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Page 1

Q1

Identity-Please fill out the indicated fields.

Candidate Name: Karen Nance
Office Seeking: House of Delegates
Party Affiliation: Democrat
District: 23

Q2

Contact Info-Please fill out the indicated fields.

Address: 3059 Wilson Rd
City/Town: Barboursville
State/Province: WV
ZIP/Postal Code: 25504
Country: United States
Email Address: knnance@comcast.net
Phone Number: 304-412-1601

Q3

Education & Experience-Please fill out the indicated fields.

High School Attended (Ex: School name, city, & state): Barboursville, Barboursville, WV
Colleges Attended & Degrees Obtained (Ex: Marshall, MBA): Marshall, BA & Marshall, MA
Current Employer & Job Position (Ex: WVMA, Director of Operations): Old House Doctor, Owner
Describe your current job & responsibilities: Administration, estimates/bids, bookkeeping, job supervision
How long have you worked for your current employer?: Since 1984, 38 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 spur economic development including efforts to retain existing businesses and industries. It is also the State's job to protect the environment and workers.

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 bring my experience as a small business owner; past member of the Cabell County Board of Education; a landlord; a community leader; a historian and geographer, in housing as past employee of the Huntington Housing Authority; researcher; and writing and administrating grants to improve the 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.

Non-profits where I take an active role: League of Women Voters; Secretary of the Madie Carroll House Preservation Society; Secretary of the Carter G Woodson Memorial Foundation; Secretary of the Greenbottom Society; Barboursville Lions Club; Parliamentarian of the Cabell County Democratic Women's Club; and Guyandotte Civil War Days.

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?

Education. Laws are being proposed and passed that limit the State's ability to provide a quality education. For example, education is not about our students being comfortable, it is about knowledge. These laws are making teachers personally responsible for what they may say in a classroom that makes a student uncomfortable. This could be anything. If they get passed, it will be hard for West Virginia to get qualified teachers for fear that they will be fired or sued when just one parent is unhappy. If we don't teach our history, other nations will. Our children will not receive a well-rounded education that employers need. If elected, I intend to oppose these laws.

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.

No. As a former member of the Cabell County Board of Education, I know how important these taxes are to funding education, now private and public. I do not believe that the general fund will be able to replace the funding without additional taxes that the legislators supporting this action have yet to identify.

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?

Living wage, middle class jobs are needed across the State, but particularly in southern West Virginia. We need to concentrate more on industries that create wealth such as agriculture, manufacturing, and mining instead of service industries. For example, we should pass laws that allow the growth of hemp and develop industries related to hemp such as rope, textiles, apparels, food, paper, insulation, and others. The production should all be located in West Virginia. We should look at improving areas that new businesses are looking for to locate in West Virginia for example, a quality, educated, healthy workforce; adequate infrastructure; safe environment; and amenities for workers. It is not all about lower taxes. Just look at where they are moving to now. Also, we should give incentives to existing businesses for infrastructure improvement and expansion. Many of our businesses, especially manufacturing, have aging, deteriorating infrastructure. Improving their infrastructure is critical to providing a safe workplace and environment. This also will lower insurance costs.

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?

I believe we need more sober living centers with programs that are monitored and proven to work. We need to pass laws that allow for drug testing in jails. Currently, it is assumed that illegal drugs cannot be gotten into our jails, but in truth they do. We need all prisoners regularly drug tested and to investigate each bad test to determine where the drugs came from and put a stop to them getting into the jail. We need to raise the salaries of correction officers in order to recruit highly qualified officers. We need to reduce sentencing guidelines if the convicted addict will go through a drug testing, sober living program while in jail. The opioids that these individuals are addicted to are very hard to kick. When addicts are free of the addiction, they once again can become a productive member of society. Programs are needed to help transition the former addicts back into society. Additional sober living facilities and programs will cost us more funding on the front end but save us a great deal of funding in the long run through reduced jail costs, drug related crime, and healthcare. Those responsible for this out-of-control epidemic need to be held accountable and made foot the bill reducing the costs to taxpayers to implement programs.

