

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, July 13, 2017 10:13:08 AM
Last Modified: Thursday, July 13, 2017 10:45:27 AM
Time Spent: 00:32:19
IP Address: 24.179.97.130

Page 2: Contact Information

Q1

Please provide your contact information below.

Name	Michael Mullin
District	93
Address	PO Box 14011
City/Town	Newport News
State/Province	VA
ZIP/Postal Code	23608
Email Address	campaign@votemikemullin.com
Phone Number	757-525-9526

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?

Part of the issue that Virginia faces is that there is no statewide availability for early childhood programs. Some localities offer early childhood education, while others do not, and between those that do there are vast differences in scope and quality between jurisdictions. Virginia's children need a statewide early childhood education program, that includes adequate funding, so that all children enter kindergarten ready to learn.

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?

Most services for foster children in Virginia are provided jointly through local social services departments and community services boards. FAPT teams are the best access points for those services, but they are usually understaffed and overworked. I have seen too often through my work as a prosecutor that the first access to services a re-homed child has is through the criminal justice system. Empowering and properly funding FAPT teams would go a long way towards supporting children that have been reunited with their families.

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?

This year I had a bill that attempted to directly address this issue. It required school administrators to determine that there were no alternative punishments available to them before they made a non-mandatory referral to law enforcement. While that bill was not successful, I intend to reintroduce it again this upcoming session. Something has to be done. We are criminalizing conduct that used to get you sent to the principal's office, and it has to stop now.

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?

We cannot allow children to be removed from this vital program. It would be disastrous if the Federal government were to cut or reduce this it. If that were to happen, Virginia would have to find a way to make up the difference.

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?

Unfortunately, Virginia criminalizes addiction. We incarcerate people who are suffering from addiction, breaking up families and not bringing the addict any closer to sobriety. That is particularly concerning because the opioid crisis that is ravaging our Commonwealth has no easy end in sight. We must start by fully funding our CSBs and working towards dealing with addiction as the root of a problem, and not a symptom of a criminal personality.

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?

Secretaries Hazel and Trent have been models of cross-agency collaboration, and I hope that the children's cabinet will continue to be a model for future success. It would be beneficial for that sort of cross-agency collaboration to start to occur on the local level. Having inter-agency committees between schools, community services boards, social services, and law enforcement would go a long way to better harmonizing the ways that children interact with the government. I would support such methodologies being more broadly adopted on the state level.

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?

I believe that one of the largest barriers to effective treatment is lack of access. Our community services boards are statutorily required to be the first point of access for mental health related services, but they routinely only have resources to handle a small number of severely in need individuals. People suffering from major depressive disorders, without co-committal diagnoses, are just not a priority. That is particularly the case with young people. A first step would be properly funding the CSBs and allowing them greater access to children in the schools, where they can do the most good.

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?

Our standards of quality for funding our local schools have been routinely altered and degraded over the last decade since the great recession. Reforming and expanding our standards of quality to decrease student teacher ratios, include great learning assistants in the classrooms, and providing for the necessary school counselors would go a long way towards addressing the achievement gap.