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Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Friday, July 14, 2017 9:18:56 AM
Last Modified: Friday, July 21, 2017 10:24:45 PM
Time Spent: Over a day
IP Address: 98.169.193.81

Page 2: Contact Information**Q1**

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Page 3: Question 1: Early Learning**Q2**

Virginia is known to have a 'non-system' of early learning where programs operate under different departments and sets of rules. What would you do to better link programs and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Virginia's early learning programs?

It is important that the state leverage funding that can be maintained in perpetuity to support universal access to programs such as Head Start, pre-K and full-day kindergarten. Investing in early learning increases the likelihood that young children will have the foundation for later school success.

Page 4: Question 2: Foster Care

Q3

Most children entering foster care are returned to their families. In most cases, these families do not receive additional support and services from the child welfare system, which can lead to poor health and education outcomes for children. How do you think the Commonwealth can better support children once they are returned to their families?

Educators play a key role in a student's life who might be in foster care. If a student is not receiving stability at home they need a sense of control and safety at school. When schools are notified about a student that may be in and out of foster care, it is important that instructors are made aware of those circumstances so they can address any signs of trauma, stress, or abnormal behavior that goes in the classroom as a reaction to their home life.

Page 5: Question 3: School to Prison Pipeline

Q4

The US Department of Education data analyzed by the Center for Public Integrity shows that Virginia schools, in a single year, referred students to law enforcement agencies at three times the national rate. Numerous studies show that these school discipline policies increase the chances of these students becoming involved with the adult criminal justice system. If elected, how would you address these issues?

As Attorney General, my team and I have supported the Department of Criminal Justice Services and the Department of Education in holding workshops and education programs for principals across the state on school discipline and how to minimize referrals to the criminal justice system. These needs to continue. Additionally, I have expanded our Virginia Rules program, which is the Attorney General's youth education program - which teaches students about Virginia laws and how to make good decisions growing up - from 12,000 students per year to 55,000 students per year. We are in the process of creating an additional module on shoplifting, which is one of the largest entry points young people experience into the criminal justice system. I will continue to strengthen and expand the availability of this program.

And, last year, I launched a program called "Give It, Get It: Trust and Respect between teens and Law Enforcement." This programs helps to ensure safe, mutually respectful interactions between Virginia teens and law enforcement. The program educates teens on their rights and responsibilities when interacting with law enforcement, and will help keep situations from unnecessarily escalating in a way that might result in needless charges or even endanger the safety of an officer or young person. Students learn about ways to improve the likelihood of an encounter being resolved safely and positively, as well as their rights to remain silent, consent to or refuse a search in certain situations, and access an attorney. Role playing and situational discussions will help young people and officers develop a better understanding of what each sees and experiences during an interaction. As Attorney General, I will work to make these positive experiences more available to students throughout the Commonwealth.

Page 6: Question 4: Health Insurance

Q5

Virginia's Children's Health Insurance Program (known as FAMIS in Virginia) and Medicaid provide low-income children with health insurance that their families would otherwise be unable to afford. If the federal government cuts payments to the states for Medicaid and/or FAMIS, how would you support the health needs of low-income children?

I have vigorously opposed the disastrous effort underway in Washington to repeal the Affordable Care Act which would rip healthcare away from over 30 million Americans and that would make serious cuts to Medicaid. I've led a coalition of states in the fight to protect the subsidies that the ACA provides for folks wishing to purchase insurance on the exchanges. I will continue to oppose repeal and harmful cuts to Medicaid. In Virginia, I have long advocated for Medicaid expansion. It makes economic sense, and it's the right thing to do for hundreds of thousands of Virginians who need access to affordable healthcare.

Page 7: Question 5: Opioid Epidemic

Q6

Substance abuse by parents affects both the parents and their children. Brain research shows that positive attachment between a parent and child in the first few years of life is critical to the child's healthy brain development. Substance abuse can significantly impact those early bonds between parents and children. If elected, what policy solutions would you promote to address the needs of the whole family?

Combating the heroin and opioid epidemic has been among my top priorities as Attorney General. We've made progress, focusing our efforts in five areas: legislation, education, prevention, enforcement, and collaboration. In my next term, I'll continue these efforts, and pursue some new solutions, including:

- 1) Early intervention from the Department of Social Services when mothers have been identified as using substances while pregnant. We need to make sure that they begin treatment as early as possible so that they can be on a recovery tract once they give birth, and that their infant is tested for NAS and treated properly to deter any long term side effects from substance exposure in utero.
- 2) Advocating for sufficient housing options for mothers who are recovering from substance abuse, or transitioning from incarceration, so they can have access to their children in a safe environment that is conducive to good parenting.
- 3) Requiring correctional facilities to administer parenting classes to mothers and fathers prior to their release from incarceration.

Page 8: Question 6: Cross-Systems

Q7

A child can interact with many systems (schools, health and mental health, courts, etc.) as they grow up. A Virginia Children's Cabinet has been established to facilitate cross-agency collaborations at the highest levels of state government. If elected, how would you facilitate this type of cross-agency collaboration for children?

These agencies need to have an open line of communication in the localities they serve. The Virginia Children's Cabinet should focus its work on developing toolkits for local governments that foster cross system collaboration in order to better serve the children that may be touched by these different entities. All too often, children fall through the cracks when they are within a government system. It is important that these different fields not operate in silos but work together for the best outcome of the children and families they serve.

Page 9: Question 7: Mental Health

Q8

In 2016, Virginia ranked 49th in the nation for the rate of youth with major depression who did not receive any mental health treatment. There are many barriers to quality mental health treatment for children, including: type of insurance, place of residence, lack of access and stigma. What do you view as the most significant barrier to effective mental health care for children and adolescents in Virginia, and how would you propose addressing this barrier?

We know from our experience in physical health that early detection and treatment leads to better outcomes, and the same is true for behavioral health. Yet, too often, those who need help do not get the services they need until they are in crisis. We could be doing a better job in identifying students who are in need of behavioral health services, and better methods of detection need to be developed for teachers and administrators and connect the students with the services they need from providers. But, fundamentally, state support for behavioral health services has lagged unacceptably behind. We need Democrats and Republicans in the General Assembly to come together and increase state funding for behavioral health services in our Commonwealth. I'll do whatever I can as Attorney General to advocate for this increased funding so that we can provide the services that are needed.

Page 10: Question 8: Education

Q9

The achievement gap between lower income students and their higher income peers and between white students and students of color has been a persistent problem in Virginia that has recently worsened. How would you address the achievement gap in Pre-K to 12 education?

All children in Virginia deserve a high-quality education that affords them the opportunity to achieve their full potential, and Virginia will not meet its economic goals without successfully addressing its minority and income achievement gaps. To do this, we need to take into account the individual circumstances that students face at home and outside of the classroom, increase wraparound services for students and families, have an honest dialogue with the community about needs and common goals, improve access to technology, provide more positive mentorships, and develop more inclusive and representative curricula.

Additionally, students are more likely to be successful if they feel safe in their communities. As Attorney General, I am in a unique position to help address public safety needs in communities with underperforming schools. Prosecutors and crime prevention specialists in my office, working with local law enforcement and community members, can work collaboratively to address the challenges facing students living in low-income neighborhoods.