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Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, July 30, 2020 8:56:39 AM
Last Modified: Thursday, July 30, 2020 11:21:57 AM
Time Spent: 02:25:17
IP Address: 75.108.212.182

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Q1

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

While government may have a regulatory role when it comes to safety of its citizens, I do not believe that it should be so burdensome as to prevent development of new or retention of existing business and industry which is much needed in WV. I believe it is a balancing act, where all parties need to be at the table to work on effective solutions, together.

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?

I bring the ability to not be narrow-minded when problems are identified needing attention. Coming from an engineering education, of course the ability to analyze and seek all available solutions and develop the same outside the box. Having a long career in law enforcement and regularly being alone in serious situations, I have developed the ability to quickly interpret and analyze information and details of a situation quickly, which matches well with the often fast pace of the legislature. Even with those who may have a difference of policy opinion, I willingly want input from all sides of a topic to try and develop a common sense approach to legislation which is proper but not an overburden. I have worked in private industry as an engineer as well as a public servant in local government which gives me a unique skillset to see from both of those perspectives. For example, I worked on and supported legislation for solar energy production that was identified as a need to industry development in WV. I regularly work with local business entrepreneurs to look o establish a new business.

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.

National Sheriffs' Assoc.; WV Sheriffs' Assoc.; Past Pres., Madison Rotary; Madison Baptist Church; high school boys soccer coach; Boone Lodge #170 IOOF; Odell Lodge #115 AF&AM; Shriners; Daniel Boone VFW Post 5578 Auxiliary; many local volunteer groups

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?

Jobs. Gainful employment can alleviate many of the social issues facing us today. We need an educated workforce geared toward those industries looking to locate in WV. Working together to solve issues holding WV back from progress, such as sponsoring legislation to support solar energy production to draw those industries who have walked away from WV because we didn't have that capabilities as an example. Introducing career technical education opportunities as well as collegiate earlier in school for students, who are considering decisions as to their place in the workforce.

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 would support the elimination of B&I taxes as long as we can develop a method where local governments and schools can be kept whole, without shifting the burden upon the regular taxpaying citizen. Knowing it is a complex issue, that needs everyone, from both sides of the discussion to be able to meet at the table to develop an effective plan, whether it is an absolute reduction, tiered or other mechanism that can be developed.

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?

Our state actually declaring ourselves to be job creation friendly and promoting it. There is little that legislators or other interested parties have access to to allow everyone to be a voice for West Virginia. Partisanship regarding job creation must step aside. Example: HCR 81, I developed with Commerce declaring ourselves a firearms friendly state to recruit firearms manufacturers of firearms and accessories in an effort to recruit out of state industry looking to relocate, would not be ran to give the Governor or Commerce the ability to have that act in their hands. We have opportunity zones providing tax credits both at a state and federal level and the state does nothing with that because it may not be in a particular place favorable to a person. We have seen that too often and it is stifling any potential growth or new creation. I would propose a new group created made up by business, labor, WVMA and others who can come together, and work together to gain whatever advantage we can get in recruiting or developing industry. Currently we are all losing out on the potential we have.

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?

From my experience it is more than just opioids, but rather a substance abuse overall. It is larger than simply opioids, as the cycle of use and abuse frequently shifts from one substance of choice to another. More local services to treat those who are seeking help are needed; making services available for industry to use to save trained and qualified employees who may have fallen to substance abuse. In economically impacted parts of WV, there is a clear distinction of a lack of treatment services. Those would go hand in hand with a qualified and safe workforce. Treatment to help produce an available workforce, can increase industry interest, create jobs who would be loyal to that industry. Local and quick response to those who are that the point of seeking help. If that moment is lost by putting off until regular business hours, or during a regular work week, we likely lose that important first contact when we can get them at their lowest.

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?

Reasonable assurances can be enacted by the Legislature to clarify and secure those equalities to make sure that any employer would come to WV. Again, it takes both sides of the discussion to develop an equitable solution. Consulting and receiving recommendations of the concerns from those potential employers and corporations would be significant. We should be open to welcome any industry who may look to locate in our state and work with WV Commerce to identify those specific issues they have discovered while recruiting industry to locate here. Fair responses can be developed between Commerce, industry professionals and rights advocates

Q9

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

One is further development and implementation of programs such as the P-20 Program being put into action by WVU and other state institutions. This program develops students from an earlier age toward career development and training. HS Students can graduate with an associate degree, possess certain skillsets that prepare them to enter the workforce with particular career technical education or go on to college to further their education ahead of regular scheduling. This can be designed to develop that regular flow of trained workforce to meet a long range and continuous flow of educated workforce or particular industry of the area being served. Diversity is made by allowing that student to follow their interest of study, producing a better product.

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.

Not knowing the intimate details of the US EPA rule and how it interacts with WV rules, I believe that it is a practical approach to have a work group to evaluate and make recommendations on the issue. We should seek the best fit for West Virginia.

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?

Creation of an advisory group, made up of various interested entities, to examine and develop policies and plans that everyone is aware of and potentially agree to well in advance of a legislative sessions. Dropping surprise legislation doesn't ultimately benefit the state because errors are normally made and creates delays of potentially effective policy.

Q12

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

I would seek a cooperative role rather than adversarial role in helping those involved in the process to make WV more productive as well as profitable for everyone involved. I sincerely appreciate your consideration.

Q13

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

Yes, either method.

Q14

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

Twitter: @miller4wv

Facebook: @miller4house

Q15

Name

Rodney Miller

Q16

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Q17

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