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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 would work closely with the appropriate individuals affiliated with those organizations to determine in what ways the legislature can improve the link, efficiency, and effectiveness of early learning programs. I would support establishing a uniform set of rules that would apply to all early learning programs.

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?

Establishing a mentoring program in our public school systems that is funded by the state could serve as potential resource. Such a program could work directly with those students in the public school system to help identify and address their needs at home.

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 mentioned before, the creation of a state funded mentoring program could serve as a resource. In many cases the public school system is the only positive influence children living in economically challenged regions have.

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 would support a budget amendment to allocate such funding in support of low income children. I would also work with our Congressional delegation to seek out alternatives.

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?

The opioid epidemic cannot be resolved without providing treatment alternatives to those who do not have access to such treatment. Allocating funding to support Drug Court programs would serve as a step in the right direction to help drug addicts recover. A parent cannot be addicted to drugs if they are to sustain a strong bond with their children.

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 would continue to support the Virginia Children's Cabinet and work close with their members to determine solutions in making the cabinet more efficient and effective.

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?

The lack of support for funding of mental health care is an issue that must continue to be addressed. The most significant barrier to effective mental health care is public funding. I would propose addressing this barrier by advocating for increased funding.

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 continue to support efforts to reform our public education system. Supporting cost savings measures to allow for an increase in public education funding would allow for local school systems to create new programs to close such a gap.