

# Goodwin criticizes ‘divisive’ bills at session

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Former U.S. Attorney and Democratic gubernatorial candidate Booth Goodwin weighed in on some of the issues facing the Mountain State Monday.

Goodwin felt that so far, too many of the bills introduced at the 2016 Legislative Session have been too divisive.

“All the stuff that’s up there, except maybe the discussion about broadband which is a laudable and worthy topic, everything else is designed to divide people,” Goodwin said on MetroNews affiliate 580 WCHS in an interview with Charleston Mayor Danny Jones. “At the very time we need to start coming together to address these critical issues.”

Goodwin strongly disagreed with a religious freedom bill introduced by GOP legislation, designed to protect business owners from having to violate their personal beliefs.

“That’s a perfect example; that’s going to cost us big time in terms of tourism, in terms of economic development,” he said. “We don’t want to be running off businesses because the customer doesn’t share our views. This bill gives intolerance the force of law.”

Goodwin said he would never have depended so much on coal revenue in West Virginia, and doing so is why the state is in a such a big budget hole.

“We needed to diversify our economy. And as a direct effect of it, we would have diversified our revenue stream. We haven’t done that,” said Goodwin. “That’s what’s put us in this hole. So there’s not going to be a quick fix.”

Goodwin was also not a proponent of a bill that would eliminate the state’s prevailing wage, which is currently before the full Senate floor.

“Designed to lower the wages of hard-working West Virginians,” he said of the legislation. “Where else would that money go? What you’re looking at is it’s going to go to out-of-state corporations, it’s going to be sucked up like a lot of money and resources have been sucked up out of West Virginia for decades and decades.”

Goodwin wanted to see the legislature come together regardless of party lines in solving the “big” issues the state faces in terms of the economy.

“I actually want to be governor. I want to do that job. I enjoy trying to solve problems,” he said.

Goodwin will square off against Sen. Minority Leader Jeff Kessler and billionaire Greenbrier owner Jim Justice for the Democrat nomination in the May 10 primary.