



LOUDOUN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2015 BizVotes Questionnaire Results – 33rd Senate District

Jennifer Wexton (D) / Stephen Hollingshead (R)



Answer is consistent with Loudoun Chamber's Position



Answer is inconsistent with Loudoun Chamber's Position or nonresponsive to the question



Answer is partly consistent with Loudoun Chamber's Position

1) What is the biggest issue/challenge that Virginia faces in the upcoming term?

JENNIFER WEXTON (D): The biggest challenge facing Virginia is how to balance our needs with our revenues, while working to create a new Virginia economy that is less reliant on Federal spending. Despite this year's budget surplus, the Commonwealth has been facing years of falling revenues which will likely only be compounded as we continue to feel the effects of sequestration. At the same time, we continue to have expanding budgetary needs. Balancing the budget while making sure that we are providing the appropriate level of services, investing in important priorities, and growing our economy, will be the biggest challenge to the Commonwealth this coming term.

STEPHEN HOLLINGSHEAD (R): Northern Virginia is in recession. Economic growth in Virginia overall was 0.0% last year (48th out of 50 states). We need to diversify our economy more broadly away from federal contracting. A shrinking economy means more people are suffering and there are fewer government resources to help. We need growth. Our tax on business is 46% above the national average. Our proliferation of regulations now cost more than taxes. New business formation is at its lowest point ever recorded. We need representatives in the General Assembly with real private sector business experience.

2) How do you propose to address this challenge?

JENNIFER WEXTON (D): Virginia needs to leverage our many assets as we create an economy that is diverse and creates well-paying and accessible jobs. In Virginia, we are blessed to have an international airport and the deepest water port on the east coast. Locally, we have an extremely well-educated and sophisticated workforce. Tech industries such as bioscience and cybersecurity need to exist and thrive alongside our agriculture and forestry industries. Meanwhile, we must continue to make investments in critical areas that attract businesses to the Commonwealth, including education, transportation and infrastructure. In addition, all levels of




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state government must eliminate waste wherever possible, so that we maximize resources available to fund all the priorities we need. Rather than address these questions piecemeal, I would like to see Virginia create a comprehensive economic plan and create incentives for targeted business areas that will thrive now and in the future.

STEPHEN HOLLINGSHEAD (R): We need tax reform. We need a regulation by regulation benefit cost analysis. The last major regulatory reform was when George Allen was governor. It is time to do this again. And we need to stand up to federal encroachments of the kind like the EPA Clan Power Plan (illegal under Section 111d of the Clean Air Act) that threaten our electricity intensive economy.

3) Do you believe there are sufficient state economic development initiatives and/or incentives that can be leveraged to support the needs in Northern Virginia? If not, what would you propose?

Chamber Position: The Chamber supports additional state economic development initiatives and incentives that support Northern Virginia's needs. The Chamber also supports increased funding for Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP).

 **JENNIFER WEXTON (D):** While the Commonwealth has been successful in attracting businesses, there needs to be more of a focus at the state level on how to leverage the opportunity that Northern Virginia, and specifically Loudoun County, offers for economic development. Loudoun County, given our unique assets, must be included in Virginia's economic incentive and development programs whenever possible. Additionally, the commonwealth should increase funding for the Virginia Economic Development Partnership to ensure that it is able to do its job in an increasingly competitive playing field. Loudoun has been successful in instituting a local Economic Development Authority, and Small Business Development Center. I would advocate that similar institutions be set up at the state level, to address regional business development opportunities for Northern Virginia as a whole, so that the Commonwealth can better assess how to best leverage our region when considering statewide economic development.


 **STEPHEN HOLLINGSHEAD (R):** I don't favor specific incentives industry by industry. Let investors (and ultimately, consumers) decide what kinds of businesses will flourish. We have a lot of advantages here (best educated workforce in the US, major Internet hub) but we are losing jobs to other states because of the high costs of doing business (regulations, taxes, and insufficient transportation infrastructure). The best incentive for business is low taxes and low regulatory costs. States with low taxes tend to see higher revenue due to economic growth. And we need better transportation infrastructure and improved education. Those will bring more business to NOVA than any incentive programs specific to any industry.




