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COMPLETE

Time Spent: 00:18:55

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Page 1: Introduction

Q1 Please provide your name.

Amelia D. Marquez

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Q2 Why are you running for State Legislature?

I believe that the most vulnerable are hurting. The working class has been misrepresented in Helena for years. It is time to send a member of the working class to represent them.

Q3 What do you believe is the most important issue related to growing business in Billings and what are your suggestions for addressing that issue?

The most important issue related to growing business in Billings is income inequality. Currently, major businesses, like Walmart, are taking advantage of the system. They are causing small business owners and working Montanans to pay more in taxes just to support mega corporation employees. We have to make the top 1% and mega corporations pay their fair share in taxes and pay a living wage.

Q4 In the 2017 Legislative Session, local option authority was supported by the Billings Chamber, City of Billings, Big Sky Economic Development, Downtown Billings Partnership, and numerous other organizations across the state. Under what conditions would you vote for a local option authority bill?

A local option authority would be the correct method if, and only if, we find ways to make sure not to allow tax on items that could be categorized as necessities.

Q5 Tax Increment Finance (TIF) districts are an important economic development tool for our community. How will you work to ensure one of local government's most useful funding mechanisms is preserved?

We must continue to allow property and business tax to fund TIF districts. It is important to have an open line of communication with residence and business owners about how their property value will increase if TIF is used correctly.

Legislative Candidate Questionnaire

Q6 In 2016, Yellowstone County hoteliers remitted \$3.5 million in facility use taxes to the state. That year our regional Convention & Visitors Bureau, which markets and promotes our area as a travel destination, received \$350,000 (just 10%) from the state to market and promote tourism in our area. Will you work with the Billings Chamber and lodging partners to ensure more money is returned to the areas generating lodging tax revenue? (Y/N) **Yes**

Q7 MSU Billings is an essential economic driver for our community and surrounding area. Not only does MSU Billings provide educational opportunity for Montanans, it also assists with workforce development, an increasingly important challenge facing our community. How will you help to ensure MSU Billings receives adequate funding for facility updates?

As a former student senator for MSU Billings, I know first hand what the 2018-2019 budget looks like. First, we have to pass a budget with the proper financial resources for higher education. From there, we have to fund new buildings across campus with state funds. With two condemned buildings and many other facility issues, the state legislature needs to push more bills forward to specifically support MSU Billings.

Q8 The Billings Chamber, City of Billings, Big Sky Economic Development, Downtown Billings Partnership, and other community partners, are working with Hammes Co. on the development of One Big Sky Center, comprised of two development districts and anchored by a regional convention center. If a state funding source were identified and developed, under what conditions would you support the inclusion of state monies in the funding mix for a regional convention center in Billings?

First, I fully support the idea of One Big Sky Center. The development and economic boost it would give Billings and Montana will be a large win for all. The one condition I would ask for is to allow access to the convention center for Billings Public Schools.

Q9 Sixteen percent of Billings workers are employed in the healthcare arena resulting in a total direct and indirect economic output of \$2.6 billion annually. Do you believe that cutting state reimbursement to hospitals, clinics and other healthcare providers is a way to address state budget shortfalls? (Y, N)

No,

You may provide additional context if appropriate.:

The last cut from the budget we should make is any form of healthcare. Should we regulate mega-corporations in Montana and the top 1% of income holders to pay their fair share in taxes we could begin to introduce a single-payer healthcare system.

Q10 Throughout the legislative interim and November 2017 Special Session the re-evaluation of Montana's funding mechanisms was a topic of discussion. What are your thoughts on the need to identify new revenue sources to address a shifting economy and our infrastructure needs?

The need to identify new revenue sources needs to happen immediately. One of the ways that Colorado is finding a surplus in its budget is by legalizing recreational marijuana.

Legislative Candidate Questionnaire

Q11 Billings, and the greater Yellowstone County area, has the largest legislative delegation in the state and there is great potential to work together toward regional specific initiatives. How do you plan to work with all members of the Yellowstone County area delegation for the betterment of our business community during the 2019 Legislative Session?

The biggest issue of any group working towards a common goal is when any individual let's their ego get in front of their work. While serving the Billings community I will always put my constituents first. Hopefully every elected official has the same mentality of wanting to work for our citizens. Through that process we must learn to listen and respect all viewpoints at the table. At the end of the day, I refuse to only vote on party lines. I want to be a representative of the people and for the people.

Page 3: Finalizing Questionnaire

Q12 If you have not sent the Billings Chamber a high-res image you would like us to use, please upload a photo here.

Amelia Marquez 4x5@300.jpg (1.2MB)
