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Page 1: Introduction

Q1 Please provide your name.

Ming Cabrera

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Q2 Why are you running for State Legislature?

I am a small business owner in Billings Height and want to see changes on Main Street. Over 40,00 cars travel and is the 6th largest city in Montana that seems to be ignored. Main Street is a state wide highway that needs to be addressed to promote business. Also, I have been associated with healthcare for over 30 years and worry about the changes to state funding for community hospitals, rural areas and cuts to Medicaid. I believe in fair wages for all workers.

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 Billings Heights has been ignored for too long. The new roads and school in the Heights need to be improved to vitalize business growth. It seems to me, all funding has continued to be given to the west end of Billings.

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?

I feel this local option is vital for growth BUT, property tax assessment must be considered in the process. My property tax has increased by over 30% but my value on my bank value on my property does not reflect this high increase in tax. My bank value is at \$8 a square foot and am having a hard time raising rental rates to reflect the valuation the city has determined.

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?

I feel the BIRD near the Metra is wonderful. Again, I emphasize why not a TIF district in the heights The new roads coming from the interstate and the new road linking the west should promote a TIF for Billings Heights. The west end of Billings is important but growth from Shepherd, Roundup has increased need of the people in the heights.

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,

You may provide additional context if appropriate.:

As a property owner with rental income my Lessee's depend on business people and tourists who stay overnight in Billings. In the last special session of state Legislature all tax increments were voted down. I read the opinion of the hotel owners that had no problem with supplementation of increase lodging tax. The airport of Billings and Bozeman are quite different and unique. It is surprising our own county legislature didn't understand the need to promote Billings.

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?

I have lived in Yellowstone County for over 40 years. The only time I left was because my educational college needs were not met at MSU- Billings. Two of the largest healthcare facilities are located in Billings and need for improvement to meet these standards in healthcare are necessary. I feel that workforce development with the new building to continue and promote high standards of care. In the long run, updating the facilities at MSU-Billings will promote more people to move to 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?

At this point I am undecided about One Big Sky Center. The reason I worry is because many property owners are having a hard time in leasing spaces. An increase in more leased area may once again decrease the needs to develop the Billings Heights. Also, questions in regards airport capacity, lodging for big conventions has not been realistically discussed. I feel the Hammes company needs to put more money for capitalization before I would support.

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.:

Absolutely not. I have been associated with healthcare for 30 years and know that most providers and rural hospitals are struggling with budgets now in place. As it now stands, community clinics as Riverstone are vital to make sure that people on the edges of society can receive care and continue to work. As more people enter the age of 65 on Medicare, they continue to move to Billings for specialized care. It is important to understand the future of healthcare and Billings has some of the greatest facilities in the northwest. The number one worry of people I have talked to about their future is their healthcare as they grow older.

Legislative Candidate Questionnaire

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?

I feel a local option tax is favorable as long as it is tied to a decrease in property tax. Also, lodging tax, rental car tax are viable options. Another thought is some type energy tax such as the coal severance tax for companies to mine the natural gas, and renewable energy sources as wind and solar to replace the decrease in coal leaving our state.

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?

I feel I am a fiscally conservative democrat that understands that the bottom line of any new program must show an improvement for the greater good for all taxpayers. If all legislatures in Yellowstone county can see that I have the experience in budget management with forethought into the near future we can all work together. I have enough experience in the business world that I can discuss needs of the community to begin the process of consensus.

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.

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