



# VOTER

GENERAL ELECTION TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2020

# GUIDE

**TIMES**  
WEST VIRGINIAN

Sunday, October 18, 2020





**JOEY ★★★  
GARCIA**  
HOUSE OF DELEGATES

JoeyGarciaWV.com

Joey Garcia learned the value of public service from his family. His grandfather, Manuel Garcia, a long-time city council member from Fairmont, taught him that it's about problem solving and making government work for working families. Garcia gained experience with the legislative process as legal counsel and legislative director to Governor Earl Ray Tomblin. As your delegate, Joey Garcia will use his passion for public service and his experience to get things done for Marion County.

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PAID FOR BY JOEY GARCIA FOR WEST VIRGINIA/DAVID GARCIA, TREASURER



Civility, Integrity, and Honesty, For A Change!

**POLIS**  
FOR WV SENATE - DISTRICT 13  
**A VOICE FOR VALUES**

*Paid for by Committee to Elect Rebecca Polis for West Virginia Senate 2020*

Economic Recovery | Jobs | Education Reform |  
Addiction Recovery | Road Repair | Pro-Gun | Pro-Life



# Welcome to the 2020 Voter Guide

The act of voting is one of the most important duties we can undertake as American citizens.

This Voter Guide contains answers to four questions we asked candidates whose names will appear on Marion County ballots on Nov. 3. Each candidate received the same questions.

Candidate answers have been edited for AP Style Book, grammar and clarity. Candidates' names are listed alphabetically and we indicate which candidates did not respond by deadline.

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## Candidates for Marion County Sheriff

### Jimmy Riffle, Democrat

**Why should voters choose you for this political office?**

I have 31 combined years of experience with The Sheriff's Office; 27 years as a deputy sheriff and four years as the current sheriff. During my first term, I had goals to improve all aspects of The Sheriff's Office. We have increased the number of deputy sheriffs. We have also been able to incorporate a new radio dispatch system that allows information sharing between other agencies.

Most importantly, we have streamlined our budget, eliminating unnecessary costs and purchases, saving the county over \$1 million



Riffle

in the past four years. The tax office has been modernized to allow for credit card and online payments.

I am most proud of the fact that we have been able to greatly improve cooperation with other agencies in the county. Some of those agencies include emergency management, fire and EMS, other elected officials, and not only local law enforcement agencies but also those from surrounding counties. I want to continue building those bridges to keep Marion County moving forward, that is why I am seeking another term as sheriff.

**What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit an individual's airflow while in custody?**

Police reform is very much in the news today. I believe we should be having conversations

about and identifying problems, finding common solutions to those problems, and then implementing the solutions. I would certainly be a part of that type of reform. In fact, that is what we do now. I have always been willing to talk about anything that can improve law enforcement relations with the community.

In response to the question about restraints that limit airflow while in custody, I have to say the Marion County Sheriff's Office has never implemented a policy authorizing any kind of "choke hold" or restraint that limits breathing or blood flow. We have deputies who are trained in defense tactics. They then train the other deputies in ways to make an arrest that guarantees not only the deputy's safety, but also the safety of the individual being arrested.

**How will you stand up against**

**all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?**

Discrimination in any form, for any reason is unlawful. We take measures to ensure everyone is treated equally. If an instance of discrimination is brought to our attention it is investigated and, if warranted, prosecuted. It is everyone's responsibility to stand up against discrimination. Classes in recognizing and investigating discrimination should be made available to both new officers, as well as veteran officers.

**As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Marion County?**

My office has and does work with other agencies to ensure public safety. Our deputies are provided

PPE and sanitizing of cruisers and equipment is available through the Office of Emergency Services. The best course of action is to adhere to the guidelines and recommendations of the Marion County Health Department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We will continue to assist the local health department with whatever needs they may have to combat the spread of this virus and we hope a vaccine or cure will be found quickly and safely. The Sheriff's Office is willing to help whenever and wherever we are needed. Please remember, wear your mask, wash your hands, and maintain a social distance of six feet. Together, we will all get through this!

**Joe Carpenter, Republican, did not respond to the Times West Virginian's questions**



# Candidates for U.S. Senate

## Shelley Moore Capito, Republican

### Why should voters choose you for this political office?

It has been the honor of my life to represent the people of West Virginia in the U.S. Senate. Over the last five years, I have traveled the state and listened to West Virginians.



Capito

I have taken their concerns and needs to Washington where I have been able to increase funding for transportation projects, double West Virginians' share of federal funding to combat opioid addiction and secure critical resources to help us deal with the health and economic challenges of COVID. I have also worked with others to pass legislation that increases research funding to combat childhood cancer and Alzheimer's as well as provide more support for caregivers. I believe my voice is a powerful voice to help the people of West Virginia, and I ask West Virginians to send me back.

### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit an individual's airflow while in custody?

While the vast majority of police officers are dedicated public servants who do their best to protect their communities, there is no question that bias does exist and that law enforcement practices should be improved. That is why I worked with my colleague Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina to help write the JUSTICE Act, a comprehensive bill that rejects partisan calls to defund the police and instead makes investments to upgrade law enforcement policies across the country. The bill makes it harder for bad police officers to move from one department to another to evade discipline. It invests in body cameras and would require that those cameras be turned on in order to protect both the public and officers themselves. The JUSTICE Act provides new training on methods to deescalate situations and on an officer's duty to intervene when colleagues use excessive force. The legislation also reforms

hiring practices to ensure that local police forces reflect the communities they serve. Importantly, the bill would ban chokeholds by federal law enforcement officers and require state and local police agencies to enact similar bans as a condition of receiving federal funding.

### How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?

America's promise of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is for every American. Discrimination in any form has no place in our society. I will continue to speak out against it and lead by example.

### As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Marion County?

I voted for the CARES Act which provides economic payments to Americans negatively impacted by the shutdown of our economy this spring. I also support increased funding for the Paycheck Protection Program so that small businesses can continue to keep their employees working and the employees can continue to get a paycheck. It is disappointing that politics is blocking the passage of an additional stimulus package. I will continue to work towards a bill that provides resources to safely reopen schools and small businesses and provides resources to medical providers. We need to increase testing, bring the manufacturing of personal protection equipment back from overseas and provide more resources to our frontline health care workers.

## Paula Jean Swearingen, Democrat

### Why should voters choose you for this political office?

I've been advocating for my community for years.

I started by writing letters to my representatives, with the idea that they just hadn't heard what the problems were. Then I went to demonstrations, with the idea that they didn't understand how widespread our suffering was. Then I began organizing — trying to connect with other community members like me — with the idea

that our reps just didn't know what needed to be done to fix it.

But what I eventually realized was that they weren't operating in good faith like I was. They'd heard, they'd known, they'd understood.



Swearingen

They just didn't care.

That's why I'm running for office. And the situation that inspired me to run has only gotten worse since the pandemic began.

Among the most important changes I'd pursue would be making certain the wealthy aren't permitted to privatize their profits — while socializing their costs on us. This applies broadly: working people in struggling, boom-bust industries should not be abandoned as soon as there's less money to be made from our blood and sweat. Industries shouldn't leave us worse off than we were before: saddled with clean up costs, health impacts, a loss of property rights, and gutted infrastructure that they beat to death, but didn't pay a fair share to maintain. Lobbyists shouldn't be able to buy elections and officials.

Industries and businesses we develop here in West Virginia should leave us better off, not worse, but our politicians have been sacrificing us for decades — and anyone who thinks it started with this administration has partisan blinders on.

We need to ensure a basic value: that it's not cheaper for companies to flout worker safety or community protections than it is to follow them. It should not be less expensive to risk us and pay fines. Voters should choose me because who better to represent us than someone who is us?

Millionaires have plenty of representatives looking out for them. Working people don't — and we need to.

### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit an individual's airflow while in custody?

We ask far too much of our law enforcement officers. They're asked to be mental health counselors responding to mental health crises, social workers responding to domestic disputes, addiction counselors responding to people

facing addiction, and more. All this while we provide inadequate training and pay, and put officers in situations they don't have the expertise to face. We put them in situations that don't require force, but where force is used because it's the only coping skill they've been trained to use.

It's wrong.

When you have a hammer, everything looks like a nail — and vulnerable communities of color and poor communities are the ones getting hammered down and bearing most of the costs. It doesn't have to be this way.

We need the accountability and the courage to filter out people who should never be in law enforcement — and we need to hold bad officers fully accountable for their crimes. We also need to provide appropriate training for good officers and give them de-escalation tools. Plus, we must bring in the expertise of social workers, mental health counselors, and addiction counselors and more, so they can deal with situations where it's just not appropriate for police to respond.

No human being should pay for a traffic violation or a bad check with their lives. No one in a mental health crisis should be shot rather than provided with appropriate medication and care. Officers are not and must never be judge, jury and executioner.

All lives don't matter unless Black lives matter, too.

### How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?

Diversity is beautiful, and one of the most wonderful things about the United States is that we are a melting pot.

Yet, politicians have been using labels to divide voters for as long as there have been voters. It often works. They know that if voters join together, we'll realize that we're not facing a left-right battle, but an up-down battle. It's millionaires and billionaires against the rest of us.

We all know our country isn't based on the idea of a government of the rich, by the rich and for the rich... but of a government of the people, by the people, FOR THE PEOPLE.

For all of us.

Y'all mean all.

We must win a government that works for all of us, not just the

wealthy few.

Our government will best represent us when it is us.

We need working class people in Congress and down ballot across the state. We need people of color, women, working people, farmers, LGBTQ people, teachers, bus drivers, social workers — and more. We need grandmas and young people. And we need to band together against the millionaires and billionaires whom we outnumber — and whose only hope of holding onto power is by pitting us against one another.

