

# Wood County Candidates for November 6, 2018 General Election

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## WV State Senate 3<sup>rd</sup> District Candidates

Office WV State Senate District 3

Name **Mike Azinger**

Party Republican

### Biography

Mike lives in Vienna with his wife Jackie and their three children, Thomas, 17; Zachary, 15; and Sophie, 9. Mike was elected to the House of Delegates in 2014 and to the State Senate in 2016. Mike works in the family business, Azinger Group.

**1. How can WV benefit from the natural gas industry without leaving a legacy of environmental damage, health problems and decreased property values?**

Natural gas has had booming growth in the last several years with a 5% growth from 2016 to 2017 alone (coal is booming also!). It is imperative to not tax this growing industry so it can continue to grow and remain competitive with contiguous states. WV had 18% growth in the last quarter because of industries like these.

**2. Where do you think the responsibility for setting educational standard lies (e.g.,state or county)? Please explain.**

Education decisions should be made on the local level by county boards, teachers, and the parents of our students. The state board cannot be as effective as local folks. It is also essential to teach again in our schools the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bible, like we did from the beginning of America's history.

**3. What kinds of assistance from the state would you support to address the shortage of decent, affordable rental housing in WV?**

Economic growth is the key to affordable housing. Jobs like what are being created in the gas industry, construction, and even manufacturing are the key to growth in West Virginia. WV just reported a \$119 million surplus in our first quarter budget with an incredible 18% growth {as mentioned above} in our first quarter alone. 18% growth is unprecedented!

Office WV State Senate District 3

Name **Jim Leach**

Party Democrat

### Biography

Leach is a well-rounded WV Senate candidate who is committed to using West Virginia resources to benefit all West Virginians. As a Vienna Councilman, lawyer (with a Masters in Energy Law), former prosecutor and local businessman, he is committed to transcending political ideology to focus on the tremendous economic opportunities in energy, agriculture and tourism to benefit all West Virginians.

**1. How can WV benefit from the natural gas industry without leaving a legacy of environmental damage, health problems and decreased property values?**

Properly managed, natural gas extraction, combustion and downstream processing yields more economic value with less environmental impact than coal in WV. Improved infrastructure (non-leaking transmission), improved regulatory oversight of production and well-pad reclamation, combined with state-of-the-art processing, serve to balance the inherent environmental and economic tension. With sound overall policy for natural gas, property values will improve with the economy.

**2. Where do you think the responsibility for setting educational standard lies (e.g.,state or county)? Please explain.**

Certain aspects of the West Virginia educational system are better suited to macro-level management, such as uniform grievance procedures, statewide educational policies and teacher/student performance goals. However, the broad socioeconomic diversity of our population may be better served by local development of standards and curriculums tailored to the individual needs of students on a county-by-county basis.

**3. What kinds of assistance from the state would you support to address the shortage of decent, affordable rental housing in WV?**

HUD, a federal program, is in crisis for affordable housing. That affects low-income West Virginians. Rather than competing for these strained housing subsidies, we can develop WV resources for all West Virginians. Energy, agriculture, tourism and improved education for all West Virginians will strengthen our economy and reduce our dependence on subsidized housing - a rising tide lifts all boats.

## **WV House of Delegates District 8 Candidates**

Office WV House of Delegates District 8

Name **Bill Anderson**

Party Republican

### **Biography**

Born : Parkersburg, WV Graduate: Williamstown High School, Marshall University, BA, West Virginia University, MA. U.S. Air Force, Vietnam Veteran. Retired Teacher: Williamstown High School. Member: First Presbyterian Church, American Legion Post 159, Wood County Farm Bureau, WVEA - Retired, NRA.

**1. How can WV benefit from the natural gas industry without leaving a legacy of environmental damage, health problems and decreased property values?**

West Virginia will benefit from natural gas with the creation of thousands of jobs for its citizens. Increased property taxes from mineral development will benefit programs for citizens. The development of a gas storage hub will attract manufacturing investment. The Department of Environmental Protection is charged with seeing that drilling does not destroy the environment nor endanger people's health.

