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Page 1

Q1

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

A balanced relationship between the state government and business and industry is required for the welfare and the economy of the state. State government role is to make a suitable environment for business organizations, critical to this is ensuring the state does not overly burden business and industry with regulatory requirements. Most barriers to economic development are the result of counter-productive government policies due to government interference – more regulation interferes with growth. Taxes – should raise revenue however we use them to redistribute income and encourage or discourage behavior – we need a simpler tax code to remove economic distortions.

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 have over 34 years of Military Service, enlisted and officer, and I have served all around the world. I hold a both a bachelor and master's degree in Criminal Justice and a second master's in strategic studies from the U.S. Army War College.

Having served my whole adult life for the Military I decided to run for office because serving is who I am and I want to use the skills I have acquired to continue to serve the people in Southern WV in District-27 (Mercer and part of Raleigh County). I want to bring fresh ideas and conservative positive solutions to the WV legislature because the future of our community, children and businesses is our biggest challenges.

One thing the Military has taught me is that you must be willing to compromise. Compromise however does not mean abandoning your principles or forgoing partisanship it does mean choosing candidates who are able to set aside their uncompromising mindsets long enough to craft the compromises necessary to improve things for the people.

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.

I am a life member of the VFW, Reserve Officers Association, and North American Hunting Club. I am also a member of the NRA, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), West Virginia Citizens Defense League, and the Bluefield, WV Masonic lodge-85.

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?

The most critical challenge that threatens our state is the outflow of people to other states due to the lack of "Quality Jobs" and an unfriendly Business environment. We must create a business-friendly environment with a positive tax and regulatory climate to encourage business growth and attract outside business to our state.

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.

The "BAIT" tax is an oppressive anti-business tax that punishes investment in new equipment and discourages companies from maintaining inventory in West Virginia. Bottom line up front I believe the business inventory tax is an incumbrance on our state's economy and our ability to remain competitive with other states. I believe it should be done away with however it will be a large hill to climb to achieve bipartisan support and the 2/3 majority to pass the state Senate and House and have it removed from the state Constitution. Both democrats and republicans in West Virginia agree that the inventory tax is bad however the hurdle to elimination of this tax are the concerns over replacement revenue. A short-term proposal to fund county budgets would be to use appropriations from the general revenue budget while the inventory tax is phased out and an alternative tax that would generate steady revenue. What that alternative tax would be would need further study however the positive results would improve the state's business climate and most importantly ensure a sustainable revenue source.

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?

1) Create positive tax and regulatory climate. 2) Improve broadband infrastructure. 3) Reduce bureaucracy in government. 4) Reduce bureaucracy in education system. 5) Reduce redundancy in the number of state boards and commissions (WV has over three times as many boards and commissions as other states which average around 60).

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 must improve and pursue a five-prong approach on 1) PREVENT – Address inappropriate prescribing of pain medications. 2) INTERVENTION – Expand awareness of substance use disorder as a treatable disease. 3) TREATMENT – Expand access to effective substance use disorder treatment. 4) SUPPORT – Expand effective programs that serve families affected. 5) RECOVERY – Pursue expansion of recovery support.

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 that there are two key steps business and industry can take to improve racial justice and equity. 1) Employee education – Avoiding discussion leads to perception disparity. We need to encourage business's and industry, already in the state, to educate employees about the realities and inequities of our society and increase awareness of individual accountability of an inclusive workplace. 2) Encourage business's and industry to create an atmosphere of belonging, a team.

Q9

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

Developing a diverse and skilled workforce is dependent on continuous evaluation and the resulting identified changes to the organizational processes. We must not just look at the recruiting and hiring process we must also focus on keeping employees and growing them into leadership roles. Evaluation should look for and root out equity disparities across all aspects of the organizational process (recruiting, hiring, promotions, compensation, and attrition).

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.

Any changes to limits on certain environmental permits must be based on; 1) Limits that are enforceable. 2) Account for emission/waste variability. 3) Protect against acute and chronic impacts. 4) Compliance monitoring. 5) Compromise between EPA recommendations and continued business viability.

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?

While I believe environmental concerns should not completely stop business profitability (example – stop all drilling because of possible oil spill) a balance can be achieved wherein the business should have viable plans of action in place prior to conducting business to address concerns that could harm the environment . Additionally, a trade-off or balance may be able to be achieved where the increased costs of addressing environmental concerns can be offset by businesses addressing the efficiency of their system as-a-whole to reduce operating costs that balance environmental costs.

Q12

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

Unlike some candidates, I am not a single-issue candidate and I am not running on a personal agenda. The people of West Virginia work incredible hard to barely get by and this has contributed to the loss of our workforce out of state. If elected I believe in representing what is best for the people over my own desires and beliefs and supporting or opposing legislation by adhering to both the U.S. and WEST VIRGINIA Constitutions.

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.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DougSmith4WVHouse>

Web Page: www.Smith4WVHouse.com

Q15

Name

Doug Smith

Q16

Office Seeking

House of Delegates, District-27

Q17

Party Affiliation

Republican

Q18

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Q21

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