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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?

I will propose legislation that would mandate Legislative Services to evaluate existing programs to find similarities in overlaps related to newly proposed legislation, with the goal of consolidating resources to ensure limited funding is not wasted on duplicative administration, and instead is focused where it is needed.

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?

Those with the least resources often have greater difficulty providing the same level of support to their children than their more affluent peers. Many of these families also receive government assistance that is threatened when parents take a job or receive a promotion. I will work to reform assistance programs to ensure finding a job or earning a promotion does not lead to an immediate loss of benefits.

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?

I would propose legislation restricting the overuse of Out-of-School suspension, enhancing guidelines for In-School Suspension, and mandate use of proven Restorative Justice measures. Disciplinary actions should seek to solve the problem, not simply remove the child from the school system.

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?

The uncertainty of continued Federal funding for state level programs is not limited to health care. One of the first pieces of legislation I will introduce will mandate the creation of contingency plans for all programs dependent on Federal funds. Ensuring children are healthy is critical to their education and should be placed higher on the funding priority list than those items unrelated to a core function of the state government.

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?

Decriminalization will go a long way toward treating addiction as a health issue, rather than a crime issue. I will propose legislation to help keep families together, and redirect law enforcement resources wasted on the supply side of the failed war on drugs to prevention, education and treatment on the demand side.

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?

I will seek to consolidate resources to ensure limited funding is not wasted on duplicative administration, and instead is focused where it is needed.

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?

Increasing the pool of Medicaid participants could adversely affect the existing pool, limiting access to medical resources, and potentially forcing existing resources to either stop accepting Medicaid (and thus impacting those currently in the pool) or drive prices up for non-Medicaid consumers.

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?

I would propose legislation that reforms the scoring for SOQ funding. Specifically, I would provide a scale in which teachers are given credit for progress made with those that still didn't reach benchmark. This could increase funding to offset the imbalance. I would also keep students in the classroom by addressing the overuse of out-of-school suspension, and institute restorative justice, to reduce recidivism, thereby increasing in-class opportunity to progress.