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4) How will you help to grow the tourism industry and what are your ideas for helping to increase tourism in Northern Virginia?


Chamber Position: The Chamber supports continued collaboration of marketing efforts between, the state, county, Visit Loudoun and Washington-Dulles International Airport to promote existing - as well as - to assist in future-air service. The Chamber supports the use of transit occupancy taxes (TOT) to promote tourism. Finally, the Chamber supports efforts to returning Loudoun County to the General Services Administration's Washington, D.C. per diem area.

 **JENNIFER WEXTON (D):** Loudoun has seen significant success in tourism because of a concerted effort by the county to market our unique assets. This success can largely be attributed to an integrated, well-funded approach by Visit Loudoun to market the county as a destination. At the local level we need to continue to make this a priority. I would advocate that Northern Virginia take a similar approach to Loudoun with a concerted and well-funded marketing strategy for the greater region. Additionally, there is a unique opportunity for Northern Virginia to target corporate travel opportunities and attract more overnight stays from business and conference travelers. At the state level, Loudoun County should be included by Virginia Tourism as a featured destination for business and leisure travelers.

 **STEPHEN HOLLINGSHEAD (R):** Entrepreneurs will grow the tourism industry if we only let them. Farm wineries in Loudoun County are a perfect case study. They were implemented with the least regulation of any county in Virginia, and have flourished by far the most. That is the model we need. New business formation is at its lowest on record in part because it is so frustrating to start a business these days. Too many rules for everything. Let entrepreneurs have a little more freedom and they will create attractive destinations in our already attractive and historically rich commonwealth.

5) What do you support to best leverage Northern Virginia's and Virginia's limited transportation funds?

Chamber Position: The Chamber supports performance-based prioritization of transportation projects with emphasis on congestion reduction, economic development and time savings. The Chamber supports debt financing, accompanied by a dedicated revenue source for debt service. The Chamber supports reforming Virginia Department of Transportation and use of public-private partnerships. The Chamber opposes using the Transportation Trust Fund for non-transportation purposes and supports use of General Fund money for transportation.

 **JENNIFER WEXTON (D):** HB2313 has provided a sustainable, independent source of funding for NoVa road projects. The challenge now is to make sure that that revenue gets put to use wisely. As a member of NVTC, I understand that we must take a regional approach to our



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traffic problems and solutions. Loudoun needs smart transit solutions to move not only more cars, but more people, between their homes and jobs. Road projects must be based on performance-based evaluations and objective criteria. At the statewide level, we need to ensure that the Transportation Trust Fund is adequately funded, and is never allowed to be used for other purposes. Also, localities need greater flexibility with spending transportation money, as they are best situated to assess and address their local needs. Finally, VDOT must more responsive in its permitting process so that missing links in Loudoun's transportation network can be filled in without undue bureaucratic delay.



STEPHEN HOLLINGSHEAD (R): My opponent voted AGAINST a constitutional amendment that would have required the General Assembly to spend transportation taxes on transportation projects. That's a horrible mistake. Transportation funds should be allocated according to empirical evidence for the most cost effective congestion relief. NOVA legislators need to band together to ensure that most transportation funds are spent where most taxes come from -- here in crowded NOVA.

6) Do you believe local governments should be granted additional authority to diversify their revenue sources, to fund the services that our citizens demand?

Chamber Position: The Chamber supports access to more diversified streams of revenue for high growth areas, to support the costs associated with growth. The Chamber supports substantive reform of Virginia's entire tax system to align the source of the Commonwealth's tax revenues with the spending priorities of state and local governments.



JENNIFER WEXTON (D): Virginia should explore the way in which localities are allowed to raise revenue. In areas that are experiencing rapid growth, like Loudoun County, the costs associated with governing are becoming too high to rely exclusively on property taxes. I am willing to consider additional options to allow local governments to diversify their revenue sources, so that they can meet their increasing obligations. However, any consideration of new revenue sources would need to weigh the options against potential impact on the local community, ensuring that new tax revenues are not unduly burdensome, are not duplicative, and are aligned with spending priorities.