**2. Where do you think the responsibility for setting educational standard lies (e.g.,state or county)? Please explain.**

Educational standards should be set by the State Board of Education. This is necessary because our state constitution provides it is the right of every child to receive a "thorough and efficient education." In order to ensure that this occurs the Stated Board must set standards and monitor the progress of students in each county school system.

**3. What kinds of assistance from the state would you support to address the shortage of decent, affordable rental housing in WV?**

First, I would hope that affordable rental housing could be provided in the private marketplace. If that proves to not be possible, I would support the creation of a state sponsored low interest revolving loan fund to aid the financing of affordable housing in West Virginia. It could be managed by the WV Housing Development Fund.

Office WV House of Delegates District 8

Name **David Bland**

Party Democrat

**Biography**

In 1988 I graduated from PHS. In 2006 I became a journeyman at the IUPAT, I am also the marketing representative for the IUPAT. My campaign website is run through facebook @DavidBlandforHouseDistrict8

**1. How can WV benefit from the natural gas industry without leaving a legacy of environmental damage, health problems and decreased property values?**

Environmental damage and health problems caused from the natural gas industry can be prevented by having responsible construction and maintenance to the pipeline industry as well as ensuring that West Virginians are included in the workforce. We also need to protect people's property rights in order to keep property values high.

**2. Where do you think the responsibility for setting educational standard lies (e.,g.,state or county)? Please explain.**

Educators in both the state and the county should both be responsible for the educational standards. It should be both because not every county needs the same assistance or direction within the state.

**3. What kinds of assistance from the state would you support to address the shortage of decent, affordable rental housing in WV?**

I would support providing more public housing that is affordable in places that it is most needed.

**WV House of Delegates District 9 Candidates**

Office WV House of Delegates District 9

Name **Ray Hollen**

Party Republican

**Biography**

I'm a Husband to Lisa for 31 years, a father of two daughters (Naddine Border and Courtney Hollen), and grandfather to 4 granddaughters. I'm a Marshall University Graduate, a retired USCG Officer, retired WV State Trooper, former small business owner, and a church leader. I have been serving in the WV House of Delegates for two years.

**1. How can WV benefit from the natural gas industry without leaving a legacy of environmental damage, health problems and decreased property values?**

When done right, by responsible companies that have policies and practices in place that negate environmental, health, and property damages, WV will not only benefit from the

natural gas industry, but will be a leader in the industry. This industry has and will continue to allow job opportunities and an economy stimulus to our state.

2. **Where do you think the responsibility for setting educational standard lies (e.,g.,state or county)? Please explain.**

Giving more responsibility to the local level will permit the County Board of Ed, the County School Superintendant, and classroom teachers latitude to teach to educational standards that are obtainable and adjust as needed for each specific circumstance. With this, there needs accountability for high standards so our children's education achievement is first priority.

3. **What kinds of assistance from the state would you support to address the shortage of decent, affordable rental housing in WV?**

There is a great need for affordable housing in many of our communities. As with anything, we can look at legislation that set forth policies for the state to assist in the developing of affordable housing. Legislation that would lay out rules to minimize and discourage abuse of the assistance that would take away from those truly in need.

Office WV House of Delegates District 9

Name **Jim Marion**

Party Democrat

### **Biography**

Graduated from PSHS in 1971, 1 year at WVU, Married- wife Jan, 2 kids- John and Jamie, 2 grandkids- Lauren and Zach. I have lived in Mineral Wells for 35 years. I'm retired from UPS as a Delivery Driver after 27 years in 2005. I'm also a retired member of the Teamsters Union 175.