Ever wonder why so many bills that are popular with the public never get passed? It's because millionaires are governing to protect their wealth, not their constituents — and they can do that so long as we're busy blaming one another and trying to snatch crumbs, while the millionaires run off with the whole pie.

### As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Marion County?

The folks in charge right now are trying to make working people risk themselves to protect billionaire and millionaire bank accounts.

As a coal miner's daughter, I know what it's like to worry about family members in jobs that put their lives and health at risk. And as a single mom, I know what it's like to worry about paying bills and feeding the kids.

My opponent is a millionaire from a wealthy family, working for her wealthy donors. She went to a press conference that was virtual while supporting the position that school kids, teachers, and school service personnel should gather in person in classrooms. That's just a perfect analogy for how they regard the rest of us: as expendable.

We're not expendable.

I support monthly aid for workers until the pandemic is over — and Medicare for All.

We must also pass the HEROES Act which would provide assistance for small businesses, funding for schools, support for first responders, and hazard pay for essential workers plus unemployment support and more.

I would've fought kicking and screaming to pass pandemic aid rather than just going on a senate break like my opponent did.

**David Moran, Libertarian, did not respond to the Voter Guide questions by deadline.**



# Candidates for U.S. House of Representatives, District 1

## Natalie Cline, Democrat

### Why should voters choose you for this political office?

I grew up in this state surrounded by the mountains, people, and



Cline

passion that West Virginia provides. Leaving briefly to move to Washington, D.C., I moved back with my husband to raise my son in the West Virginia I grew up to love.

Only when I got back did I realize that corporations and large-money donors now control the state and the people of District 1 are struggling because of it. We deserve representation that listens to our people, fights for our kids, and holds strong against those who want to exploit us and our resources. We deserve someone who will listen, and I am that person.

### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit an individual's airflow while in custody?

When talking law enforcement, it's important to hear all voices on the matter. The voices have spoken, and common-sense legislation needs to be passed regarding law enforcement. Ninety percent of Americans support mandatory body cameras. Eighty-two percent of Americans support banning choke holds and 81% support a national registry for police misconduct.

The fact that our neighbors continue to be harassed, arrested, and killed by bad cops that get through the system is unacceptable. I support all measures listed, and believe we need to create an enforcement system that works for all Americans — not just those who look like me.

### How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?

Discrimination in any form is unacceptable, and I will continue being an ally for the LGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities, as well as advocating for religious freedoms. Racism, homophobia, xenophobia, nor religious discrimination has any place in our state. I will continue

calling discriminatory actions out and will support legislation strengthening hate crimes as well as freedom for all people.

### As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Marion County?

This pandemic has brought to light the need for internet in our state. With over 60% of West Virginians without internet, many in Marion County, the need for Broadband for All is now. This will allow for individuals to stay home and work and our students to have reliable and safe access to education.

Additionally, unemployment and depression rates have skyrocketed, and our people need help now. A second stimulus check is absolutely needed, and I'm disgusted at our federal representatives for politicizing human lives.

## Shawn Cosner, Write-in

### Why should voters choose you for this political office?

My political philosophy is personal accountability, national security, and fiscal responsibility all executed in respect to and in protection of the Constitution. The Constitution is the governing document of this nation not its politicians.



Cosner

My employment history, my military experience, and non-partisan views make me a unique candidate. A candidate, that I believe, the 1st District has never had the chance to vote for on Election Day.

It is my hope, as voters find out more about my family's connection to West Virginia and how we have always answered the call to service; a sense of confidence will allow them to cast a vote for me.

Voters should choose a candidate only if the individual was able to earn their vote by convincing them they should have the privilege to represent them. I know how hard it is for a candidate to convince me they are worthy of my vote.

I expect the same level of scrutiny from those in the 1st Congressional District. It is an honor to have an individual vote for you and I would expect nothing less. Voters can feel

confident in voting for me, as I will work tirelessly to represent them and their interests.

I believe, as countless other Americans believe, our two party political system is a contributing factor to the issues currently facing our nation.

I am not saying our elected leaders or candidates are wrong nor am I attacking them, we must do a better job of working together before that is no longer an option. We must lead by example and stand for more than just party lines.

### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit an individual's airflow while in custody?

I am in favor of any reform that allows our police officers to successfully execute their job and helps strengthen their confidence in the public eye. These brave men and women are the ones who risk their lives everyday so we may enjoy our freedoms and the Rule of Law.

As a private citizen, I encourage other private citizens to gain the critical perspective before rendering a verdict on police policies. Does every situation require a restraint limiting airflow? No. Do situations arise where police officers must use a particular restraint based on a split-second threat analysis? Absolutely.

We cannot generalize or make assumptions when we have enough facts to get to the truth. The Rule of Law must be protected. There are standards for every private citizen and standards for employment activities.

Rioting, violence, destruction of property, and civil unrest is not a form of protected assembly under the 1st Amendment. Verbal and physical assault or taking a life of a private citizen by a police officer is not acceptable under the 4th Amendment.

If you are a protester, protest. If you are a police officer, be a police officer. However, once you cross that line you are neither a protester nor a police officer and accountability must be had. I am not anti-cop, anti-any race, anti-rule of law. I am however anti-ignorant. Do not let your bias blind you to the truth of what is right and just.

I am not a police officer, so I do not have the experience to aid

in the process of police reform or the knowledge of what is required to accomplish such a difficult and complicated task. Nor would I be so arrogant and force my will on the profession. We can all agree on what should be appropriate and inappropriate.

### How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?

Our Constitution speaks directly to these issues. Not only do the protections exist in the form of guidance from the Constitution as the supreme law of the land, each state, county, municipality, and employer most likely have very similar language protecting against any form of discrimination.

To answer the question; hold people accountable. If an individual violates the law or a policy then the proper authorities, controlling or governing body must follow the proper procedures to resolve the egregious behavior in question.

We have laws and policies at every level to give relief for the victims and punishment for the accused. The American people must understand that we should not substitute an accusation or charges for guilt and offend America's due process rights guaranteed under the 4th Amendment.

The system currently in place prevents McCarthysim and must remain above personal attacks on character. The Supreme Court confirmation hearings were utterly disgusting and are an example of this behavior. I am not dismissing anyone's claim as a victim but a court of law is the place for truth, not grandstanding for political motives.

New York Times v. Sullivan set very bad precedent and allows people to say whatever they want towards public figures as if they surrender the protections of our law because of the profession they choose.

Absent a showing of actual malice — that is with knowledge that the statement is false or with reckless disregard of whether it is false or not — by clear and convincing evidence, a public figure cannot recover under a defamation claim.

America's standard must remain one of decency, respect and the commitment to find the truth, not a

truth. In any situation or any form of discrimination, I will always stand against it; protecting the victims — as should all Americans.

### As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Marion County?

Any decision made will always be in the best interest of the people I represent. As new information regarding COVID-19 is updated, the task of all governmental agencies is to safeguard all people and help mitigate the consequences of such actions.

This virus is dangerous and a serious threat to West Virginia and our nation. What makes this virus unique is how it spreads and creates a false sense of security as the delay in symptoms allows it to spread with ease.

The danger of the virus itself is apparent to those who belong to the high-risk categories. However, it is a new virus and we still are unaware of the complications it can or will cause later for those who contract it.

Many who test positive can and will recover with little or no symptoms. We have a responsibility to those who are in the high-risk category. Our actions and inactions have consequences beyond ourselves.

The most dangerous aspect of this world pandemic is lack of truth and clarity. People have weaponized ignorance and for those who are seeking answers, they are without. The truth exists outside of people's bias or political party.

My concern and greatest fear for West Virginia is the economic consequences that will occur if we are unable to work together. West Virginia, no matter the county or congressional district, must make decisions with the facts available to its leaders at the time the decision is made.

Testing is key. West Virginia must know where this virus is and isolate those who are infectious. We must be comfortable with being uncomfortable for the greater good. It is reckless and irresponsible to bring people together without knowing who has the virus.

This started with one person in China and forever changed the landscape of the world.

**David McKinley, Republican, did not respond to the Voter Guide questions by deadline.**



## Candidates for W.Va. Senate, District 2

### Josh Gary, Democrat

#### Why should voters choose you for this political office?

The residents of the Second Senatorial District deserve better. Our current senator is facing legal troubles in multiple jurisdictions and legitimate questions exist about his judgment, his moral character, and his ability to serve. Fortunately, I don't have those kinds of distractions in my life and, if elected, I'll be able to focus on the issues that matter most to this region. This includes repairing our roads, expanding access to broadband, and bringing good-paying jobs to Marion County and beyond.

As the son of a coal miner, I understand how important the energy industry is to West Virginia.



Gary

The rich resources that lie beneath our feet provide a pathway to prosperity for our people and for our state. With strong leadership in the State Senate, the possibilities are tremendous. I'll make every effort to ensure that energy jobs go to West Virginians and that extraction is done safely and responsibly. We all deserve clean water to drink and pure air to breathe and I will not let corporate greed get in the way of public health.

#### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit an individual's airflow while in custody?

I'm incredibly grateful for the protection provided to us by law enforcement officers in West Virginia and proud that my campaign was endorsed by the State Troopers Association. The men and women who wear the badge are brave souls who go to work in the morning not knowing if they'll

return home at night. I'm concerned that we will soon have a shortage of officers in West Virginia, as I know that police chiefs and sheriffs across the state are having a difficult time filling vacancies. If we don't find a way to recruit new officers and keep the good ones that we have, we'll soon have a crisis and not be able to adequately protect our communities. Accordingly, I support more funding for the police.

Police officers are often asked to perform tasks that they are not trained to do, which isn't fair to them or to the public. If elected, I will advocate for the addition of social workers to police departments, to take some of the burden off the shoulders of officers and get our citizens the help they need. This concept has worked in other states and I'm confident that it can work in West Virginia.