STEPHEN HOLLINGSHEAD (R): No. We have too many taxes already. Taxes should be simple, transparent, and low.


7) What do you support to encourage innovation in K-12 education to better align educational standards with workforce needs?



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Chamber Position: The Chamber supports a closer connection between what students are taught, and how they are assessed, with the true workforce needs. The Chamber supports strong business-education partnerships to develop training programs for specific industries, particularly in the Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Healthcare (STEM-H) sectors; a stronger focus on college and/or career readiness ; and an a stronger emphasis on digital literacy.

 **JENNIFER WEXTON (D):** Our first priority for education should be to make sure that our schools are fully funded. This needs to start with the State government doing a better job of meeting its obligation to education funding. With adequate funding we need to make sure that we are attracting, retaining, and developing top teachers and support staff. A good place to start with this would be to fully reinstate cost to compete funding. We should also place a larger priority on public charter schools and pilot programs within existing schools to develop more specialized education options. I would advocate for funding at the state level for these sorts of programs. With budgets continuing to contract, we should look for partnerships between local schools and businesses to fill funding gaps and better align K-12 education with the practical needs of the regional business community and the 21st Century workforce.

 **STEPHEN HOLLINGSHEAD (R):** I support adopting a robust charter system and school choice. We should adopt the principle that the money follows the student. Today, we fund institutions. But markets work because customers have buying power; this aligns the interests of the institution with the interests of the customer. If funding followed the student, educational entrepreneurs would create more diverse, cost effective, and pedagogically effective options for our students. A robust charter system would see a proliferation of STEM schools like Thomas Jefferson High School, but at a lower cost. It would also foster more liberal arts education, which - if Steve Jobs is to be believed -- is the best education for innovators. Having co-founded one school, and turned another into a National Blue Ribbon School, I have strong faith in the ability of parents to improve educational outcomes for their children; we should empower parents to do so.

8) What do you support to enable Virginia's higher education institutions to address today's workforce challenges?

Chamber Position: The Chamber supports a life-long education and training higher education infrastructure that is accessible, both online and on campus; that is dynamically changing to meet demand; and that is supported by adequate funding The Chamber supports expanding career-specific training at community colleges; making colleges more affordable, expanded use of K-12 dual enrollment; encouraging partnerships among two-year and four-year institutions; increasing the amount and availability of Community College Transfer Grants; and, increasing access to higher education for active duty military, veterans and military families.

 **JENNIFER WEXTON (D):** Similar to K-12 education, the first problem facing higher education that we need to solve is insufficient funding. This funding needs to include targeting the

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expansion of degrees in high demand fields like STEM subjects and healthcare. In addition, we need to better match our higher education system with the needs of our workforce. We can do that by encouraging partnerships between businesses and colleges, and expanding career-specific training at the community college and university level. Programs like dual enrollment, guaranteed admission, and allowing state financial aid for non-degree certificate programs, will help students afford an education that's more likely to result in gainful employment after college.



STEPHEN HOLLINGSHEAD (R): I am proud of Virginia's higher education system, though it like higher education across the country (and primary and secondary education as well) is plagued by a dramatic growth in the number of administrators per student. Partly this is because of so many mandates from Washington and Richmond. I am all for spending more money in the classroom. There is plenty of room to find that money -- spent on needless administration outside the classroom.

9) What is your position on Medicaid expansion and reform?

Chamber Position: The Chamber supports providing healthcare coverage to the working uninsured of Virginia through a public-private, managed care approach. This plan must enable Virginia to access federal funds and provide for: competition; personal responsibility for costs; care coordination; incentive payments based on outcomes; and incentives for innovative health care delivery and healthy behaviors. The Chamber supports a sunset mechanism that automatically disenrolls/drops the new enrollees, should the federal government not follow through on its financial commitment. The Chamber supports an outside independent audit of Virginia's current Medicaid system, to identify areas to reform and achieve savings.