1. **How can WV benefit from the natural gas industry without leaving a legacy of environmental damage, health problems and decreased property values?**

First, the natural gas industry has to be responsible for any damage to roads, streams, land, or air. Second, we need to increase the severance taxes so they pay their fair share and the state can use that money for PEIA or raises for state employees and teachers

2. **Where do you think the responsibility for setting educational standard lies (e.,g.,state or county)? Please explain.**

Educational standards starts with the teachers , then the county school boards, and then the state board working in cooperation.

3. **What kinds of assistance from the state would you support to address the shortage of decent, affordable rental housing in WV?**

I think after the RISE program is done building houses for people flooded out we should keep it going to help build affordable rental housing.

### **WV House of Delegates District 10 Candidates**

Name **Tom Azinger**

Party Republican

### **Biography**

Born in Parkersburg, WV

Graduate of PHS and WVU B.A. Business Administration

Served in the United States Marine Corp

Eagle Scout

4 children and 21 grandchildren  
Self-Employed Insurance Agent for 30 years  
Served in WV House of Delegates  
Small Business owner

**1. How can WV benefit from the natural gas industry without leaving a legacy of environmental damage, health problems and decreased property values?**

West Virginia is already greatly benefiting from the natural gas industry by adding 1000s of jobs and paying \$865,800,000 in severance taxes since 2010. The industry is currently benefiting WV with little or no environmental damage or health problems. Natural gas is continuing to increase the value of property due to mineral rights.

**2. Where do you think the responsibility for setting educational standard lies (e.,g.,state or county)? Please explain.**

Each county should have the authority to establish educational standards, because each county knows best what their individual needs are and how best to manage them.

**3. What kinds of assistance from the state would you support to address the shortage of decent, affordable rental housing in WV?**

There are plenty of builders in WV that are able to build rental housing if they deem it economically feasible. It is not the state government's job to provide housing.

Office WV House of Delegates District 10

Name **Vernon Criss**

Party Republican

**Biography**

Son of the late Mr. & Mrs. A. V. Criss, Jr.

Graduate of P. H. S.

Graduate of WV Wesleyan

Business Executive in Family Business

Appointed to the House-of-Delegates in 1987 and was re-elected in 1988.

Elected in 2016 and seeking re-election in 2018.

**1. How can WV benefit from the natural gas industry without leaving a legacy of environmental damage, health problems and decreased property values?**

I believe that the gas industry will attract manufacturing back to our State, if we have the proper environment. Property values have gone up where investments have been made. Improving the health of our citizens will come with younger people staying and coming back to our State to be closer to their family. As a Grandfather, I enjoy my children

**2. Where do you think the responsibility for setting educational standard lies (e.,g.,state or county)? Please explain.**

By constitution, the State is responsible for public education. Also, the responsible party is the State Board of Education to apply the standards. The Legislature's roll is to fund the Education system at not less than the previous fiscal year.

**3. What kinds of assistance from the state would you support to address the shortage of decent, affordable rental housing in WV?**

If the private sector is not fulfilling the rental housing issue, then the Legislature can pass legislation to set up a plan similar to the "First Time" homes through the WV

Housing Fund.

Office WV House of Delegates District 10

Name **Andy Daniel**

Party Democrat

### **Biography**

I am a lifelong resident of Parkersburg WV and owner of 3D Construction as well as other small local companies. I am a proven job creator and I have a passion for making WV a better place. My main goal is to create a business-friendly environment in WV allowing our young ones to stay in WV.

**1. How can WV benefit from the natural gas industry without leaving a legacy of environmental damage, health problems and decreased property values?**

I believe that natural gas production is good for WV. I also believe there are a lot of risk and downsides to this. It has to be regulated correctly. Drilling companies must be held accountable for their actions. Also, if we were to increase the severance tax on natural gas and oil WV could see an increase in revenues.

**2. Where do you think the responsibility for setting educational standard lies (e.g., state or county)? Please explain.**

As the son of 2 public educators, I value education as much as anything. I believe that setting educational standards would best come from the ones who must teach them. The teachers should most defiantly have a lot to do with these decisions.