I support policies that limit the use of chokeholds and carotid holds by police. Over half of the nation's

largest police departments have taken this step and I hope that police departments in West Virginia will do the same. What happened in Minneapolis to George Floyd should never happen again.

#### How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?

If elected, I'll advocate for legislation that prevents discrimination based upon sex, sexual orientation, race, gender, or ethnicity. In a recent opinion by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch, the Supreme Court ruled that employers cannot fire someone merely for being gay. The West Virginia Legislature should adopt a similar policy. Many cities in West Virginia have adopted fairness ordinances and it's time for lawmakers in Charleston to do the same.

#### As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Marion County?

First and foremost, I'd ensure that monies received from the federal government are used to protect our people. I'm disappointed in the way that Gov. Jim Justice has managed the \$1.25 billion in CARES Act funding, as he had no business spending \$50 million on road repairs when there are so many other unmet needs related to COVID-19.

If elected, I will seek federal COVID dollars to be used on health care, on our first responders and front line workers, and to ensure a safe learning environment in our schools. I'll also make sure that there are adequate unemployment insurance funds so that those who are without work are able to survive until the economy gets back on track. Finally, I'll make sure that small businesses in Marion County are not forgotten and that they receive funding in order to stay afloat during these uncertain times.

#### Mike Maroney, Republican, did not respond to the Voter Guide questions by deadline.

## Candidates for W.Va. Senate, District 13

### Mike Caputo, Democrat

#### Why should voters choose you for this political office?

I've served in the West Virginia House of Delegates for the last 24 years and was previously the vice president of the United Mine Workers of America's International District 31. Now, I am running for the State Senate in the 13th

District because I believe it is time to take North Central West Virginia to the next level. I am committed to bringing business and labor together in order to improve the economy of Monongalia & Marion counties. I promise you two things: to work as hard as I possibly can for the people of West Virginia, and to never forget where I came from. I want this campaign to be about us. Because you, the people of Marion & Monongalia County, are my special interests. I'm not owned by any lobbyists, I'm not owned by any corporation and I always vote for what I believe is best for my



Caputo

constituents. I assure you that we will always work together because your ideas matter to me. I am running for the State Senate because we need a Senator who will work with anyone regardless of their party. I am running to bring people together to be able to champion ideas that put West Virginians first.

#### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit an individual's airflow while in custody?

My entire life one thing I have prided myself on is to bring people together. I would bring people together to work on this issue. One thing we certainly need to do is invest in more training for members of our law enforcement. But, I want to be clear, I am proud to be endorsed by law enforcement, but we can always improve and do better.

#### How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?

I will always stand against discrimination. We need to continue to work for a West Virginia which

is Wild & Wonderful for all of our citizens. I have always stood up against discrimination because it is quite simply the right thing to do and I will always continue to do that. West Virginia has no place for hate and we should make sure that all of our fellow mountaineers are treated equally.

#### As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Marion County?

If I'm lucky enough to be elected to the State Senate, I will certainly focus on our recovery from this pandemic. When this COVID-19 crisis is over, there will be lots of challenges for our communities. I want to be a State Senator who is advocating for local businesses, who have fallen on some hard times. But despite the challenges they face, they are always thinking about how they can help our communities. Those are the people who will need our help the most, and I'm going to work as hard as humanly possible in the State Senate to get it for them. We also need to invest in rural health care systems. In the greatest country in the history of the world, every single person should have access

to health care. Finally, I will make sure our government is being held accountable. Our state government should be focusing on supporting West Virginia workers and their families, not corporate CEOs who don't need our help. I want to make sure we have our priorities straight, because I know when you invest in the people of West Virginia, the return is better than you could've ever imagined.

### Rebecca Polis, Republican

#### Why should voters choose you for this political office?

As a mother and a grandmother, I have learned to put others first, to do what is best for the whole yet not neglect the individual rights. I care that people know they are listened to and cared for. As for working administratively, I have learned to prioritize that which is important above that which is merely urgent. As one who cares deeply about our nation, our state and our ability to pass on to the next generation the freedoms that have been bought and paid for by the blood of our citizens, I will do



Polis

my part to make sure our rights, especially our 1st Amendment freedom of speech and 2nd Amendment right to keep and bear arms is protected. As well, I will protect the right to life.

#### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit an individual's airflow while in custody?

I believe the laws in our state, county and city are quite clear on those positions. I will support the enforcement of these laws.

#### How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?

I believe this city and state has laws governing these issues for the protection of all and the protection of all is what I will support.

#### As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Marion County?

Again, there are policies in place for the protection of the citizens. Those policies will hopefully relax as time continues and I will support the businesses and the individual preferences in accordance with the policy at the time.



# Candidates for W.Va. House of Delegates, District 50, vote for 3

## Michael Angelucci, Democrat

### Why should voters choose you for this political office?

I have been honored and privileged to serve the citizens of Marion County during the last two years in the West Virginia House of Delegates. I have fought for our teachers, school service personnel and our bus drivers by voting to give them a well-deserved pay raise. I also supported the largest funding increase for Fairmont State University and Pierpont Community and Technical College in over a decade. I supported a tax benefit for foster care families because the system is rigged against kids who need a home. And I supported and voted for legislation that would eliminate the tax on Social Security benefits for our seniors. I fight for working families, our kids and seniors, and if re-elected, I will continue to fight for all West Virginians.

### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit an individual's airflow while in custody?

At no time, should law enforcement enact procedures that limit a person's ability to breathe. I am a staunch supporter of our law enforcement, and I also feel that every person should be protected while in police custody. As a first responder, I have worked alongside our law enforcement officers and I understand at times how difficult their jobs may be, especially having to make split-second decisions to protect themselves and the public. I feel additional education would be helpful for our law enforcement officers to ensure those in custody remain safe.

### How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?

Discrimination has no place in West Virginia. As delegate, I have fought for, introduced legislation and voted to ensure all West

Virginians are treated equally. I, on multiple occasions, made a motion on the House floor to call for a vote on ENDA, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. This bill would prohibit employers from discriminating against employees based upon their sex, race, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.

### As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Marion County?

As administrator of our county EMS system, I have seen firsthand the effects of COVID. In the legislature, I will continue to support funding to increase testing across our state, along with contact tracing. Our county health department has done a phenomenal job ensuring that the people of Marion County remain safe. We are a model for the state on prevention of COVID because of our health department administrator, Lloyd White. By working together, wearing a mask, washing hands and practicing social distancing we can continue to keep the people of Marion County safe.

## Joey Garcia, Democrat

### Why should voters choose you for this political office?

I will put our families first by fighting for higher quality jobs, local access to quality health care, and a first-class public education system. I have a passion for public service and the experience to get things done for Marion County. I grew up in Fairmont with a family that believes in the value of public service, starting with my grandfather, Manuel Garcia. As a former deputy mayor in the city of Fairmont, my grandfather taught me that public service is about solving problems and connecting people to their government and government services.

I returned to Fairmont in 2017 after serving for 5 years as legal counsel and legislative director for Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin. Under Gov. Tomblin, I gained important experience with the legislative process and the executive branch. I developed relationships with both Democratic and Republican

legislators in working to draft, negotiate and pass important legislation, and I gained a reputation for honesty, integrity and responsiveness. I enjoyed working with legislators to help solve problems for their constituents, and I became familiar with ways to cut through the bureaucracy of government. I will use those skills and relationships to ensure that Marion County has strong representation at the State Capitol.

I am running for House of Delegates because I want to create more opportunities for people to work, live, and raise a family in West Virginia. To do so, we must invest in our infrastructure to create better jobs, including improvements in secondary roads, high-speed broadband internet, and small business development and support. We must also have emergency room and specialty health care services located in Marion County. Finally, we need to increase compensation for public school teachers and service personnel, who are the backbone of our education system.

### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit an individual's airflow in custody?

I believe law enforcement reforms should be focused on increasing police accountability and providing support and training to law enforcement officers so they have the necessary resources to serve their communities and maintain public safety. Law enforcement officers, including sheriffs and their deputies, municipal police officers, and State Troopers have dangerous and difficult jobs. These public servants risk their lives every day to protect our communities. The overwhelming majority of law enforcement officers do a great job. For this reason, it is imperative to build and maintain public trust that officers who abuse their power or discriminate against citizens are held accountable under the law. I support the use of officer body cameras during contact with the public as a protection for both the officer and citizen. I also believe there should be increased training in de-escalation and interacting with individuals with mental health disabilities. The state of West Virginia should do more to fund this type of equipment and

training.

With respect to the use of restraints that limit an individual's airflow while a person is in custody, this should absolutely not be permitted. By definition, once an individual is in police custody, he or she has been brought under control. There is no legitimate reason for an officer to restrict the airway of someone who does not pose an immediate threat to the officer, and this is the same situation that led to the murder of George Floyd.

### How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?

I am committed to supporting policies and laws in the West Virginia Legislature that ensure the equal rights of all citizens are protected under the law regardless of sex, race, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. I support legislation requiring equal pay for women and creating a system for paid family medical leave. I support criminal justice reforms that focus on improving public safety instead of imprisoning non-violent offenders, and addressing the racial disparities in our prison population. I support strengthening laws that prohibit discrimination in employment or public accommodations on the basis of race, sex, ethnicity, religion, who you love, or how you identify.

I will also speak out against discrimination, racism, sexism, or other forms of injustice in our community. This unacceptable conduct brings negativity and harms our community's reputation. If we desire for more people to come to West Virginia from other places, or for those who have left West Virginia to come back home to live, work, and raise a family, we must be a welcoming community committed to treating all people equally and with respect.

