

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, July 06, 2017 11:25:18 AM
Last Modified: Thursday, July 13, 2017 2:10:16 PM
Time Spent: Over a day
IP Address: 192.74.136.29

Page 2: Contact Information

Q1

Please provide your contact information below.

Name	Jennifer Boysko
District	House of Delegate District 86
Address	P.O Box
Address 2	247
City/Town	Herndon
State/Province	VA
ZIP/Postal Code	20172
Email Address	jennifer@jenniferboysko.com
Phone Number	703-587-9141

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?

We must work to standardize and fully fund our early education system in Virginia to make sure that every child in Virginia gets a quality early learning education, working with the VA Board of Education and other stakeholders.

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?

We need to make sure that our social safety net is funded at the proper levels to take care of these “at risk” children. I support the “wrap-around” model making sure that families are taking advantage of any social safety net programs available to them like SNAP, TANF, WIC and such.

Additionally, we must continue to review our school funding formula to make sure that schools with the most vulnerable student populations are getting the resources they need.

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?

The School to Prison Pipeline is one of the biggest civil rights issues facing Virginia today. It disproportionately hurts Children of Color and enters them into a criminal justice system which is harder and harder to break out of. I supported HB 1534, HB 1535, and HB 1536 which would have limited the number of days students could be suspended. It was unconscionable to see those bills fail this past session. In the past, I have supported bills like SB 829 and SB 997 which have helped address these issues, but we need to do more. We need to fully fund our school support positions so that schools have the adequate resources to deal with children with disciplinary issues. By stripping schools of these vital support positions, local schools have been more and more reliant on local police forces to a job that can be handled more easily in school than out. I would support efforts by the Virginia Board of Education and local school board to developing better approaches to school discipline.

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?

To begin, I would vigorously fight any cuts to Medicaid or FAMIS. These cuts would only balloon Virginia’s healthcare cost as poor families would just end up bringing their children to the emergency room as a measure of last resort and drive up the cost. If we are unable to stop the cuts, support exploring all other options including allowing low-income families who are dropped from FAMIS due to federal cuts, to buy their way back into the program at a very discounted price. That way they can maintain coverage while helping the state recoup some of the money lost from federal cuts. Of course, I have supported Medicaid expansion in Virginia since the option was offered upon passage of the Affordable Care Act.

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?

Virginia needs to stop treating the opioid crises as a criminal issue and instead as a health issue. That can not mean just reviving those who have overdosed but making sure that we provide the treatment needed to those abusing opioids so that they stay clean. The General Assembly made several steps in the right direction to address the opioid crisis in the 2017 session and we have more work to do.

I was the author of the bill to expand access to the life-saving drug Naloxone and worked all year long with stakeholders and shepherded it through the legislative process.

We need to expand Medicaid in our state so that people have the option to seek these treatments and I would support legislation that would expand treatment facilities throughout Virginia so that people who are in treatment that is close to their support group during their recovery.

If we don't then we will only continue the cycle of poverty and neglect that will trap the children of opioid abusers in the same cycle as their parents.

I support expanding access to the full range of reproductive health care so that every child is wanted and loved and if a person is actively addicted, she can prevent an unintended pregnancy. Having access to safe affordable and reliable contraception is a vital part of the public policy initiatives we should make accessible.

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 am very pleased that Lt. Governor Northam created the Children's Cabinet. This was a huge step in the right direction. I supported legislation like HB 369 in the 2016 session that would have appointed members to the council who have received services through the Child Service Act so that they may better inform the council on strategies to improve cross-agency collaboration that will benefit Virginia's children.

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 fact that we have not approved the Medicaid advantage in Virginia is a major barrier to mental health access, not only does it deny mental health coverage to over 400,000 Virginians, but it also denies needed funding to hospitals and local clinics that could use that money to expand the number of beds in the state for mental health patients. The lack of beds and the funding needed to keep them running is the most critical barrier we face. If we accept the Medicaid funding we can make great strides in addressing mental health in Virginia.

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?

Over the last few years, Republicans in the House of Delegates have gutted funding for public schools, especially in the funding of support staff for schools. Schools in traditionally low-income areas generally have a higher percentage of people of color than schools with wealthier schools. Those wealthier schools have the resources to fill in some of those missing staffers, but lower-income schools do not. We need to address this imbalance by fixing our school funding formula so it lead's to an increase of fundings for individual schools for each student they have below the poverty line.

The core problem of many of these issues stems from families where parents do not have access to earn a livable wage. There are families in my district where parents work up to 3 jobs, never having the time to be at home with their children. Childcare is too expensive and we have children who are basically left on their own to raise themselves. Schools cannot have to do it all to resolve this issue. Families must be part of the solution and having a livable wage gives moms and dads the ability to spend time with their children and provide more of the educational and emotional support they need.