JENNIFER WEXTON (D): I am in favor of extending coverage to the working uninsured. This is a priority not only because it is the right thing to do, but because it also has important implications for the business community. I supported, and would support again, the Marketplace Virginia plan that passed the Virginia Senate in 2014. Marketplace Virginia would use the available federal subsidy to provide necessary coverage to the working uninsured through a public-private approach, and include sunset provisions should the federal government fail to follow through on its commitments. Along with Marketplace Virginia, we need to make sure that we are training enough health care professionals to support the new entries into the healthcare and the inevitable increase in needs that we will see as baby boomers age. I would also support reforms to Medicaid in Virginia to ensure that our taxpayer dollars are being spent as effectively as possible.



STEPHEN HOLLINGSHEAD (R): I am against expanding Medicaid. Obamacare has put millions of people out of work, and lowered the take home pay of millions more. Expanding Medicaid to fill the gap in coverage widened by Obamacare would bankrupt the state. The federal government cannot sustain the high subsidies of Medicaid expansion, and -- as they always have -- Medicaid reimbursements will fall toward their historical levels, bankrupting Virginia. Since the





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problem is that many people cannot buy their own health care because they do not have a job, the solution is not to try to create more free health care. It is to put Virginia back in the business of business -- robust job creation.

10) What role do you feel the state should play to protect local governments and businesses from the costs and burdens of federal regulations regarding the environment, labor relations and other issues?

Chamber Position: The Chamber strongly opposes the expansion of federal regulations that oppress businesses of all sizes and across all industries. The Chamber opposes administrative overreach by any branch of government that goes beyond the application of statute and the Constitution. Finally, the Chamber believes that all levels of government should conduct regular periodic cost impact reviews of all regulations and ordinances to assess the continued relevancy and efficacy of these regulations.

 **JENNIFER WEXTON (D):** While there is an important place for government regulation, the regulatory regime needs to be compatible with a strong business community. At every level of government, it is critical that regulations be clearly defined and based on reliable cost-benefit analyses. At the State level, in addition to setting responsible regulatory regimes, we should evaluate what can be done to mitigate the impact of federal regulations. Where possible, the Commonwealth should work with the localities to both navigate federal regulations and also subsidize costs incurred by them. One such example of this is the funding the state provides to localities and individuals to help implement the regulations set up by the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan. The Commonwealth should look for other opportunities where this sort of program could be reasonably implemented and have a positive effect.

 **STEPHEN HOLLINGSHEAD (R):** The General Assembly should aggressively pursue our legitimate powers under the 10th Amendment in order to stand up to federal encroachment on Virginia businesses. (See the energy question below for an example. Another good example would be the federal move--without consulting Congress--to reclassify franchise businesses as large businesses in order to impose huge regulatory costs on what are in reality small businesses exempted by Congress from those burdens.) If our Attorney General continues to refuse to defend Virginia in these matters, the General Assembly can hire its own attorneys to do so.

11) What specific initiatives do you support to enable access to the reliable, affordable energy required to support the needs of Loudoun's businesses and to sustain our community's high quality of life?

Chamber Position: The Chamber supports a diverse mix of energy sources, including increased conservation and energy efficiency, new sources of conventional and renewable energy, and new



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transmission and distribution infrastructure. Electricity load growth, to meet the energy requirements of these businesses. The Chamber supports a reasonable and timely approval process for infrastructure expansion that support electricity load growth, including for large commercial loads such as data centers.



JENNIFER WEXTON (D): Loudoun County is growing more rapidly than our ability to produce cheap, accessible, and reliable energy. This is especially true given the prevalence of energy-hungry data centers in our County. To remedy this we need a diverse approach that includes increased conservation and also new sources of both conventional and sustainable energy production options. At the state level, we should continue to fund and execute the 2014 Virginia Energy Plan, but in addition, the Commonwealth needs to account for the rapid growth of Northern Virginia and specifically Loudoun County. We should be doing more to invest in alternative energy sources like wind and solar. I would also support the Commonwealth offering renewable fuels tax incentives to encourage the production of biofuels by our farmers. This would both help Loudoun's rural economy and its access to energy.



