

WV for Manufacturing Jobs Pac Questionnaire

Doug Skaff Jr House of Delegates 35th District

Democrat doug.skaff@gmail.com

3 Joplin Place South Charleston WV 25303 (304)-549-2171

1. Overall Philosophy for role of State Government.

My overall thoughts toward state government are that we should get out of the way of the business owners and job creators so they can do what they do best. Government can assist with the framework and give opportunities for the businesses and investors to take a chance in West Virginia. I think it is also Governments job to create a good overall quality of life environment that attracts people to WV, with a good education system, great recreation culture, and great tax climate. Job of government is to keep things constant without allot of changes so those who want to invest know and understand the climate. When it comes to regulations, government should work together and not overregulate just for the sake of regulating.

2. What do I bring to the office I seek?

Having worked and owned various businesses in and around WV I think I bring a first-hand look into what it takes to be successful as well as the everyday struggles businesses have in WV. I also worked for a fortune 200 Company Owens Corning for 7 years where I traveled all around the country and worked in their manufacturing facilities as well as with their sales forces. I got a real life view of how products were manufactured and all the people aspects that go along with making a successful and consistent product. Currently own various small businesses across WV and understand how COVID has affected my workforce, customers, and bottom line. Personally I am either directly or indirectly involved in commercial & residential real estate development, building material distribution, commercial & residential construction & remodeling, restaurants, movie theatre, and consulting firms. Through the jobs I do or buildings I lease I am responsible for creating opportunities for people to succeed and grow and expand their businesses. I feel like my understanding of various types of businesses makes me a well-rounded Legislator who can relate to the laws being proposed.

3. Groups or organizations I am involved in.

HBA – Home Builders Association of Charleston & WV, Charleston Moose Lodge, WV Kids Cancer Crusaders, YWCA Sojourners Shelter (Chair Guys Night Out Fundraiser to Support Women & Children In Need), St. George Orthodox Church, Clay Center Board, Kanawha Valley Business Group.

4. WV Facing many Challenges?

I think one of our states biggest challenges is our workforce preparedness. I mean finding a drug free worker who wants to show up every day has been a real challenge. Especially now with the Trump bucks that were given out I can't get people to work. I think we must create an environment that helps people get the skills they need to be successful. And if you were on drugs and recently became clean we must help them become a contributor to society. #2 is perception. The sooner we realize that everything we say or do does have consequences it will help with our perception around the world. When we don't adopt certain workplace standards when every other state has, or our Governor or elected officials make comments in jest that set us back decades. We need to get past that stereotype that we are a backwards state. We need to help ourselves first by being better leaders and spokespersons for our state. #3 Roads and infrastructure. I could go on for days talking about this. It is downright embarrassing. How can we attract or encourage businesses to come to WV when half our state doesn't have good broadband and $\frac{3}{4}$ of our state has crumbling roads. If we want to be business friendly, put our money where our mouth is. Focus on broadband, our roads, and our workforce. Then the perception that we are a good place to do business will follow.

5. SJR 9 & SB 837

This is a great issue. And I would love to see this phased out over time. And I agree this is tough tax for businesses and manufacturers to swallow. To be frank we need to take the politics out of this issue. It was completely politicized this year. It should not be a republican issue or a democratic issue. It needs to be a pro WV business issue. I will not allow this issue to be used as a political pawn. And used as campaign talking points. During the whole campaign two and four years ago all the Republicans said this tax had to go, and it would be the first thing they got rid of. But now 4 years later this tax still exist and it wasn't even mentioned until the beginning of this session, because it sounded good in the state of the state address. And Senator Carmichael and both Finance chairs publically said all the right things but when the cameras were off tell

moderate Democrats like me they are hoping we take the heat for it because they have no way of paying for this. Even to the point of joking about it saying we will just get the counties all fired up and let you Democrats take the credit for saving them and the blame from all the companies. I wasn't about to fall on my sword and have all Mayors and all counties and all schools mad at me for taking away their revenue stream. In reality the Governor had no plan to ever take this off this year. It sounded great and they were good about using this issue to raise a lot of donations with large companies but had no plan to backfill and knew enough legislators would say we can't afford to do right now. The idea of all the counties and schools and entities that this tax effects would be made whole sounds wonderful but the reality is they had no way of actually doing that. If this tax truly was a priority why did we put giving Murray energy 200 million dollar bailout? Why did we give first energy a big bailout? This was not a priority and it should have been. I pointed out from day one of session to the Manufacturers association that we need a real plan to phase this out and a new revenue stream to backfill or this will never happen. Regardless of what a coupe elected officials may have told you. I would be happy to help on this issue and work towards a long-term plan to phase this out while not bankrupting our counties and cities.