### As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Marion County?

The Legislature should be more involved right now in collaborating on laws, policies, and funding decisions related to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Legislature should already have been called into an extraordinary session by the

governor to be the voice of their constituents. There is such a thing as the Capitol bubble, in which those working for the state government in Charleston do not easily hear the voices of citizens from different parts of the state. The members of the House of Delegates and the State Senate should be the voice of their constituents in deciding priorities and relaying concerns.

As a legislator, I would advocate for the use of federal CARES Act funding of approximately \$1.2 billion to address several important issues. First, we should be funding necessary personal protective equipment for first responders, health care professionals, educators, and other essential personnel. Second, more substantial funding should be allocated for small business grants, and the funding should be disbursed more rapidly to prevent businesses from closing and employees from being laid off during this time. Third, we should provide more funding to local health departments that have played critical roles in public communication, testing and contact-tracing. Fourth, we must provide funding to improve broadband speed and access and to increase school IT and computer trouble-shooting assistance for teachers and parents during virtual learning to ease the burdens felt by everyone.

## Ron Straight, Democrat

### Why should voters choose you for this political office?

After serving on Fairmont City Council for 24 years, including four years as mayor, I gained knowledge about how local government works. I now want to use my knowledge to serve Marion County on the state level. I support better pay

for our state education employees, but we need more jobs and business development to increase our tax base in order to achieve this.

I have served on the board of Fairmont General Hospital. On the state level, I served on the board of the West Virginia Municipal League. Currently, I am vice



Angelucci



Garcia



Straight



# 2020 ELECTION



IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

### ABSENTEE VOTING

• Sept. 18  
Absentee Ballot Mailing Begins

• October 28  
Last Day to request an absentee ballot.

• November 3  
Absentee Ballots MUST be postmarked by this date.

### EARLY VOTING

• Oct. 21 Early Voting Begins  
• Oct. 31 Early Voting Ends.

### Early Voting Polls Hours

Monday-Friday  
8:30AM – 4:30PM  
Saturday  
9:00AM - 5:00PM

**GENERAL ELECTION**  
**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3**  
**POLLS OPEN**  
**6:30 AM—7:30 PM**



# 2020 ELECTION



## MARION COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

### VOTER INFORMATION

### GENERAL ELECTION

NOVEMBER 3, 2020

### HOW TO VOTE BY ABSENTEE BALLOT

Due to the Corona virus pandemic, all registered voters may request and vote by absentee ballot for the 2020 General Election. Here are the steps to take to vote absentee:

**1. Contact the Marion County Clerk's office by phone or in person to request an absentee ballot application.**

**2. Upon receipt, complete, sign and date the application and return it to the Marion County Clerk's office.**

**3. Mailing of Absentee ballots begins in September and will be continued through October in the order in which requests were received.**

**4. Completed ballots may be returned by mail in the envelope included in the absentee ballot package, delivered in-person to the County Clerk's office at the Courthouse, or delivered to your polling place on Election Day.**

*NOTE: IF YOU REQUEST AND RECEIVE AN ABSENTEE BALLOT AND INSTEAD CHOOSE TO VOTE IN PERSON, THE UNMARKED PAPER BALLOT MUST BE RETURNED TO THE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE OR YOUR POLLING PLACE ON ELECTION DAY. FAILURE TO RETURN THE PAPER BALLOT WILL RESULT IN YOUR VOTE BEING PROVISIONAL. A PROVISIONAL VOTE MAY OR MAY NOT BE INCLUDED IN OFFICIAL RESULTS.*

### EARLY VOTING: OCTOBER 21– OCTOBER 31

No matter their precinct location, registered voters may cast their ballot at ANY of the Early Voter locations. Early Voting locations are:

• **FAIRMONT: County Courthouse Annex / J. Harper Meredith Building : 200 Jackson St.**

• **WHITE HALL: White Hall Public Safety Building 118 Tygart Valley Mall (next to Tygart Valley Cinema)**

• **FARMINGTON: Farmington Community Building 1013 Main Street (behind Manchin Clinic)**

### ELECTION DAY VOTING: NOVEMBER 3, 2020

Regional polling locations are open from 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM on Election Day. Each precinct in the county has been assigned to a specific regional site.

## Marion County Election Locations / Precinct Polling Places

<b>BARNES LEARNING CENTER 100 NAOMI STREET, FAIRMONT</b>	
1	J. HARPER MEREDITH BUILDING
2	MORNING STAR BAPTIST CHURCH
5	BARNES SCHOOL
6	BARNES SCHOOL
7	MORNINGSTAR BAPTIST CHURCH

<b>MANNINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL 113 CLARKSBURG STREET, MANNINGTON</b>	
66	MANNINGTON FIRE HALL
67	MANNINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL
68	MANNINGTON CITY HALL
72	HOUGH PARK COMMUNITY BUILDING
74	METZ COMMUNITY BUILDING

<b>WEST FAIRMONT MIDDLE SCHOOL 110 10TH STREET, FAIRMONT</b>	
13	WEST FAIRMONT MIDDLE SCHOOL
30	FAIRMONT SENIOR FRESHMAN BUILDING
34	FAIRMONT SENIOR FRESHMAN BUILDING
36	FAIRMONT SENIOR FRESHMAN BUILDING

<b>RIVESVILLE COMMUNITY BUILDING 200 JASPER STREET, RIVESVILLE</b>	
82	RIVESVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
83	RIVESVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT.
86	GRANT TOWN COMMUNITY BUILDING
88	BAXTER COMMUNITY BUILDING
90	GRANT TOWN COMMUNITY BUILDING
92	RIVESVILLE COMMUNITY BUILDING

<b>CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 301 FAIRMONT AVENUE, FAIRMONT</b>	
16	CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
27	BARRACKVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL ANNEX
28	BARRACKVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL ANNEX
29	BARRACKVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL ANNEX
33	BARRACKVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL ANNEX

<b>EAST FAIRMONT MIDDLE SCHOOL 221 MASON STREET, FAIRMONT</b>	
96	POLICE RESERVE BUILDING
102	EAST FAIRMONT MIDDLE SCHOOL
112	MARION COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS
113	MARION COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS

<b>FLEMING MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1493 LOCUST AVENUE, FAIRMONT</b>	
18	WHITE SCHOOL (ADULT LEARNING CENTER)
20	WHITE SCHOOL (ADULT LEARNING CENTER)
31	JAYENNE SCHOOL GYM
32	FLEMING MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN

<b>NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY 201 ARTILLERY DRIVE, FAIRMONT</b>	
98	EAST PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
100	EAST PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LIBRARY
101	EAST PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
120	VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH

<b>WHITE HALL PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING 118 TYGART VALLEY MALL, WHITE HALL</b>	
38	WHITE HALL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
39	WHITE HALL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
40	WHITE HALL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
41	WHITE HALL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

<b>PLEASANT VALLEY MUNICIPAL BUILDING 2340 KINGMONT ROAD, KINGMONT</b>	
111	PLEASANT VALLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
116	YWCA
117	PLEASANT VALLEY MUNICIPAL BUILDING
119	PLEASANT VALLEY MUNICIPAL BUILDING

<b>FAIRMONT SENIOR FIELD HOUSE 1516 MARY LOU RETTON DRIVE, FAIRMONT</b>	
42	WATSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
43	WATSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
45	WATSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
48	WATSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

<b>QUIET DELL COMMUNITY BUILDING WV-310, FAIRMONT</b>	
114	COLFAX COMMUNITY BUILDING
115	QUIET DELL COMMUNITY BUILDING

<b>MONONGAH TOWN HALL 430 BRIDGE STREET, MONONGAH</b>	
44	MONONGAH FIRE HALL
47	HUTCHINSON COMMUNITY BUILDING
50	WORTHINGTON TOWN HALL
52	W. MONONGAH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
57	W. MONONGAH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
59	TEVERBAUGH CHURCH

<b>EAST DALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 57 EAST DALE ROAD, FAIRMONT</b>	
121	EAST DALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
123	EAST DALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
124	EAST DALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
125	BUNNERS RIDGE FIRE DEPARTMENT

<b>FARMINGTON COMMUNITY BUILDING 1975 RAY KELLEY AVENUE, FARMINGTON</b>	
51	SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH
53	FARMINGTON FIRE HALL
55	IDAMAY COMMUNITY BUILDING
56	FARMINGTON COMMUNITY BUILDING
87	FAIRVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
89	FAIRVIEW MIDDLE SCHOOL

<b>BLACKSHERE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL</b>	
41	BLACKSHERE DRIVE, MANNINGTON
61	DOWNS COMMUNITY BLDG—RACHEL
69	HOMWOOD FIRE HALL
78	BLACKSHERE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

For additional information, please contact the office of the  
Marion County Clerk Voters Registration

304-367-5447    304-367-5449    304-368-3399



## HOUSE OF DELEGATES, DISTRICT 50 CONTINUED

chairman of the Fairmont Planning and Zoning Commission and the president of the board of the Family Resource Network and I serve my community by delivering Meals on Wheels. I have been endorsed by numerous labor organizations, including UMWA, the Teamsters, Ironworkers, Carpenters' Union, Pipefitters and Plumbers, Electrical Workers, Sheet Metal Workers, AFL-CIO, AFT, WVEA, and the West Virginia Association for Justice.

### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit an individual's airflow while in custody?

Continued and updated training is vital for all members of law enforcement, not only in dealing with suspects but for their safety as well. Also important is open dialogue with police organizations to discuss what issues need to be addressed. Limiting an individual's airflow should be a very last resort if the suspect is in danger of harming himself/herself or officers.

### How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?

When I was on Fairmont City Council, I voted in favor of the ordinance that ultimately resulted in the creation of our city's Human Rights Commission. I would work with the state's Human Rights Commission to ensure that West Virginia continues to pass laws ensuring equality for all.