STEPHEN HOLLINGSHEAD (R): My opponent cast the deciding vote against the chief means Virginia could have used to defend itself against the EPA Clean Power Plan that has such an unfairly disproportionate impact on Virginia: She cast the deciding vote against Del. Head's Constitutional Amendment to require that new regulations imposed by the governor get an up or down vote in the General Assembly. I support: Passing a bill to require the Attorney General to sue EPA under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act (which EPA's plan violates) or if he does not to remove enough funding from his office for the General Assembly to hire its own attorneys to do so. I also support the new gas pipeline to lower fuel costs. President Obama actually promised in 2008 that his policies meant that "electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket." My opponent also votes that way -- for example against the rate freeze.

12) What policies and initiatives would you support at the state level to support growth and expansion of Virginia's rural economy?

Chamber Position: The Chamber supports a view of regulation of agribusiness that meets its particular needs for success, including flexibility for use of property for multiple purposes.



JENNIFER WEXTON (D): A major issue currently facing Virginia's rural economy is the need to balance water quality improvement objectives with the economic survivability of our farms. I support the General Assembly fully funding the Agriculture Best Management Practices Cost Share Programs and also the Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Another challenge facing VA's rural economy is the poor state of the rural transportation network. With over \$3 billion in agriculture and forestry exports, the rural economy is one of Virginia's largest assets and we need to make sure we have the transportation network to support it. I would also support the Commonwealth offering renewable fuels tax incentives to encourage the production of biofuels by



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our farmers. In addition I would support and grow the existing resources we have for the rural economy such as our land grant colleges, the Cooperative Extension Service and the Agriculture and Forestry Developments Fund.



STEPHEN HOLLINGSHEAD (R): Lower taxes and regulatory burdens for everyone. Specific subsidies for particular industries often have unintended consequences and cause malinvestment. One broad base with a low rate for all allows investors--not government--to choose the best investments, and for consumers to ratify or reject those choices through the market's ultimate feedback: Profit and loss.

13) How would you address the need for improved broadband access in Virginia's underserved areas, such as western Loudoun County?

Chamber Position: The Chamber encourages investment in the infrastructure to enable cutting-edge wireless and other Internet infrastructure in Loudoun, and supports cooperation between government and commercial interests to maximize broadband access throughout the County. The Chamber supports state legislation and initiatives to enhance e-commerce.



JENNIFER WEXTON (D): Broadband has rapidly gone from being a luxury to a necessary utility in the modern economy. Unfortunately, our rural areas, including Western Loudoun, traditionally have the least access to broadband service. Loudoun County first needs to work with service providers and community stakeholders to identify the challenges and costs associated with broadband buildout in the underserved parts of the county. We should consider forming public private partnerships to help defray the costs of new broadband infrastructure. I would seek incentives to encourage telephone and electric providers to engage in fair and reasonable pricing for access to utility poles already serving areas not yet served by cable. At the state level, I would support making more money available to localities to help subsidize broadband expansion. I would consider the construction of municipally-owned broadband by Loudoun County, but only if it were to serve primarily those communities not already served.



STEPHEN HOLLINGSHEAD (R): I support Del. Randy Minchew's HB 2325 that would require non-discriminatory access for broadband providers to utility poles owned by regulated utilities, as well as other initiatives to lower barriers to entry for telecommunications providers.

14) How would you assess the General Assembly's efforts to engage the business community on important public policy issues and how would you improve or otherwise change those efforts?



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Chamber Position: The Loudoun County's business community must have the opportunity to work with government officials at the federal, state and local levels to develop and implement legislative and regulatory policies that will impact the economy and quality of life in our community.



JENNIFER WEXTON (D): In my experience, the General Assembly has frequent and open communication with the business community on matters of public interest. It is worth noting that “the business community” is not homogenous, and at times there are competing views among a number of groups who purport to speak for “business.” To improve efforts at communication, I would suggest that, rather than publish scorecards or assess legislators’ performance after the fact, business representatives do what they can to educate legislators about issues coming up in committee or on the floor before the fact, so that we can adequately research concerns and assess business’ views along with those of other stakeholders and constituents.



