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Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 9:24:42 AM
Last Modified: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:12:26 AM
Time Spent: 00:47:43
IP Address: 98.236.135.68

Page 1

Q1

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

The role of state government should be to create the framework for the regulatory and legal systems in which businesses should operate within. However, that framework should be focused in what it concentrates on, and allow for businesses and individuals alike to operate largely in freedom from fear of the government stepping in and preventing them from carrying on their business. Over the past several years we have loosened many of those restrictions and believe that we should continue to do so.

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 hard work. I bring leadership and the ability to act calmly in stressful times learned from over a decade serving in the military. I bring pragmatism and the desire to bring about change even if doing so requires difficult decisions. In my first term in the Senate - aside from the constant work I do on behalf of my constituents here at home - I've had several pieces of legislation that I've introduced that have become law that I feel have made an impact for WVians. The issues addressed in these new laws address substance abuse, mental health, and veterans issues. I believe that a review of the 39 bills of mine that have become law show things that truly will benefit the people here, and don't just show that I was present.

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.

While my time is limited outside my professional and legislative duties, I am an active member of the Wellsburg Lions Club, as well as my parish, St. John The Evangelist in Wellsburg.

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 believe that the biggest challenge this state currently faces is our substance abuse issue. If an employer is looking to relocate or expand in WV, and knows that they won't be able to get a drug free workforce, what is their incentive to do so? If I'm back in the Senate for a second term, I plan to continue the work I've started to address this issue. We cannot simply arrest our way out of it, so the focus will also need to be on improving access to care, clearing out red tape in the regulatory system for medical providers which would all for an expanse of rehabilitation programs, and incentivizing people to work, not to stay at home.

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 supported both SJR 9 and SB 837, and would do so again in the future. It was stopped not because it was a bad idea, but because it was a good idea killed for political purposes.

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?

In no particular order: continue to address our substance abuse issues; reforming our tax system; improving infrastructure; continue to fight back against the status quo and reform our public education system

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?

See my answer to question for. By cutting back on the burdensome regulations in place in our current healthcare system, we are preventing providers from expanding their care network. Additionally, the work that was started with the Opioid Reduction Act must continue to address the issue of supply and demand.

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?

The Bostock decision by the U.S. Supreme Court has somewhat diminished the need for state action on this issue, but I do believe that at some point we as a state need to be explicit in state law that all are welcome in WV. I have been an outlier at time in my own party on this issue, as I'm more progressive than many others.

Q9

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

The answer would depend on the type of workforce you're looking for. If it's for employees on the shop floor at Eagle Manufacturing here in Wellsburg, its promoting the trades and programs offered at the community college level. If it's for something that requires a higher degree, then it comes down to developing ways for our youngest professionals to remain here. But this all goes back to finding ways for businesses to want to expand or relocate here, which goes back to the issues I named above I believe.

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.

As has always been my approach on these issues, it's to listen to all sides of the discussion and work with them to try to find a consensus. All sides have an interest, so as a legislator one of my roles is to find where we can shape those interests into a workable piece of legislation that achieves the objects of allowing for industry to grow but also protecting our natural resources.

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 that my legislative record shows my stance over the past six years. However, in short, my answer to number ten explains it briefly.

Q12

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

Nobody works harder for their constituents. Whether it be at home or in Charleston, I work harder than any other legislator because I want the people I represent to know just how much I love this job and appreciate the opportunity they have given me.

Q13

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

Either would work.

Q14

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

Facebook: Ryan Weld - WV State Legislature

Twitter: @ryanweld

Website: www.ryanweld.com

Q15

Name

Ryan Weld

Q16

Office Seeking

Reelection to State Senate

Q17

Party Affiliation

Republican

Q18

District

First

Q19

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