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Q1

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

I believe state government has a very limited role with respect to business and industry. It's the government's responsibility to protect individual rights and to create a civil and criminal justice system which abides by and advances the rule of law. Those government functions serve business and industry exactly in the same manner as they serve individuals. I recognize a limited regulatory role for government, particularly with respect to public safety and environmental concerns. However, I believe that regulatory role should be strictly limited and well-focused on achieving the safety and environmental protections necessary with the least amount of intervention as possible.

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?

Because of my concern and active participation in the education of my three children, now young adults, I was a parent volunteer in the educational system in Harrison County from 2000-2019. In 2009 I attended The Governor's Summit on Global Competitiveness at the University of Charleston. I was a member of and served in leadership positions of Local School Improvement Councils, PTAs, and my children's high school Academic Boosters' Corporation. I also served as a participant with parent committees for the Harrison County Board of Education. During this time I became very involved in educational issues in WV. I have not only advocated for changes at the local level, but have brought attention to and advocated for changes at the state level, including standardized testing issues, standards and curriculum, and school choice. I have spoken before the Education Committees of the WV Senate, WV House of Delegates, and the WV Board of Education. I have attended numerous legislative meetings and sessions in regard to education and other issues. Because of my extensive involvement in education, I assisted my children and other students in obtaining the best possible educational opportunities available to them in a WV public school. Further, I helped to provide a nurturing and enriching academic environment to my children's schools and to assist in the discussion of necessary changes in education in WV.

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.

President, Bridgeport High School Academic Boosters Corporation, Bridgeport, WV (2012-2019)
Chairperson, Bridgeport High School Local School Improvement Council (2016-2019); (2013-2015)
Member, Bridgeport High School Local School Improvement Council —(2015-2016);(2012-2013)
Member, HARCOBOE Parent Advisory Committee (2012-2014)
Member, Bridgeport Middle School Local School Improvement Council (2013-2015)
President, Simpson Elementary School, PTA (2007-2012)
Member of the Harrison County Republican Executive Committee (2017-present)
Member of the Harrison County Republican Club (2015-present)
Member of All Saints' Catholic Church 1998-present

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?

I think West Virginia's public education system is among the biggest challenges we face because, to the extent it is failing our students, it represents both a continuous generational problem and also a tragedy for children who are currently progressing through a system which isn't meeting their needs. I would like to see public education in West Virginia become more flexible in terms of providing instruction and educational experiences to West Virginia's youngest citizens based on their individual needs and desires. I would like to see more opportunities for the highest performing and most ambitious public school students, including those students who desire a trade or technical education. For some academically driven students, digital learning provides an opportunity to take classes which otherwise would not be an option. For technical or trade-oriented students, enriching job skills while reinforcing reading, writing, and mathematical skills is essential to enrich their lives and nurture a better future for WV. I believe that WV children deserve to have the best educational opportunities in the nation. I know that all children can achieve academic success regardless of their socio-economic, racial or ethnic background.

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 was very disappointed that this legislation did not pass. I agree with the need to eliminate these taxes. I also recognize the need to resolve the resulting diminishment in revenue by identifying other replacement funding sources and reduction in state spending.

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?

The best thing government can do to improve the state's position in competing for investment and job growth is to lay the foundation for fairness and stability in the tax structure and the regulatory environment. The state should make the tax structure as fair as possible and the regulatory environment as limited as possible. West Virginia will continue to become more attractive to new business and investment as it becomes more clear that West Virginia is not likely to return to its former perspective of demonizing and taking taxing advantages from job creators.

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 support many of the efforts which have been made since 2017 to address the problems associated with the crisis such as decreasing the number of opioid prescriptions by 48% increasing the number of residential treatment beds from 197 to 740 and the creation of the Ryan Brown Fund. Even with the positive efforts made thus far, WV has a long way to go on its own road to recovery from the opioid crisis. I agree with the premise that workforce participation is a factor that contributes to both avoidance of addiction and to long-term recovery. Efforts through education, training, rehabilitation, and treatment to increase the labor participation rate from last in the nation at 53.9% will certainly aid in our healing.

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 believe it is the government's proper function to safeguard the rights of all individuals. As such, I do not believe that anyone is entitled to special protections due to any specific characteristics they may possess.

Q9

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

I think government can best help develop a diverse and skilled workforce by conducting public education in such a way so as to serve the individual needs and requirements of individual students, rather than offer a one size fits all program of public education to which all public school students must try to adapt, despite their individual needs and interests.

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 confess that I am not aware of this rule or the proposal. However, my guiding principle will be that regulations need to be narrowly tailored to achieving the specific goal for which they exist. To the extent that industries are to be regulated, I believe they should absolutely have a voice in assessing the need for and scope of any such regulations.

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 think all regulations, including environmental regulations, should be strictly scrutinized to ensure that the problem they are designed to address is a legitimate concern. If so, then any such regulation should be as limited in scope as possible in order to achieve the desired goal. The policy I would advance is one of governmental restraint in order to ensure only just and necessary regulations.

Q12

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

I graduated from West Virginia University with a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies. I believe that good government should be committed to protecting life, ensuring liberty, and leaving people free to pursue their own version of happiness.

Q13

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

Yes.

Q14

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

Laura Kimble for WV House on FB

Q15

Name

Laura Kimble

Q16

Office Seeking

House of Delegates

Q17

Party Affiliation

Republican

Q18

District

48

Q19

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Q21

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