STEPHEN HOLLINGSHEAD (R): They must be very poor indeed! The numbers tell a bad story: Virginia's tax on business is 46% above the national average. We are 48th out of 50 states in economic growth, and 46 out of 50 in new business startups. Our General Assembly does not have a business mentality. Our first priority should be economic growth -- that means lower taxes and less regulatory burden. Low tax states see faster revenue growth than high tax states. That is the mentality we need to adopt.

15) Please briefly describe what best qualifies you to hold the office for which you are running.

JENNIFER WEXTON (D): I think that a deliberative and thorough approach is my best quality as an elected official. I have developed a reputation as a thoughtful and responsive legislator who focuses on creating sound policy and who puts partisanship aside to pass good laws. My background as a prosecutor and an attorney has given me a thorough understanding of the law, and allows me to approach legislation from an informed position. It is this deliberative approach to legislation that has led me to receive recognition from a wide variety of organizations including an A rating from groups as diverse as the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, the Sierra Club, and the Virginia Education Association.

STEPHEN HOLLINGSHEAD (R): Business experience: I am an entrepreneur who has owned and operating companies in manufacturing, food distribution, and management consulting. And I am on the board of a financial services company that does business in all 3600 counties of the United States. I know firsthand how government regulation and taxation kill jobs before they are born. Education experience: I founded one school and turned another around and made it a National Blue Ribbon School. I understand that excellence in education is achieved by spending money IN THE CLASSROOM, empowering teachers rather than hampering them with mandates and rules. Government experience: As the Senior Advisor to the HUD Secretary, and as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Enforcement, I have a strong record of government reform. When I



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coordinated the President's Management Agenda for HUD, my team found -- and stopped -- \$2 Billion PER YEAR in welfare fraud.

16) What is the chief factor that differentiates you from your opponent(s) (if you have one)?

JENNIFER WEXTON (D): I have experience both in the legislature and in the community of the 33rd district. In my short one and a half sessions in the General Assembly I have had nine bills signed into law, and developed a strong reputation for myself. I have also been appointed to a number of commissions and councils including the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, the Joint Commission on Technology and Science, the Aerospace Advisory Council, Substance Abuse Services Council, and the State Executive Council for Comprehensive Services for At-Risk Youth and Families. Before I was elected to the State Senate I had been an active participant in Loudoun County including serving as the President of the Loudoun County Bar Association, and winning the Legal Services of Northern Virginia's Harry L. Carrico Award for pro bono legal work.

STEPHEN HOLLINGSHEAD (R): NOVA is in recession. Who is better to get us out: An attorney, or a business guy? The general assembly is full of attorneys. What is needed are more people who understand that empowering businesses to grow is key to solving a great many of our problems in and out of government. My opponent's record of advocacy on social issues is a distraction from what 33rd District families really need: To get our economy growing again and get off the roads and home to our families sooner.

17) Is there any other personal or professional information you would like the business community to know about you that is not already covered?

JENNIFER WEXTON (D): No.

STEPHEN HOLLINGSHEAD (R): While I have mentioned my experience as a business owner (see no. 15) I want to reemphasize that: I grew up in Dad's machine shop, which he and Mom turned into a manufacturing company selling products worldwide. I learned from an early age how jobs are created, and know in my bones the obstacles that government continually places in the path of entrepreneurs who want to create more and better jobs.

Campaign Committee Information:

Candidate's Name (as it will appear on ballot): Jennifer T. Wexton

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Candidate's Current Occupation: Attorney/ State Senator

Candidate's Political Experience: Current State Senator

Candidate's Business Experience: Partner in law firm

Campaign Committee Information:

Candidate's Name (as it will appear on ballot): Stephen B. Hollingshead

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Candidate's Current Occupation: Management Consultant

Candidate's Political Experience: Senior Advisor to HUD Secretary, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Enforcement; congressional candidate

Candidate's Business Experience: Entrepreneur in manufacturing, food distribution, management consulting. Board member in financial services.