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# Gubernatorial hopeful Richey says family, state motivate bid

By RANDY BARTLEY Staff writer

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Jason Richey

The following story is one of a series from interviews the newspaper conducted with several candidates for U.S. Senate or Pennsylvania governor in the 2022 election.

PUNXSUTAWNEY - Pittsburgh attorney Jason Richey said the "love" he has for his family and a desire to bring Pennsylvania back from a 50-year decline are the factors driving his gubernatorial bid.

"I am running for governor because I love my boys and I love my family, but there have been too many families that have left Pennsylvania. I don't want that to happen anymore," Richey told the newspaper during a recent campaign stop in Jefferson County.

Richey, an Aliquippa native who is a graduate of both Allegheny College and Ohio State University, is critical of the way Gov. Tom Wolf has handled the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We have a governor who sent COVID positive cases back to the nursing home at the same time his secretary of health took her mother out (from one)," Richey said. "That showed that (the administration) knew (it) had a harmful policy and they kept going on with it."

Richey said Wolf, who is term-limited and cannot seek re-election, was "picking winners and losers" during the economic fallout of the pandemic.

"Walmart was OK to be open, but mom and pop stores were not," he said. (Wolf's) cabinet-making business was allowed to stay open, but a competitor making the same product, was not."

Richey called Act 77, which allowed up to 50 days for mail-in ballots, "unconstitutional."

"The Pennsylvania Constitution says voters will go to the polls, but allows for certain exemptions for people to vote with an absentee ballot," he said. "The mail has existed since the 1700s, and we never thought it was a good way to vote."

In addition, Richey said when casting a vote from a booth, "no one knows who you are voting for. There is no pressure on you. But when you can vote from your apartment and someone comes knocking on your door with a ballot, it is different. I do not believe the integrity of our elections will return until Act 77 is repealed."

Richey also is opposed to the creation of sanctuary cities.

"There are people who want to make Philadelphia a sanctuary city," he said. "We cannot allow for that to happen. If the president of the United States wanted to send illegal aliens to Pennsylvania, I would look him in the eye and say no."

Richey believes in cutting the size of government and a 0% tax rate for companies coming into the state.

"Pennsylvania has the most expensive and largest full-time legislature in the country with 253 legislators," he said. "Conversely, the most populous state, California, only has 120 legislators. The state executive branch is also bloated with too many departments.

"I will champion reducing the size and cost of the legislative branch, and I will shrink the size and scope of the executive branch."

He said Pennsylvania has the third-highest number of local governments, at 2,561, and the seventh-highest number of school districts, at 500.

"I will make it easier for municipalities and school districts to voluntarily consolidate," Richey said, "resulting in lower local property taxes for Pennsylvanians."

Richey said he also would take a government friendly approach toward business and local government while reining in state spending.

"I will greatly reduce regulations that plague businesses trying to operate here, provide more flexibility for local governments to run their affairs, and limit state spending to the guidelines under the Taxpayer Protection Act," Richey said.