6. What ideas to Build our state's economy and improve West Virginias' position in competing for investment and job growth. ?

We need to focus on our workforce development. We need help displaced workers by giving them to tools and resources they need to be successful. Continue to expand partnership with our technical colleges. Also start our high school kids into the community colleges while there are in high school taking one or two classes a semester from the community colleges and or career schools to give them a leg up once they graduate high school. We need to get rid of our opioid problem. This is a huge black eye on our people and state. We must invest in jobsites and help make the sites shovel ready for developments. We must create partnerships with companies wanting to invest in WV and listen to their needs. Focus on Broadband expansion, and put money into entrepreneurship initiatives to help our best and brightest is creative and successful. And lastly we focus too much on giving students the promise scholarship (which is great) but then we don't do enough to keep them here after graduation. Why not offer no state income tax on for recent college graduates who go into specific areas of trade where we have a shortage. Let's be creative and work together to keep our graduates here.

7. The best solution is hope, opportunity to succeed. Those who lose their jobs or have nothing else to do turn to opioids. We must invest in helping people get back on their feet. People want the opportunity to feel good about them again, but they are going to need help getting there. The best cure for opioids is giving someone a chance. We must help them get back on their feet. Give them tools and resources to be successful. Then those that won't get cleaned up we need to invest in more treatment facilities and responsible addiction clinics to help get them cleaned up. As well as invest in mental health counselors. I think we need to put more counselors in the schools. I mean mental health counselors to help steer students the right way or to help head them off before they drift. And continue to hold these companies accountable for shipping so many pills into our towns.

8. Racial Justice and equity and workplace rights?

It is 2020 and I cannot believe we cannot pass a nondiscrimination bill in WV. All fortunate 200 and 500 companies have nondiscrimination and workplace equality in their mission statements. For WV to be so far behind the times is embarrassing. We will continue to be the laughing stock of America and be described as backwards Hillbilly's unless we address nondiscrimination in the workplace. We must pass a bill, and also make it illegal to kick someone out of his or her apartment for being Gay or of a particular race.

9. Developing a diverse and skilled workforce?

We need to start our students early in learning about those jobs we have a shortage in. For example nursing, teaching, welders, pipe fitters, natural gas industry etc. DO partnerships within the high schools so students can get some hands on career and technical training and exposure to the jobs of tomorrow during their years in high school. Secondly we need to go into our more urban areas and educate the students of opportunities that may exist for them. It is important to make sure we develop a final chapter to the promise scholarship that gives them the ultimate goal, which is post-graduation, a job or opportunity to succeed. As for creating a more diverse workplace we need to educate our current employers as well as our legislators that we can do better and be more inclusive of all people regardless of age, race, sex, or who they love. We need to offer diversity classes to all our students as well as our current employers. I know the YWCA does a wonderful job with diversity training. We should offer this as online courses or something to all employees. Also we need to pass legislation that says we do not discriminate at all in West Virginia.

10. I agree in a proposed active work group to make sure our DEP regulations and rules are fair and not overreaching. DEP should be partners with the Manufacturers assoc. and should be working together to provide certainty and stability when it comes to standards. I support eh WVMA position here.
11. We need to speed the up the process of getting permits. Companies can be waiting months and years for permits. This is unacceptable. I am a firm believer that we must work to protect our environment but we also must be realistic and consistent with our neighboring states. We should not put ourselves at a disadvantage and create regulation's that far exceed and outreach all our neighboring states. We need to quit overreacting every time there is one bad apple that did not follow the rules. We shouldn't punish all the good actors for one bad one. (Example the storage tank rules) We must create a place of stability and realistic rules and guidelines that allow for investment and long-term growth.
12. I appreciate the opportunity to work with the WVMA. Regardless of my voting record or where I fall on your evaluation. I will always be there with an open ear and be looking for areas of opportunity where we can work together. During the water crises my party was in control and wanted to create some very extreme measures. I remember meeting in the Vice Chair office of finance reworking the Judiciary committee far reaching rules and regulations they put forth with Rebecca. I view myself as a moderate who is an independent thinker and who always looks for creative solutions. I always put party politics aside while putting my region and people in my district first. The manufacturing sector has always been one of the backbones of the Kanawha Valley as well as this state. We need to do whatever we can to bring more manufacturing jobs and investments to WV. As for me you will always know where I stand I will not tell you one thing and do another. I have no problem speaking candidly and will always have an open door or phone line where I can be reached. My cell is 304-549-2171.
13. Would be honored and happy to do an interview to further discuss any of these topics. I have ideas for phasing out the inventory tax and business and machinery tax. Look forward to discussing in person.
14. Dougskaff.com is my website

Doug skaff on FB, Instagram and twitter.