

NONPARTISAN CANDIDATE GUIDE: 2016 WEST VIRGINIA GOVERNOR'S RACE

| | Bill Cole (R) | Jim Justice (D) |
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| <p>For mobile-friendly version and other guides, see campuselect.org/guides.html</p> <p>For more detailed information on candidate positions visit their respective pages at votesmart.org</p> <p>To volunteer, visit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • billcolewv.com or • justiceforwv.com |  |  |
| Abortion: Should abortion be highly restricted? | Yes. Spearheaded multiple restrictive bills including banning abortions after twenty weeks except for medical emergency. | Opposes abortion personally but says Supreme Court ruled & “the law is the law.” |
| Campaign Finance: Do you support increasing restrictions on campaign donations? | Unknown | Yes. Would require disclosure of all donations to stop dark money and ban receiving or soliciting funds during legislative sessions. |
| Climate Change: Believe that human activity is the major factor driving climate change? | No. Supported bill that initially blocked and later established review of new state science standards that require teaching about human climate impact. ¹ | He’s unsure. Wouldn’t say “there’s no such thing.” Wouldn’t say “there is such a thing.” Says he welcomes the discussion, but just doesn’t know. Wants more data. |
| Climate Change: Should government limit the levels of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere? | No. Opposes tipping the scale in favor of one source of energy over another. Won’t cooperate with Obama EPA rules. ² | Promote new uses for coal. Wants to convince EPA to use a “cumulative, weighted limit” for emissions rather than individual power plant limits. |
| Education: Increase funding for K-12 education? | Find savings within the Department of Education to pay teachers more & put more technology in the classroom. No specifics on sources of funding aside from cutting Dept of Education. | Education is key to economic future. Pay teachers what they’re worth (endorsed by state teachers’ unions). No specifics on sources of funding. |
| Education: Support charter schools, which are publicly funded but privately run? | Yes. Supports charter schools, vouchers, and support for home schooling. Voted for pilot charter school program. | No. “Until all WV schools are thriving, we should [not] spend taxpayer money on an elite few.” |
| Education: Increase funding for higher education? | Maintain merit-based PROMISE scholarships & protect from cuts. | Maintain merit-based PROMISE scholarships & protect from cuts. |
| Gay Rights: Support gay marriage? | No. Believes in the sanctity of marriage between a man & a woman, but states that WV must respect the Supreme Court’s decision. | Declines to state position, but says Supreme Court decision must be respected. Simultaneously states support of religious freedom without government intervention. |

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| Gay Rights: Should state pass religious freedom bill allowing businesses exemption from laws that would violate their religious beliefs, including anti-discrimination laws? | Supported religious freedom bill until amended so it no longer overruled local LGBT nondiscrimination ordinances. Said didn't accept discrimination in his own business. | Opposed religious freedom bill because of Indiana's financial loss following passage of similar bill. |
| Gun Control: Enact more restrictive gun control legislation? | No. Instrumental in passing Constitutional Carry law that eliminates need for permit or training to carry a concealed weapon. ³ | No general position but concerned about lack of permit or training in new Constitutional Carry law. |
| Healthcare: Repeal the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare? Accept federal funds so Medicaid will cover people earning up to 138% of the federal poverty line, which has helped state go from 29% to 9% of adults without health insurance? | Considers Obamacare a failure but wants to keep Medicaid expansion. "Increasing access to healthcare for low-income families is a good thing." Will work to find ways to fund state Medicaid contribution. | No. Wants to keep Medicaid expansion. Will work to find ways to fund state Medicaid contribution that starts this year. |
| Labor Laws: Repeal prevailing wage law, which mandated wage levels on state-funded construction projects? Enact right-to-work law, eliminating the right of unions to mandate dues for workers they represent? | Yes for both. Spearheaded repeal of prevailing wage law and passage of right-to-work law. | Opposed both changes. Believes they will lower wages & make it easier for contractors to hire out-of-state workers. Advocated instead to put both on 2016 ballot. |
| Marijuana: Decriminalize and/or legalize marijuana? | Might consider legalizing medical marijuana, but not recreational. | Might consider legalizing medical marijuana, but not recreational. |
| Prisons: Switch money from prisons to preventive measures like education and social services? | Stiffer penalties and mandatory minimums for drug dealers, but more drug treatment & drug court programs for nonviolent offenders. | Close gap between money spent on prisons & money spent on education. Create better treatment and program options for nonviolent offenders. |
| Renewable Energy: Support government mandates and/or subsidies for renewable energy? | No. Voted to repeal state's largely symbolic Renewable Energy Portfolio mandate. Opposes tipping the scale in favor of renewables. | Supports retrofitting buildings for energy efficiency, but also promotes new uses for WV coal. Explore renewable energy, but not at expense of coal & gas. |
| Taxes: Increase taxes on corporations and/or high-income individuals to pay for public services? | No. Supports tax cuts on high-income individuals and cuts in government spending as means to economic growth. | No. Opposes both tax increases and spending cuts. "Can't cut our way out of this mess." Sees job growth as the answer, including developing agriculture and tourism. |

Other gubernatorial candidates include [David Moran-L](#), [Charlotte Jean Pritt](#) (Mountain Party), and [Phil Hudok](#) (Constitution Party). Due to limited space, we can't include their positions, but invite you to check out their websites.

Created by the [Campus Election Engagement Project](#), a non-partisan effort to help college and university administrators, faculty, and student leaders engage their schools in the election. Key sites consulted included [Votemart.org](#), [Ballotpedia.org](#), [Countable.us](#), [OntheIssues.org](#), [FactCheck.org](#), [Politifact.com](#), and public candidate statements. For a guide to all races, see [Vote411.org](#), from the League of Women Voters, and [Ballotready.org](#).

¹ Supported bill seeking to repeal science standards [that require students to be taught about man's impact on the climate](#). Repeal eventually rejected in favor of a review, also supported by Cole, by University subject matter experts who will decide what, if anything, to include. Cole said that [kids should be able to decide if man-made climate change is "real."](#)

² [Threatens to boycott carbon regulations](#) and states [intention to fight for expansion of entire energy industry](#), including development of fossil fuels. States that "there is something morally wrong with an administration that seeks to use onerous regulations and the heavy hand of federal government to tip the scale..." and drive up costs and put people out of work. [Supports WV House Bill 2004](#), which is designed to block regulations seen as harmful to state.

³ Cole states that ["the bill allows West Virginians to protect themselves without the government's permission."](#)