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?

I would oppose all laws limiting the rights of LBGTQ individuals, minorities such as person of color, and religious freedom. I would support all laws that protect the rights of LBGTQ individuals, minorities, and religious freedom.

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.

The state is not doing enough to support industrial and manufacturing trades. Currently, our high school career centers have inadequate funding. Even though the state is making some efforts to recruit students into trades such as welding, electric, plumbing, heat and cooling, machinist, carpenter, and insulation, follow-up, post high school training is generally not offered (except through union programs that have limited openings) and training programs are not often synced up with businesses' needs. I would work to increase support for and work with businesses to improve training programs that meet their needs. More training programs could be offered at our community colleges. Again, there would be an increase in costs up front, but in the long run, the quality of our workforce would improve. The state could attract more businesses especially those in manufacturing increasing employment and employee income taxes.

Q13

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

Higher pay and better benefits that will allow the state to recruit highly qualified educators; keeping the Legislature out of curriculum and allowing the State Board of Education that is made up of experts in education to do its job; stopping efforts to defund public education; increase meal programs; and hire more social workers. Children cannot learn on an empty stomach or when their homelife is impacting their ability to learn. Many of our students today face many challenges such as neglectful and abusive parents/guardians. Many students need food, and they only get it at school. Many students need not just a counselor, but also a social worker who can find social programs that assist with healthcare, clothing needs, and family issues such as abuse and neglect. They come to school after a parent/guardian has been arrested for domestic abuse or use of illegal drugs from homes impacted by addiction, mental health issues, poverty, or extreme neglect. These students could learn if only provided food and social programs. Many students are special needs students who require accommodations to learn. The state is not adequately funding special needs students' accommodations. They will not be productive members of society if we don't take care of their leaning needs. Addressing all these issues will improve student achievement in the state. Again, it may cost more in the beginning, but it will save the state in the future with a quality workforce that can increase economic development and tax dollars. The state needs long term thinkers that are focused on the future.

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)?

I would support industry working with our public schools to improve STEM curriculum and career and technical education. Any workforce learning models would have to comply with existing education policy and such programs would have to be voluntary as well as age appropriate.

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?

Some regulations are required to keep the environment safe for everyone. For example, it is not beneficial for businesses to close or individuals to lose water services during a chemical spill until the water is safe to use. If we make the environment unsafe, businesses will not locate here. We need to sit down together and discuss existing businesses' concerns about regulations. I would support incentives to businesses that have the capacity to negatively impact our environment for them to make their business safer. Businesses require a safe healthy environment too. It does not benefit the state, residents and businesses, if one business creates an environmental disaster, goes bankrupt, shuts down, and leaves the taxpayer to clean up the mess. The costs of incentives would pale in significance to the costs of an environmental disaster.

Q16

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

I agree West Virginia needs to promote energy diversity. Thus, I do support the growth of renewable energy sources especially those that are environmentally friendly.

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?

I believe that this is a step forward for corporations that should be pursued in all corporations. I feel that what is good for the worker and state is good for the corporation. Again, incentives for such plans may spur other corporations to do the same. It would impact my decision making on relative policy issues.

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?

As I mentioned earlier, I believe that many of our manufacturers' infrastructures are deteriorating, and the manufacturers could use some help upgrading and expanding their infrastructure. This would be good for the environment, manufacturers, workers, and other West Virginians. Down the road it would greatly improve the manufacturers' ability to maintain their facilities in West Virginia. West Virginia already is negatively impacted by far too many vacant factories deteriorating and inviting a disaster. If there is a fire, fire fighters are put in danger and the environment is polluted. It is like the abandoned car problem the state had many years ago. We must clean up our state, not create a larger issue with factories in the future following suit. I support incentives such as grants and tax relief to manufactures to improve infrastructure. I also would like the state to seek Federal funding to clean up the abandoned factories.

Q19

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

Yes. You can contact me by email "knnance@comcast.net" or cell phone 304-412-1601.

Q20

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

Facebook "Elect Karen Nance for Delegate" is currently being developed.
