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Q1

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

The proper role of state government as it relates to business and industry is to protect property rights and ensure our tax and regulatory environment is as competitive as possible with other states. The state should also work with business and industry leaders to see what policies can be enacted to help accelerate business growth and new jobs. The fundamental question anyone in government should ask is this: is a given policy helping or hindering business growth and development and job creation?

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'm a small business owner. My wife and I have built a successful law practice from the ground up. We have employed numerous individuals over the years. We know what it means to deal with government policies that work against helping businesses thrive.

The House of Delegates has only a few Republican lawyers. I have not studied the records of the Republican lawyers who are in the Legislature. That being said, while others may be just as pro-business as me, none will be more pro-business. We need someone with my skills who can ensure a pro-business agenda can be promoted as much as possible.

My main area of practice is domestic relations. As such, I'm frequently in highly contentious situations. I try many cases when necessary, but I also have experience negotiating to get the best possible results for my clients. The only way one can do what I do for as many years as I've done it is to have great interpersonal, negotiation, and advocacy skills. These skills will serve me well in the Legislature.

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.

Associate member, Kanawha County Republican Executive Committee.
West Virginia State Bar

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'm very concerned about the national political environment after the 2020 election. I see the potential that further attacks on natural resources, from which we receive a lot of tax dollars, will cause us to have an immense amount of pressure to raise taxes. Raising taxes on our businesses and citizens would be devastating to the West Virginia economy. There may be other Republicans who would support tax increases. I will not.

Having a more diverse economy will ensure we are not as subject to national policies that have a disproportionate impact on West Virginia. We must have tax and regulatory policy that is more competitive than other states. Other industries will more likely relocate here with such policies, thus diversifying the economy.

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.

We have to educate the public and our Legislators on the importance of this Legislation. The business community must have a united front. We must ensure that whatever plan we have is practical and has reasonable benchmarks. This will mean passage is more likely.

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?

We have to reform our education system to ensure that our instruction is narrowly tailored to the needs of the business community. We need to set a goal of having the best business environment in America. This means a regulatory and tax environment for businesses that is superior to all other states. Businesses will come here and existing businesses will expand when we start enacting legislation with this mindset.

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?

We need to ensure anyone who wants help will have access to treatment. This means ensuring funding for treatment regardless of one's socioeconomic status. We need to have a "no questions asked" policy without the red tape to get people treatment.

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?

We need to ensure that the government will not get in the way of such companies enacting whatever policies deemed appropriate for addressing these concerns. The state should not be instituting laws and regulations that have the effect of preventing companies from having their own internal policies to address racial justice and equity, LGBTQ rights, and gender equity.

Q9

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

We need to hear from our businesses as to what specific skills they need. Our education system, both secondary and post-secondary, needs to be more narrowly tailored to help our students have the skills needed in today's workforce. If we're teaching something that has no relevance in today's workforce we probably need to get rid of it.

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 have not studied the rule enough to know. However, any new rule needs to be evaluated from the perspective of whether it will harm existing businesses and future business development. If the business community supported it, I would be likely to support it as well. I would like to study this more and would request the ability to supplement this answer.

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?

We need to study places that are thriving and we need to emulate them. We have to have more of a mindset of taking the politics out of it. What does North Carolina or Texas have that we do not? Can we emulate them? If not, what does West Virginia have that other states do not?

If other places have more accelerated growth, we need to analyze their rules and regulations to see if they are able to ensure a safe environment.

Q12

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

I've never seen a West Virginia strategic plan. We need to start having a conversation about long-term goals, and we need to set actual benchmarks. For example, let's say West Virginia in the relevant markers we're 49th. We need to set a goal such that within, say, 10 years, we're 45th. I've never personally heard any conversations about this. We must be strategic, and we must start thinking about achieving very specific goals we literally and figuratively put to paper.

Q13

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

Yes, either

Q14

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

Facebook: @pritt4thepeople Twitter: @pritt4thepeople Instagram: @pritt4thepeople

Q15

Name

Christopher Todd Pritt

Q16

Office Seeking

House of Delegates

Q17

Party Affiliation

Republican

Q18

District

36

Q19

Email

chris@chrispritt.com

Q20

Phone

3045739980

Q21

Address

Address

403 Saddle Horn Road

Address 2

403 Saddle Horn Road

City/Town

Charleston

State/Province

West Virginia

ZIP/Postal Code

25314