### As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Marion County?

If elected, I would have a continued dialogue with state medical experts to determine which procedures need to be addressed. I would advocate for more testing and more testing supplies countywide.

Wearing masks is crucial to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. This is mandated, but not everyone is complying. Businesses should require all employees as well as customers to wear masks. Social distancing is also important, but many do not follow the guidelines. Businesses should have the right to refuse service to

anyone who violates the rules.

## Guy Ward, Republican

### Why should voters choose you for this political office?

I have the best track record of getting things accomplished and more experience in government than anyone else running for the House of Delegates. I've been a county commissioner, a mayor and a member of the House of Delegates. As commissioner, I did a lot in my one year in office. I helped resolve issues at several water associations and public service districts. After a major flood, I was instrumental in helping acquire a \$300,000 grant to cleanup areas hit by the flooding. I was and still am a big advocate



Ward

for Volunteer Fire Departments and helped acquire a Genesis Rescue System for Marion County (the first of its kind in the state) and an underwater rescue camera. When I took over as mayor, the Town of White Hall was in financial trouble. The police department was way over budget. Within the first few days as mayor I made drastic changes to spending and discovered a shortfall in the wine and liquor tax. The town had lost nearly \$250,000 during a 10-year period because of mismanagement. I took a town that was in financial trouble and at the end of my first year in office, I increased revenues, eliminated wasteful spending and created a surplus of \$103,000. All this for a town that had an annual budget of about \$750,000 and did it without raising any taxes or fees. After that first year, I oversaw storm water drainage improvements in residential areas and the largest construction project in the town's history with the building of a Public Safety Building. I played a big roll, and I still give advice, in the economic development that's happening now in White Hall. As a Delegate, I supported and introduced legislation that helped create jobs, improved our economy, and combated the drug epidemic.

### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit

### an individual's airflow while in custody?

I support the Justice Act that was introduced in the United States Senate by Sen. Tim Scott(R-S.C.). These are some of the things that his bill would do if passed: it would discourage chokeholds by withholding federal grants from departments that allow for such deadly restraint; it would require state and local governments to report to the Federal Bureau of Investigation any use of force by a law enforcement officer that causes injury and any discharge of a firearm; it would require law enforcement agencies to maintain employment and disciplinary records of law enforcement officers for 30 years and to review records as a part of the hiring process; it would make lynching a federal crime; it would impose harsher penalties on officers who falsify police reports; it would add a new criminal penalty for falsifying reports in connection to civil rights violations; it would allow the Department of Justice to match investments into body cameras worn by police officers through a federal grant; it would commission a study that would go beyond police brutality, looking at education, health care, financial status and crime; it would create a standardized curriculum to train in alternative uses of force and responding to behavioral health crises; it would establish and provide funding for a program

to train officers to know when to intervene if they see their colleagues abusing their use of force; it would close a law enforcement consent loophole to ban officers from sexually abusing the individuals they arrest, and track reports of sexual abuse by law enforcement officers to be reported to Congress after one year; and it would fund an education program for the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture to create a law enforcement training program on the history of racism in the United States.

### How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?

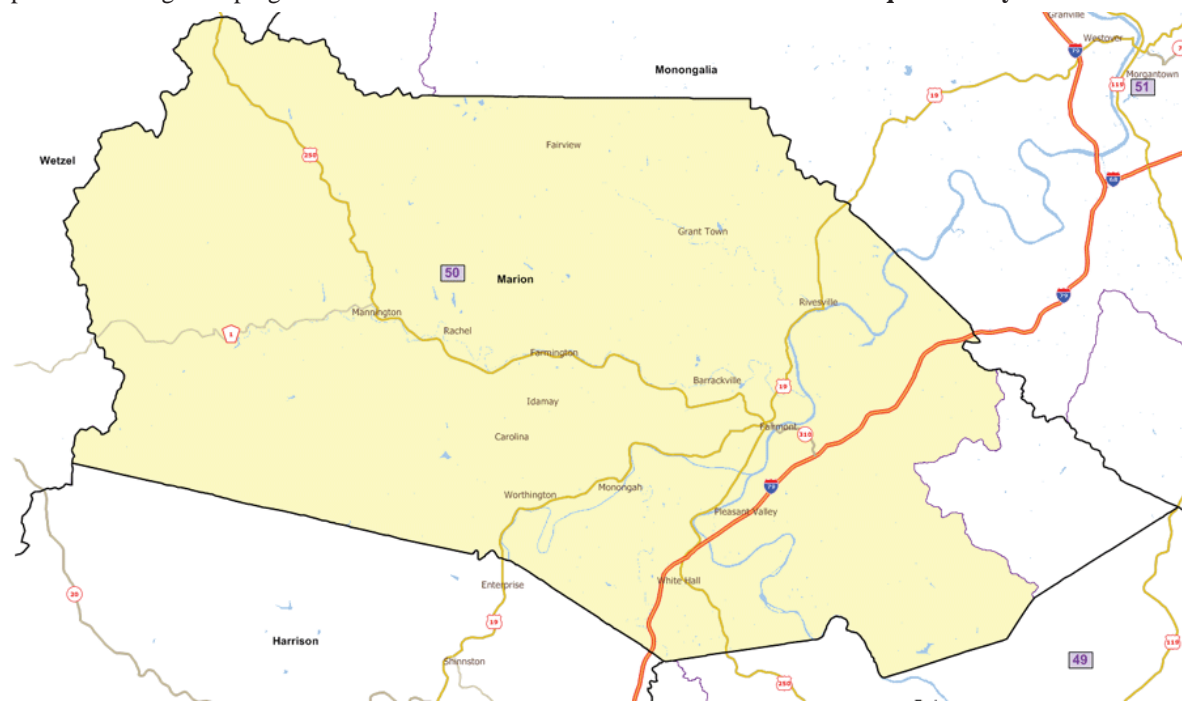
There are numerous laws already on the books that deal with all types of discrimination and for the most part, they're very good laws. However, sometimes there is room for improvement and that's why legislation is an ongoing process. Keep in mind that Legislators don't enforce laws, they make them. So, as a legislator, I will be looking for ways to improve the laws we have concerning discrimination.

### As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Marion County?

Members of the House of Delegates are legislators and legislators' main duty is to pass bills, which become law. It looks like the

coronavirus pandemic started around the end of the 2020 legislative session and hopefully will be near an end when the 2021 session begins. So, from a legislation point of view, not much has been happening in Charleston. (Washington is a different story since they meet year-round.) One of the most important bills that's passed every year is the state budget bill. We'll need to look at what areas of state government that were most affected by the virus. We may have to do some supplemental appropriation bills to change the current fiscal year budget. Hopefully, during committee meetings, we'll be looking at what transpired during the pandemic and whether or not the governor and other local governments overstepped their legal boundaries. If they did, we may have to pass legislation to prevent any such overreach from happening in the future. Hopefully, during these committee meetings, we'll also be given input from the governor's office and other branches of government including local health departments, county commissions and municipalities. From this information, we should compose a list of lessons learned during the pandemic and then pass bills that will better prepare us in case of a future pandemic.

### Phil Mallow, Republican, and Darton McIntire, Republican, did not respond to the Voter Guide questions by deadline.



MAP COURTESY WVLEGISLATURE.GOV

The 50th district of the West Virginia House of Delegates covers most of Marion County



# Candidates for Marion County Commission

## Karl David Kennedy, Republican

### Why should voters choose you for this political office?

For decades, the voters have wanted honest people in government. I fill that bill and I am not a politician.



Kennedy

I've given community service as a 5 time Lions Club president, a businessman and realtor, a member of the local NAACP, Marine Corps League, American Legion and NRA. As a businessman, we helped to improve this community for over 18 years. I know how to talk with 'out of county' business leaders and invite them to locate and bring new jobs here. So far, I have traveled to 14 different countries and recognize and respect ethnic diversity. The future will belong to the international community and I can move that effort along very well.

### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit

### an individual's airflow while in custody?

To my knowledge, our local police officers are still being trained at the State Police Facility in Nitro, West Virginia. The highest standards of law enforcement are taught there. Our current police officers reflect that character and training. Fairmont Chief Steve Shine, Marion County Sheriff Jimmy Riffle and officer Joe Carpenter do great jobs as managers and their staffs are a wonderful credit to our city and county. The rule of law is maintained because of their high standards and character. As a County Commissioner, I will want to expand their services to protect the outlying towns better. That is sorely needed.

### How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?

State and federal laws have been on the books for over a hundred years now. Teaching them in the secondary schools with our American history would go a long way to improve society. Years ago, our school systems had just that — it was called Civics. I would like

to see that subject returned to the school curriculum.

### As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Marion County?

I'm far from being a medical expert, and applaud the efforts of Gen. Hoyer and the state medical people who have kept a tight lid on this COVID-19 virus event. Common sense helps. Wear a mask and follow the rules. Keep yourself and your environment clean. Eventually, this will pass and things will return to normal. We will be a healthier people because of the learning curve we have followed. And support your local businesses as much as possible — they are paying a great price in lost dollars for this virus and we want them to stay in business.

## Linda Longstreth, Democrat

### Why should voters choose you for this political office?

I will bring my experience in state government and the same commitment to the county commission as I have in the past 16 years in the West Virginia House of



Longstreth

Delegates.

I will continue to support small businesses and all cities and towns in any capacity that the commission is allowed. My experience in state finance and all areas

of government, including counties, will allow me to be a good steward of taxpayers' money and provide fair taxation on personal property.

I hope Marion County citizens will continue to have faith in me as a county commissioner as you have as your state delegate.

### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit an individual's airflow while in custody?

First, let's remember the outstanding and difficult work our city and county officers do.