**3. What kinds of assistance from the state would you support to address the shortage of decent, affordable rental housing in WV?**

I believe that the state of WV must put Education and long-term job creation as their top two priorities. I believe if we strengthen these two things affordable housing will come.

Office WV House of Delegates District 10

Name **Harry Deitzler**

Party Democrat

### **Biography**

Harry Deitzler is an attorney. After graduation from WVU in 1976, Harry served in the Wood County Prosecuting Attorney's office for 13 years, representing and helping persons who were victims of crime. Since 1989, Harry has represented individuals who need legal assistance to overcome life challenges such as injury or disease which have been wrongfully caused by someone else.

**1. How can WV benefit from the natural gas industry without leaving a legacy of environmental damage, health problems and decreased property values?**

Harry Deitzler understands first-hand the danger of pollution to water and the environment. He believes that through reasonable agency and legislative regulation, responsible practices can be required of the industry and natural gas can be captured, marketed, and reasonably taxed for the benefit of our citizens without leaving a legacy of environmental damage, health problems and decreased property values.

**2. Where do you think the responsibility for setting educational standard lies (e.g., state or county)? Please explain.**

It is important that no child in any county of this state be left behind. For that reason, the

setting of educational standard is a statewide issue. Although the issue should be resolved statewide for fairness and consistency, teachers and administrators at the local level must be directly involved and consulted before any statewide standard is set.

**3. What kinds of assistance from the state would you support to address the shortage of decent, affordable rental housing in WV?**

The rental housing shortage is exacerbated by the increasing gap between entry level incomes and housing costs. With the federal government drastically cutting rental assistance to low income individuals, it is becoming impossible for those persons to pay rents sufficient to allow landlords to invest in necessary improvements. Our state may not have the budgetary resources to bridge the gap.

Office WV House of Delegates District 10

Name **John R. Kelly**

Party Republican

**Biography**

Educated Wood County Schools, Graduated Mountain State College, AAS; PCC (WVU-P), AAS; Glenville State, RBS. US Air Force veteran. Retired DuPont. Served on Council, 85-96, 2013-2014. Council President, 3yrs; held VP, Chairmanship of Public Works, Finance, and Personnel Committees. Five years on Area Roundtable. Elected to the WV House of Delegates 2014. Various Civic and Fraternal organizations.

**1. How can WV benefit from the natural gas industry without leaving a legacy of environmental damage, health problems and decreased property values?**

Having personally visited horizontal well-site operations, I can attest to the adherence to state/federal laws governing surface owner protections, worker and public safety, chemical containment, air and water permit oversight and compliance, and the use of ultra modern drilling techniques. Abundant, clean burning natural gas is the HOPE for WV by providing downstream investment and job creation.

**2. Where do you think the responsibility for setting educational standard lies (e.g.,state or county)? Please explain.**

Educational standards must be adopted locally. Parents, teachers, and local business leaders have a better view of the needs of our students. One size fits all programs adhered to by the US Department of Education, and the WVBOE have failed our children. Programs that raise test scores and performance must therefore be introduced at the local level.

**3. What kinds of assistance from the state would you support to address the shortage of decent, affordable rental housing in WV?**

No such program exists at the state level today, but a couple federal programs are administered by DHHR. Ensuring that these programs are managed properly, and federal dollar spent in compliance is the key. I would not support increasing the states financial burden by creating a new residential rental program. We must reduce, not expand the cost of government.

Office WV House of Delegates District 10  
Name **J. Morgan Leach**  
Party Democrat

### **Biography**

J. Morgan Leach is a 7th generation West Virginian whose roots run deep in Wood County. Morgan is a graduate of WVU College of Law with a degree in Energy and Sustainable Development. He is the founder and CEO of the West Virginia Farmers Cooperative, and organization dedicated to promoting sustainable agriculture as a vehicle for economic diversification.

