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Q1

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

State government needs to work for business and industry, not the other way around. Our elected officials should be asking business owners what they can do to help attract new businesses and grow existing ones.

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 am the co-founder of West Virginia Eye Consultants. We opened cold in 2011 with one employee, one location, and two doctors. Now, we have seven locations, seven doctors, and over 60 employees.

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.

Member of American Optometric Association and WV Association of Optometric Physicians. Deacon at Bible Center Church. Volunteer for Union Mission, WV Health Right, and Remote Area Medical.

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?

Over-regulation makes it difficult for businesses to start and grow, and makes us less attractive to outside companies. We have done a lot since 2014 to improve the regulatory environment, but there is still much to be done. I will work with our House leadership to introduce bills that will cut red tape and reduce expenses for business and industry.

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 will work with our House leaders to make sure we have enough support in the caucus for this. I will also help with a PR campaign to make sure the public applies pressure on their legislators to get it done.

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 need to make sure we have the building blocks in place to build businesses and add jobs. We need continue to cut regulations, reform our tax laws, tackle substance abuse, overhaul our education system, build our broadband network, and modernize our utility systems if we want to be competitive.

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 educate our citizens young and old, about the dangers of opioid abuse, continue to expand treatment options around the state, and impose tougher penalties on those who transport and distribute illicit drugs in our state.

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 get all of the pertinent advocacy groups around the table and find some language that all can agree on concerning non-discrimination.

Q9

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

It starts with education. We need to have our kids exposed to a wide variety of career paths starting in middle school. Once they identify a path they would like to take, then the school system can create a unique education curriculum to make sure that they are ready for college or the workforce by the time they graduate. We also need to place a bigger emphasis on vo-tech training at a younger age.

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 would be happy to partner with the WVMA to support that approach.

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 make sure that our regulations aren't just designed to deal with bad actors when there are plenty of good companies out there doing the best they can to comply and create jobs. Regulations that are too stringent increase costs unnecessarily and stifle economic growth.

Q12

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

I am a proven job creator and know what it's like to have to meet a payroll.

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.

@stansburyforw
Stansbury for West Virginia

Q15

Name

Chris Stansbury

Q16

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House

Q17

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