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Q1

Identity-Please fill out the indicated fields.

Candidate Name: Bob Fehrenbacher
Office Seeking: House of Delegates
Party Affiliation: Republican
District: 11

Q2

Contact Info-Please fill out the indicated fields.

Address: 1601 Greenmont Hills Dr
Address 2: ***
City/Town: Vienna
State/Province: WV
ZIP/Postal Code: 26105
Country: United States
Email Address: bobforwv@gmail.com
Phone Number: 304.481.4927

Q3

Education & Experience-Please fill out the indicated fields.

High School Attended (Ex: School name, city, & state): Austin High School, Decatur, AL,
Colleges Attended & Degrees Obtained (Ex: Marshall, MBA): University of Texas at Austin, BSChE
Current Employer & Job Position (Ex: WVMA, Director of Operations): Retired. Former plant manager for Chemours
Describe your current job & responsibilities: NA. Retired.
How long have you worked for your current employer?: Worked for DuPont and Chemours for 39 years.

Q4

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

Government should be supportive of business and industry to encourage employment, business success, and appropriate tax generation. This should be done in a manner that is fair and equitable with global and regional competitive awareness.

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 spent my career in manufacturing, the last 9 years of which were in WV. I also served as a WVMA Board member and was Board Chair of the WVMA. I championed business and manufacturing issues state-wide and locally, and also served in various Boards in the community (Wood County Development Authority, United Way, Rotary, Shale Crescent USA, etc.) promoting awareness and support of business and social issues in the region and state.

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.

Wood County Development Authority (current member of the Executive Committee); United Way Alliance of the Mid-Ohio Valley (past Board Chair, active volunteer now); Parkersburg Rotary (member); West Virginia Manufacturers Association Educational Fund (Board Chair); West Virginia Manufacturers Association (Emeritus Board member); Shale Crescent USA (Board member).

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?

West Virginia is losing population and jobs. The 2020 census showed that WV lost 3.2% of its population since 2010, and many young West Virginians believe that there is a better brighter future elsewhere in the United States. West Virginia must create an environment that is pro-growth and retains and encourages employment and investment. Creating a broad set of programs that address factors supporting investment (taxes, regulations, education, health and safety issues, etc.) will draw employers and investors to WV and grow jobs.

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.

Absolutely. These taxes are a significant disadvantage to manufacturers, particularly in comparison to with states surrounding WV. As WVMA Board Chair, I helped to champion an earlier effort to address this issue.

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?

In so many words: make WV a state that is attractive to site selection consultants. These firms scout locations for new investments and job creation, and WV does made some progress in the factors that influence choices, but there is more progress to be made. Nucor is a recent example of a company deciding to investment in and create jobs in WV, and we must create more successes.

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?

This is a multi-faceted issue. There are issues that drive individuals to use and become addicted to these substances, so one focus should be on addressing issues that lead to the start of usage. Another is to focus on the long-term recovery of those with substance use disorder (SUD). A 28-day treatment program does NOT get someone to a sustainable place. The recidivism for SUD is very high, and support of long term recovery (including 2nd chance employment, etc.) is a key requirement.

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?

I believe that many of these topics should be addressed at home and not regulated by government. I believe that there are many beliefs on such factors, including some that are completely opposite each other. To stake out a position as to which is right or allowable by the state (and thus explicitly mandating which are "wrong" or "prohibited") creates winners and losers which impact choices for companies in making investments and job creation. I would promote tolerance as much as possible.

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.

I am the Board Chair for the West Virginia Manufactures Association Educational Fund, and our mission is to raise awareness of careers in manufacturing and then to help prepare them for such careers. This would include raising awareness of the variety of roles and career paths, including formal education or development options. This would be a broad program to generate awareness and then ensure skill or knowledge awareness through universities, technical schools, union trades options, and backward integration to high schools, middle schools, etc.

Q13

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

What are the standards or benchmarks that are important to developing and educating the work force of the future? Conduct that survey and then pick the key gaps that exist in WV and create a plan to address those gaps.

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)?

Make STEM a key focus and requirement for advancement. Then use manufacturers to provide practical support and perhaps enhancements to educator development for STEM subjects. This could be summer development of educators, to programs such as "Explore the New Manufacturing" that bring manufacturers, educators, students and parents together to become aware of careers and the linkage of STEM in being candidates for such careers.

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?

Look at regulations and rules to streamline the effort required for compliance INCLUDING an evaluation regarding the competitiveness or validity of the requirements. If regs or rules are dated or overly strict (more than is considered "equitable" or competitive), then consider revising or eliminating the requirement. Ideally the requirements for compliance reporting can be streamlined so that it is less burdensome and less costly.

Q16

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

Eliminate regulations, rules or laws that prohibit or unfairly punish (or prejudicially support) certain energy sources. Where infrastructure can help support renewable energy sources, make such investments as appropriate.

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?

This is a slippery slope. ESG criteria could be considered as a pro or con like social issues in question #11. I personally support the stance taken by State Treasurer Riley Moore that pushed back on banks and financial institutions that made ESG declarations (such as making no investment in fossil fuel companies) while at the same time wishing to do business with the State of West Virginia.

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?

Personal Property Tax (including inventory tax) and how a balanced approach can be taken to provide relief to manufacturers and incentivize more investment and job creation while at the same time balancing revenue needs for schools, communities, etc. Why? This is a key opportunity that requires voter approval as it requires a Constitutional Amendment. With the current state revenue surplus, we need to get this right to retain and grow jobs. The time is now, and we do not want to miss the opportunity nor mess it up.

Q19

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

Yes. Either.

Q20

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

bob4ww.com