Having said that, I support reform in the area of training in de-escalation tactics and accountability measures to combat any excessive force such as using extreme restraints such as limiting a person's airflow.

### How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?

All citizens have a right to equal opportunities without discrimination. If elected, we as county commissioners should be held accountable for all county departments to follow state non-discrimination procedures and law. Every elected official should be held to a higher standard when representing Marion County.

### As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Marion County?

I would continue to have the county not only follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations but would work with the Marion County Health Department on what precautions we need to continue and ensure personal protective equipment is available to all.

The county facilities would have proper protection for the public as we slowly move back to normal. We all have to do our part in keeping ourselves and others safe by wearing masks and social distancing as much as possible.

# Candidates for Fairmont City Council, District 2

## Anne Bolyard

### Why should voters choose you for this political office?

When I had the opportunity to relocate to this area in 2008, the only place I wanted to call home was the East Side of Fairmont. For almost 100 years, both sides of my



Bolyard

family have lived on the East Side of Fairmont where I spent almost every Christmas, Thanksgiving, and many summers with my grandmother. These cherished memories were the initial reason, but the positive people, the sense of community, as well as the local businesses is why Fairmont is the place I call home.

My decision to run for city council is that instead just saying that change is needed without becoming involved, I want to work

with others in the community to put ideas into action for this city. I am pledging that if elected, I will serve by focusing on the interests and priorities of all people living in the city of Fairmont. I will work for this city that I love with dedication, inclusiveness, and integrity to meet the needs of Fairmont now and in the future.

Serving my community is a privilege and in Fairmont, I have been serving on the Historic Preservation Commission since 2016 and the Board of Zoning Appeals since 2017. As a commissioner on these boards as well as my professional experiences from state government, health care, research administration, and working in academia I have the strong skills needed to address the goals for Fairmont outlined by the city council. These goals were approved in November 2019 and focus on priorities such as continued downtown revitalization; promotion

and marketing to highlight all that Fairmont has to offer; the ability to assess the rationale of existing code regulations; revitalization and renewal of our neighborhoods; and, planning for sustained economic growth in our city.

### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit an individual's airflow while in custody?

In Fairmont, we have 39 officers and seven civilian support staff that serve our city dealing with minor complaints to life-threatening situations every day. Our Fairmont police officers receive training through the West Virginia State Police Academy as well as four months of field officer training. To enhance this training, I believe we should work together and develop culturally responsive, localized approaches. Our officers are an integral part of this community and should be included in solution-

oriented approaches to improving police-community relations.

Currently, many large metropolitan police departments have prohibited the use of neck restraints and there is some discussion for a federal ban using neck restraints. The potential for irreparable harm to those being restrained is significant even with training on technique due to multiple variables. For these reasons, neck restraints as well as carotid restraints should be carefully examined and then a determination made if these techniques should be prohibited.

### How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?

Defending equality and inclusion extends beyond just following existing laws, but constant action and awareness. As an elected official, I would uphold my beliefs to challenge individual

discriminatory behavior as well as any pattern of norms or practices that occur in our community that marginalize people. To truly be the Friendly City, we need to understand the issues. We need to come together and have difficult but honest conversations about these issues and act as a community.

The Human Rights Commission provides leadership for addressing community interaction and fairness concerns. If elected, I would work closely with the commission and support their dedication to ensuring the quality of community life and the protection of the community from preventable unfair damage to the lives of individual citizens and families. These commissioners are the guiding force to ensuring Fairmont is the Friendly City for all people.

### As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Marion County?



## CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 2 CONTINUED

of our resiliency and willingness to help each other. As this pandemic continues, we each need to the best of our ability take the basic precautions suggested to slow the spread of COVID-19 in our communities.

In several conversations, an identified need was to expand the available community testing to hours that accommodate different needs such as evening testing sites as well as weekend testing options. In addition, I would explore the utilization of additional mobile testing units to reach people in other areas of the city that have limited transportation options within a neighborhood.

Another initiative I would explore are different ways to connect the community to current COVID-19 information in addition to the great efforts of the city and the Marion County Health Department. One strategy would be to offer a weekly virtual forum on COVID-19 with a question and answer opportunity for the community. One person shared with me she was not aware of what was needed for the testing or that she would administer her own nasal swab; she did not know who to ask before going to the testing site.

While there are still many uncertainties related to COVID-19, we need to be prepared to adapt accordingly as the pandemic's impact on all communities continues to grow and evolve. This will require dedicated resources; multiple communication methods for important information; and, the continued commitment to public health efforts so that we reduce the impact of COVID-19.

### David "Alex" Knapp

#### Why should voters choose you for this political office?

The people of this city deserve a partner and representative in their government. By signing the West Virginia Can't Wait pledge, I have promised to this community that I will devote 100 percent of my efforts to the community, relinquishing those outside, profit driven interests seeking to undermine the will of the people. This city can come together and move forward, working

together to solve the problems we face. We can work to develop nation-leading infrastructure. We can clearly define the mission of city law enforcement and ensure that they have the tools they need to complete their mission. We can be good neighbors; helping others when the world seems to be falling down around us and rejoicing together when we've conquered a particular challenge. We can stand up, united, and declare that racism, bigotry, misogyny, and hate have no place here. We can do all of these things together. Being elected will enable me to be the voice that carries the strong message from the people of this community to those in power.

#### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit an individual's airflow while in custody?

Law enforcement reform is essential, as all agencies need revision on a regular basis. We have come to a crossroads where law enforcement expectations are not appropriately communicated from the people and received by the agencies that enforce the law. There are two tenets of cyber security that should be applied to law enforcement reform. A. Separation of Duties: We need to clearly define the duties, methods, and goals of law enforcement. Police officers are not social workers, they are not mental health professionals, they are not substance abuse specialists. Law enforcement officers have a clear mission to apprehend those that are suspected to have broken our laws so that they can stand trial. B. Least Privilege: While the name doesn't carry over well, the messaging behind it does. Law enforcement will be given the tools to complete the mission. The tools to complete the mission will be defined by the mission as outlined under the theory of Separation of Duties. The community will adequately fund the mission so that law enforcement officials can complete it safely and securely. This two way street will do much to harbor goodwill between both law enforcement and the public so that we can all grow together while staying accountable to each other. With these thoughts in mind, there should be no point where restriction of airflow is necessary in detaining any individual that is suspected of committing a crime. Our

laws specifically regulate rights to each individual; whether guilty of a crime or not. This should not change on any level: city, state, or federal.

#### How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?

Recently the Fairmont Human Rights Commission convened to discuss posts and comments by an elected official on a social media platform that was not in line with what our community stands for. The city is diverse and every person contributes in a positive way. While the Human Rights Commission did send suggestions to city council regarding a way forward, those suggestions are not binding. The only cure for bad speech, is more speech. We are all responsible for upholding and enforcing what the council and this community stands for through both actions and words. This community does not discriminate based on sex, race, gender, sexual preference or ethnicity. When elected, I will continue to support those recommendations of the Human Rights Commission that level the playing field for all. I will seek to provide the support that the council needs to appropriately censure and mediate inappropriate action.

#### As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Marion County?

As the country and the world navigate through this pandemic, each community has a responsibility to follow appropriate health guidance. While there is a plethora of information available from search engines, social media, and the news, every person needs to critically analyze what's presented and take individual responsibility to ensure the safety of those around them. Masks can do much to protect the community and I support the earlier action taken by council to enforce mask use when it's appropriate. I will work to elevate information from peer-reviewed research so that the community can make an informed decision on any changes regarding COVID-19.

### Sharon Harvey Mallow

#### Why should Voters choose you for this political office?

I am a longtime resident of

Fairmont and am invested in this great community. My parents, who were also longtime residents, instilled in me moral values, the importance of honesty and the commitment to responsibility and being a person of integrity. When elected to the city council I will bring these traits to the position and take every concern brought before the council with your best interest at heart. For the past 25 years of my career, I was employed in social justice at West Virginia University where I learned the importance of planning,



Mallow

communicating, empathy, and seeing sides of every situation. These organization and communication skills will bode well for me on the council. I will always represent the best interests of the community if honored to be part of the Fairmont City Council.

#### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit an individual's airflow while in custody?

The United States as well as our city is becoming increasingly more diverse. With the increase in diversity there is a great need for more specific training such as cultural competency, mental illness understanding, age appropriate responses, and other strategies to decrease violent police responses. Law enforcement should have mandatory training in implicit bias which is important to combat stereotypes and attitudes that can affect our actions and decision making. We should also call for an end to targeting and profiling people of color. Law enforcement's primary responsibility is to protect lives and property. I appreciate the very difficult challenges that officers face each day while trying to keep us safe, but we are seeing more and more instances of violence escalating inappropriately. Officers should be trained to assume that any individual suspected of a crime are nevertheless, treated with respect, regardless of the individual's background. We must be able to trust our officers to take steps necessary to protect us while also balancing the individual perpetrator's civil rights. When

a person is apprehended, or in custody, officers need to be sure that person has the ability to breath and swallow. If the victim expresses difficulty breathing, this matter should immediately be resolved for their protection.

#### How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?

In my 25-year career working in social justice, I learned strategies in making sure that everyone has the right to be treated fairly and equally regardless of sex, race, gender, and ethnicity. To summarize this point, all human beings deserve to be treated with respect! If elected to the Fairmont City Council, I will stand up against these forms of discrimination by respecting our cultural and racial difference. I will value all individuals and recognize we are all created in God's image. I will conduct myself professionally and respectfully in my behavior and speech toward others and encourage others to do the same.

