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**Q1**

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

I believe West Virginia can realize the prosperity the rest of the nation enjoys as we continue to become more competitive with our tax code, our regulatory climate and our legal system. If re-elected, I'll continue to advocate for policies that promote economic growth, workforce development, greater government transparency and accountability, and controlling government spending.

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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?

As chairman of the House Committee on Education and in my role as House Majority Whip, I was pleased to sponsor and work for passage of significant education reform that has reduced our state's education bureaucracy by 40 percent, saving West Virginia taxpayers millions of dollars, while empowering our local school districts, superintendents, principals, teachers and parents to make decisions closer to the classroom and helping to ensure more equitable funding for growth counties like those in the Eastern Panhandle.

As a member of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on 4-Year Higher Education and as a member of the House Finance Committee, I successfully advocated more equitable funding for our higher education institutions.

I've also had the privilege of serving as co-chair of the West Virginia Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children, sponsoring and working to enact several key pieces of legislation to help protect the most vulnerable among us, and was humbled to be named the West Virginia Child Advocacy Network's 2018 Legislator with Courage.

I was also honored to receive the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce's "Champion of Free Enterprise" award in recognition of my efforts to improve West Virginia's business climate.

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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.

Rotary Club of Charles Town (past president), Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce (past president), United Way of the Eastern Panhandle (past board chair), West Virginia Manufacturers Association, American-Danish Business Council.

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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?

Clearly the COVID-19 pandemic is the most pressing challenge facing West Virginia and I'll continue to work with the Governor, his administration, and my legislative colleagues to leverage the federal funding made available through the CARES Act to aid our recovery and position West Virginia for future success. I'll also continue my efforts to address the impediments to job creation, including a fair and predictable regulatory climate.

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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 support the phase-out/repeal of the tax on business equipment and inventory and have previously sponsored legislation to accomplish this. Accomplishing this goal will clearly require legislative majorities sufficient to achieve two-thirds majorities in both houses of the legislature.

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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?

I've been pleased to sponsor and work for the enactment of legislation to enhance workforce development in West Virginia and will continue my efforts to ensure our secondary and higher education systems are preparing a qualified workforce. I will also continue to support legislation to eliminate barriers to employment so we can improve our workforce participation rate.

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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?

I've supported a three-pronged approach to addressing our state's opioid crisis by sponsoring and working for the enactment of legislation to expand education, treatment, and criminal penalties for drug king pins and will continue to do so.

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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 firm supporter of equal employment opportunity. I do not support the establishment of additional protected classes which I believe would increase the regulatory burden on job creators without expanding the protections afforded by both our State and U.S. Constitutions.

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**Q9**

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

I've supported expanded access to workforce development opportunities and will continue my efforts to keep higher education affordable. I've also been pleased to sponsor and work for the enactment of legislation to ensure that our secondary and high education systems are aligned in helping to develop a diverse and skilled workforce.

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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 support the WV DEPs approach in order to help ensure that we safeguard the environment without enacting regulations that do little to protect health while increasing expense to consumers and the regulatory burden for job creators.

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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 believe it's imperative that West Virginia's regulatory climate be competitive with our neighboring states so that we are not at a competitive disadvantage with attempting to attract and retain job creators.

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**Q12**

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

I believe the experience I've gained, and the relationships and respect I've developed with my legislative colleagues, the Governor's office, agency leadership, and policy advocacy organizations during my eight years in the legislature have enabled me to serve as an effective representative for the 66th District. Serving in a House leadership role has enabled me to effectively advocate for fiscally conservative state government and I'd welcome the opportunity to continue represent my constituents in the 85th Legislature.

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**Q13**

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

Yes.

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**Q14**

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

Facebook: @DelegatePaulEspinosa

Twitter: @DelPaulEspinosa,

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**Q15**

Name

Paul Espinosa

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**Q16**

Office Seeking

House of Delegates

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**Q17**

Party Affiliation

Republican

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**Q18**

District

66

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**Q19**

Email

paul@espinosafordelegate.com

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**Q20**

Phone

304-268-4266

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**Q21**

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