**1. How can WV benefit from the natural gas industry without leaving a legacy of environmental damage, health problems and decreased property values?**

We must balance production with protection. We have a natural resource economy that will take advantage of the growth potential from natural gas, but we must protect the environment and our property rights. There are workable solution to these issues and I hope to use my education to help bring more balance to this industry.

**2. Where do you think the responsibility for setting educational standard lies (e.g.,state or county)? Please explain.**

I believe our educators on the local level are most in tune with the challenges of the education system and implementing standards that are best for their students. Fostering a strong collaboration between the local, state and federal level is important to building and maintaining a quality education system.

**3. What kinds of assistance from the state would you support to address the shortage of decent, affordable rental housing in WV?**

I would support existing programs like the Affordable Housing Fund, as well as a new programs that focus on downtown revitalization. We could create more opportunities for affordable housing in downtown areas that help build stronger communities and more economic growth for Main Street programs and tourism across the state.

### **Wood County Commissioner**

Office County Commissioner  
Name **D. Blair Couch**  
Party Republican

### **Biography**

Blair Couch, Republican, is seeking a third term as Wood County Commissioner. Couch is an agent for Penske Trucks and Hertz Rental vehicles. He serves as county commission President; president County Community Corrections board; president Mountwood Park board; board president Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department. Blair resides in Vienna with his wife Kim Lantz Couch, director of Camden Clark Hospital Foundation

**1. What is your opinion of the possibility of expanding the home rule program to allow the county to impose a 1% sales tax in areas of the county not within a city?**

The commission supports legislation to give counties the same Home Rule option cities have available and have already implemented locally. Any sales tax created would be paid by anyone passing through the county who makes a purchase in the unincorporated areas. The county levy rate could be lowered if enough revenue was generated from this alternative source.

**2. What are the most important issues you feel the Wood County Commission should address?**

One of the biggest issues which continues to face the county and the state is the ongoing drug crisis. The commission will continue to fund and support law enforcement and other first responder efforts to address this problem. With proven dedication, experience and leadership, if elected, Commissioner Couch would continue to deal with this and any other challenges the county

**3. What do you think is needed to attract new businesses to Wood County?**

The county Commission works closely with local, state, national and international Economic and Development officials to sustain continued growth of local business as well as attract new ones. Expansion of Hino Motors, development of a TIF zone to enable creation of Emerson Commons, and development in Williamstown are all part of continued cooperative efforts to keep and spur economic development.

Office County Commissioner

Name **Charlie Meyers**

Party Democrat

**Biography**

Graduated from Williamstown High School, BS in Business and Economics Marietta Collage, US Army veteran 11th Airborne and 24th Infantry divisions, 50 years volunteer firefighter, 5 years president Wood County Firefighters Association, instrumental in establishing 911 in Wood County, chairman 911 advisory committee, member Williamstown Sanitary and Storm Water Board, retired from GE/Borg-Warner, worked in information systems.

**1. What is your opinion of the possibility of expanding the home rule program to allow the county to impose a 1% sales tax in areas of the county not within a city?**

I would oppose any new kinds of fees or taxes unless they were asked for or approved by the voters. I would also oppose using our tax dollars to pay lobbyists. Five delegates and two senators represent us in the legislature, invite them to a commission meeting and discuss any proposed legislation that would benefit Wood County.

**2. What are the most important issues you feel the Wood County Commission should address?**

Look at the compensation of county employees and make adjustments where we are out of line with other counties our size, so we can fairly compensate and keep our excellent people. Continue looking at ways to reduce jail costs, such as legislation to limit bond amounts, thus reducing the number of people in jail. Cell service for all areas.

**3. What do you think is needed to attract new businesses to Wood County?**

Government that is open and welcoming to all people. Maintain our excellent public safety services, law enforcement, fire, EMS, 911. Meet with and listen to business leaders about their needs. Support our public schools and university in any way we can so that we have an educated and trained workforce. Keep reasonable tax rates for our businesses and individuals.