#### As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Marion County?

The pandemic is a serious epidemic that has plagued our community and the world these past nine months. Every precaution that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has implemented should continue until we are notified otherwise. As public servants for the city council, the council's website should remind viewers to continue to safeguard themselves by the CDC's recommendations which includes, Washing hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; the use of hand sanitizer that contains 60% or more alcohol; 3) the avoidance of touching eyes, nose and mouth, 4) cover our mouth and nose with a mask when we are around others, 5) avoid close contact with those who are sick, maintain social distancing keeping six feet apart from others, stress keeping countertops, tables, desks and areas disinfected.

### Scott Straight

#### Why should voters choose you for this political office?

Let me start by saying I was born in Fairmont and have spent a large portion of my life in Fairmont. I attended East Fairmont High School

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



## Candidates for Fairmont City Council, District 6

### Dan Weber

#### Why should voters choose you for this political office?

As a former Fairmont city council member, I have governance experience and I believe in government transparency and fairness to all Fairmont citizens. I believe experience in government because, as the times change, new issues arise and experience in government is almost a necessity. Transparency is self-evident. The citizens should know how and why decisions are being made about their lives.

#### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use



Weber

#### of police restraints that limit an individual's airflow while in custody?

Without knowing the specifics of any proposed law enforcement reforms, it would be imprudent for me to acknowledge any reform changes. All law enforcement encounters are different. Officers are endangered every time they are out on patrol to protect the public. Each time is a different situation. I have always supported our local law enforcement and our local fire department.

#### How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?

I support the human rights of all

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 14**

### CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 2 CONTINUED

where I was a member of the Busy Bee Band and Honeybees. I am involved in Scouting and have the opportunity to work with the youth of our community and listen to their thoughts and ideas on what they think needs to be worked on and improved in our community. I have lived at my current address for over 23 years. When I retire, I do not plan



Straight

on leaving Fairmont. So I am very committed to seeing only the best for my hometown. If you ask anybody who knows me I feel certain they will tell you that I am a very dependable person and that I am a man of my word and I do take it very seriously. If elected to this position I'll give you my word I will do my best and work my hardest to see this city thrive.

If elected I look forward to working with City Council and the citizens of Fairmont to help ensure that our hometown will thrive and prosper. With everyone working together I feel we can make Fairmont a great community.

#### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit

#### an individual's airflow while in custody?

I believe no matter what's your profession you should be properly trained. You should also never stop training or learning new techniques. I feel with proper training law enforcement can have the ability to restrain a suspect while both keeping the officer and suspect safe from harm or injury

#### How are you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office if elected?

I believe discrimination of any type is unacceptable. I feel we need to treat all people with the respect they deserve and the respect we wish to be treated with. By following the guidelines of common courtesy and decency we can all do our part to help stop discrimination.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Fairmont?

If elected to office I would rely on the health department to provide guidelines to help keep everyone safe. I would do my part to follow the guidelines and help inform other people of ways to keep themselves and loved ones safe until this pandemic comes to an end.

## Candidates for Fairmont City Council, District 4

### Terry Burton

#### Why should voters choose you for this political office?

I hope that if I am fortunate to be elected to office then my past political experience should be a source of refreshing ideas to make Fairmont a better place. I served two 4-year terms as a politician in London, responsible to over 380,000 area residents. I was selected into the Mayoralty and this opened a whole new world to me through invitations to many cultural events and allowing me to meet people from around the world, as well as leading a peace delegation from the UK to Cyprus.



Burton

I was appointed onto many public committees including: Planning and the Environment Committee (Chairman); Liquor Licensing Approval Board (Chairman); Police Consultative Group Committee; Chairman of the Appeals Board (Chairman); Tackling Crime and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Chairman); Appropriate Adult (serving teenagers and vulnerable adults in police custody); Community Association Management Committee; Corporate Joint Negotiation & Consultation Committee; and London Representative on the Armed Forces & ROTC Committee.

It was an interesting and worthwhile job helping the community, and one I enjoyed very much. I think I have a lot to offer the residents of Fairmont if I am elected.

#### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit an individual's airflow while in custody?

I am sure everyone has been shocked and very upset at the unwarranted deaths of individuals by police officers. It is a very sad state of affairs, and officers must be held accountable for their actions. I believe there is a need to revisit and examine the training officers receive in all aspects of community contact, and adhere to regulations relating to appropriate handling and use of restraint techniques.

#### How will you stand up against

#### all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?

I am deeply saddened when I hear of any form of discrimination. Times have changed dramatically over the decades from a time when it was deemed OK to essentially mock people, name-call and more. The great Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement carries on today. Everyone, regardless of religion, sex, race, ethnicity, or gender, is a human being and deserves the right to be treated kindly, fairly and with respect. As a representative of the people I will not tolerate any form of ridicule, discrimination or name-calling against anyone.

#### As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Fairmont?

Obviously, I am not qualified in the medical field, but would pay very serious attention to all recommendations of the health authorities. We are lucky to have truly fantastic medical providers in Fairmont and the surrounding areas. Whatever recommendations are made to me, I would ensure that these recommendations are advertised and passed on as quickly as possible to all our Fairmont residents, and encourage them to follow current guidelines to ensure their absolute safety and protection.

### Brad Merrifield

#### Why should voters choose you for this political office?

I can only describe who I am and allow the people to decide for themselves if I am worthy of serving them another four years. During the past four years, and in particular the past two years as mayor, I have established many good working relationships in the



Merrifield

community such as Fairmont State University, the Marion County Commission, the Marion County Chamber of Commerce, local business leaders, members of the media, the Pastors Alliance and more to put us in position to progress in a more expeditious

manner. I have been involved in many situations within the community and done my best to listen and learn from the residents of Fairmont that I represent. Being a lifelong resident, I love Fairmont and promise to always put Fairmont first in any decisions that may come my way. I have put forth effort to assist residents in anyway I can. To do my best is all I have to offer. Hopefully, that is good enough.

#### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit an individual's airflow while in custody?

My position on police reform and the use of restraints that limits a person's airflow while in custody is very straightforward. I believe the least amount of force should be used that accomplishes the goal of restraining an individual. There is a certain amount of trust we must show toward the individuals that we call upon every day to protect us. In return, those same individuals must sustain our trust by never using more force on us that is absolutely called for, regardless of whether it is legal or not.

#### How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?

I do this by not seeing differences between us, but viewing all individuals as human beings that have the same rights as I do. As the father of a special needs child, this mindset is very familiar. So, when any situation arises, if I do the right thing, discrimination cannot exist.

#### As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Marion County?

I would continue to support and emphasize the current recommendations laid out by the governor and the Marion County Health Department. I would continue to do my part, as an individual, to abide by these recommendations. I would be aware of any situations that might require my intervention.

**Candidate Rick Garcia did not respond to the Voter Guide questions by deadline.**



## CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 6 CONTINUED

people based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity and religious background. We all should respect the human rights of all people.

### **As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Marion County?**

Any pandemic, be it COVID-19 or other, we should adhere to the advice of the medical and health recommendations and leave politics out of it. Locally, if we had a Marion County person or persons of the year, I would nominate Lloyd White of the Marion County Health Department and his assistants. We should respect our health department recommendations and we should listen to the scientists.

### **Dora Kay Grubb**

#### **Why should voters choose you for this political office?**

I have a broad area of expertise in many fields. For over 30 years I worked for the state in social services in placement of special needs children in home finding and adoption. I was chosen to be part of the committee to develop child care policy for the state, assisted in grant writing, monitored grants, and worked with the legislature. Later, I moved back



Grubb

to Fairmont to take care of my parents. I developed an interest in history and became the director of the Marion County Museum and president of the Marion County Historical Society. I discovered the financial advantage of heritage tourism. I am on the board of the Convention and Visitors Bureau, my church council, the Council of Churches, Shalom and NACHMA. I love this state and my family has been here for over 300 years.

#### **What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit an individual's airflow while in custody?**

No one has the right to take a life of another. I do believe that Fairmont has an excellent police force with progressive ideas. Each future officer needs to have a complete mental health evaluation and criminal background check

prior to being hired. Continuing education for each officer in race relations, acceptable restraints, crowd control and positive relationships with the community it serves is needed. Police need to be professionals and have the respect of our community.

Our present police chief is working hard to obtain these goals. We do need to have more diversity in individuals who apply for these positions.

#### **How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?**

I have fought my whole life for equality for all regardless of sex, race gender and ethnicity. I faced discrimination in my early employment years. Men received higher salaries for the same position, education and tenure. They also received promotions that woman did not. I heard more than once that women only go to college to receive their Mrs. degrees. I believe in the biblical saying "Judge not, least you will be judged" applies to all. While employed I took diversity training and sexual harassment training. I later became nationally certified in Train the Trainer.

I supported the Human Rights Commission but also believe in doing so all people are to be respected. Calling people bigots, rednecks, and idiots is also a discrimination issue. I also believe in the United States Constitution and The West Virginia law. When changes need to be made then we need to do it in the correct manner.

#### **As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Fairmont?**

We, as citizens, need to protect ourselves and others. Encourage wearing masks and social distancing for all ages until this virus disappears or a vaccine is discovered. We need to protect our teachers, students and health care workers.

