state.

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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?

There must be an investment at three levels. First, those who are convicted of crimes linked to drugs need to have access to long-term recovery programs. Second, there needs to be a way to help those people who are recovering to find employment. This can be done with job training and apprenticeship programs, allowing them to get back on their feet or the long term. Finally, there should be early intervention with students in our schools. Too often the problem has begun in the teenage years as a result of various circumstances. This is where more social workers and counselors are needed in our schools to help our overwhelmed teachers and administrators to have a more positive effect on their most at-risk students.

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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?

I am a strong supporter of racial and gender equality as well as LGBTQ in both society as well as in the workforce. I would always encourage any business or entity to hire the most qualified person for a job no matter their race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, etc. Finding the most qualified person is what makes businesses grow the most.

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**Q9**

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

We need more job training programs for both the unemployed as well as in our educational institutions. CTE programs can give our current students a leg up in the workforce as they become adults. More apprenticeship programs will allow those who may find themselves out of work or looking for a change in jobs skills to help themselves find long term job security.

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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 am a supporter of having regulations to protect the environment. However, there are circumstances that warrant another look at certain rules that may have become outdated or unnecessary. I would support establishing a group of experts in both the environmental as well as business communities to come together to work out ideas for rules that will more resourceful for all parties involved.

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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?

I am not aware of any specific policies, but as stated in the previous answer, I am open to looking at any ideas that can make West Virginia more competitive, while at the same time preserving the environment we live in.

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**Q12**

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

As I have stated, I have been an educator for many years. I have witnessed many students come through my classroom and go out into society to go to college, trade school or the military. Some have left the state, some have stayed. I want to see our state grow to the point where the majority know that they can stay and have a prosperous life for themselves. I am willing to work with anyone to find the answers that can get us on the road to that place.

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**Q13**

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

I am willing to meet in person or remotely.

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**Q14**

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

yes.

Facebook: Josh Gary for State Senate

Twitter: @joshgary4WV

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**Q15**

Name

Josh Gary

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**Q16**

Office Seeking

West Virginia State Senate

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**Q17**

Party Affiliation

Democrat

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**Q18**

District

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**Q19**

Email

josh@joshgaryforwv.com

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**Q20**

Phone

304-945-3400

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**Q21**

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