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Q1

Identity-Please fill out the indicated fields.

Candidate Name: Lori Cowger Dittman
Office Seeking: House of Delegates
Party Affiliation: Republican
District: 63rd

Q2

Contact Info-Please fill out the indicated fields.

Address: 440 dittman drive
City/Town: Gassaway
State/Province: WV
ZIP/Postal Code: 26624
Country: United States
Email Address: dittmanforhouse@gmail.com
Phone Number: 3046448912

Q3

Education & Experience-Please fill out the indicated fields.

High School Attended (Ex: School name, city, & state)

Braxton County High School, 200 Jerry Burton Drive, Sutton, WV 26601

Colleges Attended & Degrees Obtained (Ex: Marshall, MBA)

Farimont State College BA Secondary Education, West Virginia University, Masters in Special Education 5-Adult

Current Employer & Job Position (Ex: WVMA, Director of Operations)

Braxton County Board of Education, 8th Grade West Virginia Studies Teacher

Describe your current job & responsibilities

8th Grade West Virginia Studies Teacher and summar and responsibilites follow: Provide appropriate instruction to secondary students and insure that the students meet the learning objectives and standards for the appropriate content and grade level. PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES: Appropriate certification required: Middle School, grades 6-8 minimum; Senior High, grades 9-12 minimum; Sixth Grade Teacher, Elementary certification. Responsible for implementing adopted and supplemental academic programs. Responsible for implementing 21ST Century technology skills. Responsible for planning and implementing collaborative model with special education students and teachers. May be responsible for planning & implementing designated co-curricular activities and/or programs at the school such as curricular fairs, awards programs and field trips Be accountable for individual student achievement. Responsible for planning and implementing personalized learning for all students. Strong working/communication skills with students, parents and peers. Willing to implement any other programs designated by principal for school improvement. Responsible for maintaining classroom control. Includes supervisory and/or other duties as assigned by Principal.

How long have you worked for your current employer?

I have worked for the Braxton Board of Education for the last 19 years.

Q4

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

The state government should be supportive of businesses and industry and encourage growth. The government often over-regulates instead of supporting success. Regulation should be supportive, not punitive.

Q5

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 live in a rural county. The closest town to me is Gassaway and for years has been dying and becoming a ghost town. In 2018, I found like-minded people that wanted to see a change in our small town, and together we founded Gassaway Area Improvement Council with the desire to restore, enhance, and promote the best of smalltown living. We began beautification projects, and town clean-up, and believe that if you renovate, businesses will come. We have seen new businesses move into our town and other projects are in the works, and we are seeing our town come to life again. I also live along the Elk River and have been an avid kayaker, but our county did not have a kayak rental or shuttle service, so in 2018, I formed Elk River Paddle and Yak, a kayak rental and shuttle service from the Sutton Dam to Duck, WV. I have served nn many local mission projects in my community and am supportive of shopping locally.

As a teacher, I encourage students to use their gifts and talents as young entrepreneurs. I serve on the Elk River Trail Town Committee to support and encourage business development and community involvement along the Elk River Trail.

Q6

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.

Groups I belong to include, the Gassaway Area Improvement Council, Elk River Trail Foundation, Elk River Water Trail, Brownfields, Girls on the Run, and Gassaway Baptist Church.

Q7

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?

The opioid crisis and low workforce numbers are two of our most significant issues. We need better education and more treatment facilities. I want to partner with organizations on the front lines fighting the opioid crisis.

Our schools need a greater emphasis on non college career paths. College is great, but not everyone wants to go in that direction. Helping students find alternative careers is crucial. Students don't know what they don't know. Let's expand trade school programs and Vo-tech opportunies.

Q8

Do you support the passage of Amendment One on the November 2022 General Election ballot? The measure provides the legislature with the authority to repeal or phase out tangible personal property in the future, this includes tax on personal vehicles, small business inventory, and tax on manufacturing inventory, machinery, and equipment.

I do support the passage of Amendment One.

Q9

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?

Since this is an area that I am not an expert in, I am open to listening to leaders in manufacturing and the economy so that we can find solutions that will build our state's economy and improve West Virginia's position in competing for investment and job growth. I believe West Virginia is a great place to live, work, and retire.

Q10

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?

I would support law enforcement's need to get drugs off the streets and the dealers who are bringing them in and increasing rehabilitation centers across our state. There are organizations that are addressing this issue, and I would want to listen and seek ways to come alongside them to find and implement solutions.

Q11

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?

Promoting that West Virginia is a state that values all people. Discrimination against anyone based on race, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation will not be tolerated.

Q12

What are your specific ideas for addressing workforce skills gaps in industry? Specifically, with the growth of manufacturing jobs in the state and need for diverse and skilled labor, what are your ideas to prepare the state's current and future workforce for manufacturing jobs.

Identify what skills are needed and provide a way for people to get the skills they need through various programs. Promote those jobs and opportunities.

Q13

What are your ideas for improving outcomes in the state's K-12 public education system?

Speaking from my experience, elementary schools need the staff to address deficits and do interventions in the foundation of students learning. Once I get a student in 8th grade that struggles to read and do the math, they are several grade levels behind. Moving them just a grade level in a year is progress, but they are still behind. Parents/guardians and students must take greater responsibility for their learning. The culture surrounding schools and education must also change. The value and opportunity that education can make are just not valued enough. How to change culture? That starts on the local level. Great leaders and teachers that are passionate, and families investing and promoting the value of education will certainly help improve outcomes. Highlighting successes and sharing what works will also be key to improving outcomes. In addition to education, an emphasis on greater mental health care for students must be addressed.

Q14

What ideas do you have for incorporating a focus on STEM education in our public schools and how could industry engage to support increased workforce learning models in middle and high schools, as well as career and technical education centers (vo-tech)?

Schools are offering more STEM education classes. Each county should have a career and technical center. Expanding vo-tech classes and allowing more students to be able to take field trips to learn about specific industries, allowing opportunities for students to shadow different careers where they see what that career looks like. Industry leaders visiting schools. I saw Creators Wanted to not just visit cities, but rural areas too. Last year some of the high school students visited a real construction job and learned about the bridge building process. Industry could foster those opportunities by helping students go on those field trips by sponsoring and working with schools.

Again, there are organizations that are engaging and supporting students. In my school, we have Career Technical Education and all 8th students are exposed to the sixteen career clusters. Guest speakers and hands-on activities are a major part of that class which helps students explore career options. Career fairs with representatives from different industries would help promote and inform students about the opportunities and how to land a career in the desired field.

Q15

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?

Policies have to be examined to maintain economic and environmental issues. I would look to support policies that fit our current environment, promote innovation and new technologies, and eliminate duplicate regulations.

Q16

What do you think West Virginia could do to promote energy diversity including the growth of renewable energy sources in the state?

We are a state of rivers and have several dams. Let's explore how West Virginia can use hydroelectric power. Having more conversations about energy diversity, sharing the facts and how it would impact our state with our constituents, and showing how renewables are being successful in other states would help promote the growth of renewable energy. It is difficult, our state has been dominated by coal for a long time.

Q17

Many corporations have established environmental, social, and governance criteria. How would such goals impact your decision making on relevant policy issues as a member of legislator?

I would ask a lot of questions about ESG.

Q18

If you could work on a single piece of legislation to help support manufacturers with in the state of West Virginia what would it be? and Why?

I am not sure what single piece of legislation I would support, but I do know I support legislation that moves West Virginia forward economically and want to see the US and West Virginia grow their manufacturing opportunities.

Q19

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

I would be available for an interview remotely.

Q20

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

Facebook

Lori Cowger Dittman for House of Delegates-63rd District