Look for ways to keep the public active. Marion County Library is featuring arts and crafts over YouTube for grades K-9. WVU is sponsoring musical concerts online. I would like to promote

an arboretum and the revival of the community gardens as fresh vegetables and fruits may become hard to get for all of us. I believe that businesses are finding that people are able to work from home. We need to work towards the rising problems of child abuse and spousal abuse that are on the rise. One way is to have activities such as nature walks, hiking, and other things to do that are free and available to the public

### **Gia Deasey**

#### **Why should voters choose you for this political office?**

Fairmont voters should choose me for Fairmont City Council for several reasons. My campaign slogan reflects who I am as a person and as a candidate. I am dedicated, dependable and determined. I have



Deasey

been a dedicated special educator for over 35 years. I have worked at the classroom level, the university level and the local education agency central office administration level. I have lived in Fairmont for over 30 years. I take part in this community by being active in groups and serving on boards that make Fairmont a better place. I am a dependable supporter of groups such as The Disability Action Center, Family Resource Network, Special Olympics, and Fairmont State University Education Advisory Board. I am dedicated to causes that I can give of my talents and time. I am a commissioner on the Fairmont Board of Zoning Appeals and the Fairmont Human Rights Commission. I am pleased that while serving on the Board of Zoning Appeals, we have supported new businesses such as Dunkin Donuts and Sheetz. We have supported families improving their homes and enhancing their neighborhoods. We have supported actions that provided play space for our children such as the youth soccer field on Walnut Avenue. I am determined to support human rights in our city. I believe Fairmont voters want their city council to be dependable individuals who are dedicated to our city, and are determined to find ways to enhance our city.

#### **What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit individuals airflow while in custody?**

This question deserves more dialogue than a written interview can fairly provide. The Fairmont City Council has a role to support our police force and our firefighters. I was afforded a great opportunity while participating in Leadership Marion to fully appreciate our police force and firefighters. We are fortunate to have strong leaders such as our police chief and our sheriff. My personal experience with our local police force has been positive. When I have reached out to the Fairmont Police, I find quick and respectful responses. I am meeting many of our young officers on the streets of Fairmont and with our school resource officer project. The police officers I meet and talk with "know" our city and its unique needs.

I must stress that reform is not anti-police. Police reform must respect the organizing principle that police are essential. Good officers embrace accountability and reject misconduct. As citizens and city council members we must appreciate the life threatening and challenging job our officers face. Through my work and training supporting students with emotional and behavioral challenges, I can appreciate how difficult it can be to deal with human beings at their worst moments. I believe there is a lot to learn about de-escalating aggression while balancing safety. However, we must move forward and recognize the charge is to keep individuals in custody safe. Through my work with Fairmont City Police as well as the Human Rights Commission, I am in a unique position to fully appreciate this issue. I will help to develop the necessary dialogue that will lead to improvements during this unsettling time.

#### **How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?**

I am humbled and fortunate to have served on Fairmont's first Human Rights Commission. I have learned from my fellow commissioners and from the regular attendees at the HRC meetings. I

recognize the efforts the Fairmont City Council in the fight to get a Human Rights Commission. I applaud the city council members who have made an effort to attend the HRC meetings. I applaud the current city council candidates who have also made an effort to attend and get involved with the HRC. The Human Rights Commission welcomes and depends heavily on the input of attendees.

The HRC is fully aware of the limited diversity of the current commission. While, all of the commissioners are devoted to remain involved, three of us are "stepping down." This will afford an opportunity for others with diverse talents and experiences to apply to the commission. I am dedicated to the HRC and will remain a dependable attendee and a determined participant in HRC activities.

There are many community organizations and nonprofit agencies that are actually doing the heavy lifting necessary in this area. Their hard work is what plays the biggest part in making certain that Fairmont takes care of all of its citizens. When elected to the city council, I will continue my support to these many groups. Too often such groups have to "fight" their way into being accepted into the community. Communication and dialogue between the city council and organizations and agencies that support vulnerable populations is crucial. When we fully understand the organization's mission, our city council can stand up in support and maximize the necessary efforts to make Fairmont a kind and friendly city.

#### **As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Fairmont?**

The challenges of being a leader in the educational system during this unprecedented time have been remarkable. However, I recognize the importance of this learning opportunity. I have spent the last seven months working with the West Virginia Department of Education, Marion County School administration, school nurses, service personnel and educators during the COVID-19 school closure and school re-entry this fall. I have learned that science is our

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# Candidates for Fairmont City Council District 7

## Phil Mason

### Why should Voters choose you for this political office?

Experience matters when you're on city council. Many people before having the experience of serving, including myself when I came on council, believe they can come in, make changes and fix anything that needs to be fixed.



Mason

The truth of the matter is it takes two or three years to understand the operations of the city. A perfect example is stabilizing police and fire departments' retirement funds. It took two years to get action to increase funding without increasing taxes. It takes time to learn the city charter and the other guiding documents in order to understand what you can and cannot influence. It takes time to understand the city manager's role, the mayor's role, the deputy mayor's role and council members. I've been there for six years and understand how to help get things accomplished, such as the Sharon Steel property development, the Rails to Trails completion through Fairmont, a proposed development of a rec center for Fairmont and Marion County and the creation of partnerships with the county commission, the hospital, the university, the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Fairmont and the private sector.

In order for the city of Fairmont to move forward to accomplish projects that are in the planning stages without raising taxes and fees we must create viable partnerships with entities in government and the private sector. I have a track record of developing such partnerships.

### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit an individual's airflow while in custody?

Any department or individual can always improve the level of service to the citizens they serve, including the police department. In my opinion, Fairmont is blessed with a professional law enforcement team. However, when mistakes are made, those mistakes need to be

owned by any department and the individuals who made the mistake and appropriately handled internally and otherwise. I think the question relates more to larger cities than the experiences we have here in Fairmont.

Being a police officer is not an easy job. Many decisions are made in a split second. If a person being taken into custody or in custody presents a danger or a threat to an officer or another citizen an appropriate action has to be taken. As far as using restraints that limit an individual's airflow, except for extreme cases, should be banned. I know being in law enforcement is difficult and dangerous, and many times unappreciated. Once as a much younger and stronger man, I was deputized on the spot at a county fair, by the county sheriff. It can be not too much fun.

In general terms I think the police department in our city handles itself in a proper and professional manner. However, as I said earlier, any department or individual can always improve.

### How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, ethnicity during your term in office, if elected?

I have been concerned about human rights and the removal of prejudice and discrimination. That's why I served on the committee to reinstate the Human Rights Commission. I'm happy we have a policy and the commission but I also have concerns. I will work to bring minorities to serve on the commission. My purpose in serving on the committee to develop a human rights policy was to do what I could to remove prejudice and discrimination against minorities. The commission itself became pigeon-holed primarily for one segment of society that has



experienced discrimination. But it's not the purpose of the Human Rights Commission and I will work to remove the commission from that pigeon hole and address discrimination of all types. I will encourage

education of the citizens of Fairmont about the charter of the Human Rights Commission and the policy that formed it. There is a HUGE misunderstanding of the purpose and function of the Human Rights Commission. No one and I mean no one should live under prejudice and discrimination. We say we pursue equal opportunity for all and we are called the Friendly City but we have work to do to live up to those words. I am a firm believer of education through communication and understanding.

The city can't solve this issue by itself. We can create a framework to address this issue; that's why I will pursue partnerships and relationships with other entities to address discrimination within our community.

### As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Marion County?

I voted for the city council policy to require face masks in buildings and businesses where social distancing is not possible. Again, communication and cooperation with the Marion County Health Department director and his office will help protect citizens from this pandemic. Guidance from his office and cooperation by the city will go far in protecting us all from COVID until we get a vaccine and therapeutics. It is not the role of the police department to enforce the wearing of masks. However it is the responsibility of businesses and organizations within our community to follow the guidelines. I will encourage citizens of Fairmont to do their part to mitigate the spread of COVID by wearing masks, social

distancing and practicing good hygiene.

## Blair Montgomery

### Why should voters choose you for this political office?

I believe I am qualified to be a city council member since I have lived in Marion County since 1974 and in the City of Fairmont since 2001. I am familiar with the city and have ideas that can improve civic operations.



Montgomery

I am a progressive who is fiscally conservative. I believe we need to target our efforts and limited supply of funds toward projects that have been proposed in the past after reviewing them and working toward completing them. We talk too much and take too little action unlike our neighbors to the north and south.

### What is your position on law enforcement reform and the use of police restraints that limit an individual's airflow while in custody?

I believe law enforcement reform is necessary in that we send officers into situations for which they are not adequately trained; for example, domestic violence. I think it would be a good idea to staff law enforcement agencies with

counselors and social workers who can help diffuse various situations when they arise. I find it hard to believe that police restraints that limit airflow to an individual are necessary. Police have methods for neutralizing violent behavior like handcuffs and tasers.

### How will you stand up against all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, gender, and ethnicity during your term in office if elected?

There should be no discrimination toward any person regardless of their sex, race, gender, and ethnicity. We must remember the Golden Rule; do unto others as you would have them do unto you. If I determine discrimination is occurring in the city of Fairmont I would use my office as council member to advocate for action from the council to end the discriminatory behavior.

### As the COVID-19 pandemic continues what steps would you take, if elected, to safeguard the people of Fairmont?

I would rely heavily on the public health director for Marion County for direction in how we can reduce and eliminate the health risks associated with the pandemic. The issue cannot be politicized and we have to listen to what the science tells us.

## CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 6 CONTINUED

guidance and fear can be harnessed. I have learned that people can and will organize to do the extra work to keep their loved ones safe. I have learned that working in focus groups is a necessary. I have learned the importance of "keeping up" on current information.

With these lessons learned, I feel better prepared for my role on city council. Fairmont is fortunate to have Lloyd White as the director of our health department. I believe the city council must support the health department and look to them for guidance. This pandemic is not over. As a rural state, we find ourselves hit harder now while other areas of the country are on the downward slope.

I think the city council must allocate time at each meeting for a

local update regarding COVID-19 related topics. Updates may include reminders about COVID-19 tests, numbers of cases, local trends, sharing of efforts to avoid transmission, etc. This will afford the council opportunities to play a bigger part in the necessary supports. I applaud the city council for their support of safety measures such as wearing masks. I applaud efforts of our local citizens who spread the word and ensure COVID-19 testing is available across all neighborhoods. I applaud our school employees for taking measures to make school re-entry as safe as possible. The city council must sustain communication with these dedicated citizen groups and offer leadership and support.



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