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Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, June 27, 2022 10:54:02 AM
Last Modified: Monday, June 27, 2022 12:09:16 PM
Time Spent: 01:15:14
IP Address: 204.197.150.156

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Q1

Identity-Please fill out the indicated fields.

Candidate Name: Eric Hayhurst
Office Seeking: WV Senate
Party Affiliation: Democratic Party
District: 2

Q2

Contact Info-Please fill out the indicated fields.

Address 34 Commerce Dr
Address 2 Ste 203
City/Town Morgantown
State/Province WV
ZIP/Postal Code 26501
Country United States
Email Address hayhurstforwv@gmail.com
Phone Number 3049329308

Q3

Education & Experience-Please fill out the indicated fields.

High School Attended (Ex: School name, city, & state)

Valley High School, Pine Grove, WV

Colleges Attended & Degrees Obtained (Ex: Marshall, MBA)

WVU, BA; WVU, JD

Current Employer & Job Position (Ex: WVMA, Director of Operations)

Hayhurst Law, PLLC, Owner

Describe your current job & responsibilities

I am a solo practitioner representing individuals and small businesses.

How long have you worked for your current employer?

5 years

Q4

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

State government's role is to provide education, build infrastructure and set policy that make the state attractive to new and existing business so that jobs can be created. Further, state government is a regulator to ensure that business and industry provide a safe work environment, treat their employees and competitors fairly and do not harm others.

Q5

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 a small business owner and a lawyer. I started my own firm five years ago and employ three other people. I understand the pressures and difficulties business owners face. Additionally, I am an active member of my community, serving on the boards of the two HOAs I have been a part of and I referee high school basketball and volleyball. I also give to various causes within and around my community.

Q6

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 board member of the West Virginia Association for Justice

Q7

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?

As the question states, there are many challenges facing the state and each of them are pressing in their own regard. However, I believe the most critical challenge is the opioid epidemic and the resultant consequences. West Virginia has been devastated by the epidemic and it has affected many areas of our society, including the loss of human life, an increase in orphans, a loss in employable workers and an overall hit to our state and local government budgets. There is no easy fix, but we must try. If elected, I will work to increase support and services for those who are afflicted with addiction, including rehabilitation facilities. I will work to get the drugs off the streets and hold those responsible accountable. I will work to increase resources for foster children and parents. And I will work to improve education and infrastructure, which will lead to more jobs in the state, helping get those who are afflicted out of the cycle of addiction.

Q8

Do you support the passage of Amendment One on the November 2022 General Election ballot? The measure provides the legislature with the authority to repeal or phase out tangible personal property in the future, this includes tax on personal vehicles, small business inventory, and tax on manufacturing inventory, machinery, and equipment.

I do not. Personal property and other taxes are vital to local governments, including public education and other local government services. At present, there is no adequate proposal for replacement of the revenue and assurance that those revenue streams will not be affected by the whims of the state legislature. Education is the fundamental building block of any society and economy and I do not support meddling in the funding for it as proposed in Amendment One.

Q9

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?

As eluded to previously, education is the key. We have to support and build our public education system. That is how we train workers and those who might start small businesses. We must also increase post-secondary training opportunities for skilled workers. Beyond that, we must provide a modern and adequate infrastructure -- including roads and bridges, broadband and cellular, among others. Finally, we must make West Virginia welcoming to all and stop the divisive social policies debated (and some passed) and in the legislature.

Q10

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 Response to No. 7, above.

Q11

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?

First, it starts with leadership. As an elected official, I will not demonize anyone who looks different than me, thinks different than me or leads a different lifestyle than I do because one, I do not think that way, and two, it is what a leader should do. Words matter and elected officials must be more respectful and welcoming, which will influence others to do the same. Second, I will oppose any divisive or discriminatory social legislation and will support repeal of any already passed (including the transgender athlete ban).

Q12

What are your specific ideas for addressing workforce skills gaps in industry? Specifically, with the growth of manufacturing jobs in the state and need for diverse and skilled labor, what are your ideas to prepare the state's current and future workforce for manufacturing jobs.

We must ensure that we are offering skills classes in K-12 public education. We should invest in career and tech centers and train those who wish to be trained in the skilled trades. Further, we should expand those offerings in tech centers to adults and provide that training at low or no cost. Finally, we should offer better training and re-training assistance to those who lose jobs or wish to change careers.

Q13

What are your ideas for improving outcomes in the state's K-12 public education system?

Outcomes are directly correlated to resources. We must fully fund public education. We must increase teacher pay to attract and retain the best teachers. We must also challenge our students with better curriculum and methods of teaching, but leave those decisions up to the educators who are trained to teach.

Q14

What ideas do you have for incorporating a focus on STEM education in our public schools and how could industry engage to support increased workforce learning models in middle and high schools, as well as career and technical education centers (vo-tech)?

As eluded to in response to Question 13, we must elevate our curriculum in public schools to challenge students and better prepare them for the workforce or higher education and that includes STEM education. Although difficult in smaller schools, we should develop tracks in high school, allowing students to focus their elective courses in a particular area, including STEM education. As to how industry could engage, they could loan employees to teach in schools or CTE centers. For instance, when I was in high school, my chemistry teacher was a chemist at Bayer (he was also a former teacher). That would actually alleviate two issues -- teaching students in STEM education and providing certified teachers in those areas.

Q15

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 have always believed in a balance between rules and regulations and maintaining a competitive atmosphere. I do not have a specific policy in mind, but will always review legislation and agency rules with this in mind.

Q16

What do you think West Virginia could do to promote energy diversity including the growth of renewable energy sources in the state?

West Virginia must embrace renewable and sustainable energy. For too long, we have refused to do that and been focused too heavily on fossil fuels. Although fossil fuels are still an important part of West Virginia's economy, they will not be forever and we must prepare for the future. The Legislature has done well in the last few years to expand renewable energy in the state, but more must be done. We must adopt policies and legislation, including tax incentives, to encourage development of renewable energy sources. We must also continue to build our education system (i.e., train workers) and infrastructure to attract renewable energy companies.

Q17

Many corporations have established environmental, social, and governance criteria. How would such goals impact your decision making on relevant policy issues as a member of legislator?

If elected, I will commit to listening and understanding all sides of an issue, including the positions of industry, and will take all factors into consideration when deciding how to vote on a particular bill.

Q18

If you could work on a single piece of legislation to help support manufacturers with in the state of West Virginia what would it be? and Why?

Legislation to support and strengthen our public education system. Education is the key to all other issues. A manufacturer cannot start or maintain a business without a properly trained and effective workforce.

Q19

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

Both

Q20

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

<https://www.facebook.com/Hayhurst4WV>

Instagram = @Hayhurst4WV
