

# What the *Bresch Scandal* told us

## About Joe Manchin

A little over a year ago, my husband, John, and I had the privilege of campaigning across the great state of West Virginia in the special election for the U.S. Senate seat vacated by the late Senator Robert C. Byrd. We met such wonderful people from all parts of the state, all wanting a better future for our state.

John focused on the issues, specifically the need for more jobs and less federal government interference with expensive new programs like the unpopular Obamacare health care plan. Those were both issues of great importance to West Virginians across party lines.

Moreover, the polls reflected that most voters agreed with John on these vital issues. In fact, the Rasmussen poll had John up seven points with three weeks to go—quite a feat when running against an incumbent Governor.

Instead of taking the high road and debating the issues, John's opponent, Joe Manchin, stooped to a new low in the final weeks of his campaign when he chose to buy the largest negative TV ad campaign in West Virginia history. Manchin wasn't content with just going after John personally. He also decided that John's family, his companies, and his employees were fair game. That was over the line. After all, our daughters and I were not on the ballot. His companies and employees, some of the finest in West Virginia, were vilified. None of this mattered to Manchin.

Now I'm not asking for your sympathy—everyone knows that politics is a contact sport. I would only ask that you look hard over the next nine months as to which candidate truly has a stronger commitment to West Virginia values, a slimmer federal government, a stronger national defense, and a more robust private sector so that we can create the jobs West Virginia citizens deserve.

Joe Manchin has had a political lifetime to devise some serious ideas on these important issues. John had the courage in 2010 to simply offer an alternative. I think if you look at John's values, you will find that they are very similar to yours. On the other hand, I believe you will find that Joe Manchin's values are very similar to Barack Obama's.

Given Joe Manchin's history and the start of this campaign, I know that he will again attack our family, our companies, and our employees. This time, I will not sit back idly and let this happen without challenging him every step of the way. Instead,

I would now like to ask him a question: "Joe, what about your family?" Many of us will recall what was labeled nationally as the "Heather Bresch Scandal at West Virginia University." Heather Bresch, of course, is the daughter of Joe Manchin.

Bresch claimed to have earned an MBA degree, but when a WVU investigation asked for evidence to support her claim, she had very little to show. Instead of backing off early and admitting error, Heather Manchin Bresch dragged WVU through months of the worst national public relations nightmare it had ever experienced.

The value of every single WVU diploma was denigrated by these events. Just imagine the new WVU graduate. They had worked hard for four years to start to make their way in the world, only to worry what job recruiters thought while reading about the academic scandal going on in Morgantown.

All of us who have earned our degree from WVU owe that investigatory committee a debt of gratitude for clearing things up and informing Heather Manchin Bresch and the world that no, she had not earned an MBA from WVU.

While WVU's academic reputation was being tarnished in articles in the Chronicle of Higher Education and other national media outlets over the scandal, then Governor Joe Manchin said very little except to encourage and enable his daughter's ill-chosen path, even when the truth of the matter was increasingly clear: his daughter simply hadn't done the work to complete her degree.

To make matters worse, when the investigation resulted with the finding that the Governor's daughter's claim of having earned an MBA degree was invalid, Manchin tried to shift the blame. "All I can hope for as a parent," he said, "is that WVU's leaders will correct whatever problems that led to this situation so that no other student will have to go through this kind of ordeal in the future." ("Criticism for Degree to Governor's Daughter," by Ian Urbina, New York Times, April 25, 2008.) This is the same parent who couldn't remember attending his own daughter's WVU graduation.

Now, if Manchin is really worried about this happening to another West Virginia student, I think he can rest easily. After all, the vast majority of parents who send their children

to WVU would never encourage them to drag the rest of the student body, professors, staff, and alumni through the grinder for months without serious evidence to support their claim. That is an arrogance reserved only for a special few.

Moreover, it is my opinion, as well as the opinion of others, that this scandal was a significant reason why the Atlantic Coast Conference rejected WVU's bid to become a member of that conference.

After all this mess, the only people who came out unscathed where Joe Manchin and his daughter, Heather Bresch, who is now making a multi-million dollar salary as CEO of Mylan Pharmaceuticals. Many people lost their jobs in the aftermath. WVU President at the time of the scandal, Mike Garrison, resigned his position along with then Provost Gerald Lang. In addition, the business school Dean during the scandal, Steve Sears, stepped down along with then Associate Dean Cyril Logar. This ordeal continues to make headlines. Just the other day, federal district judge, Frederick Stamp, entered an order against then Dean Sears' and Associate Dean Logar's claims that Manchin's handpicked WVU administrators had deprived them of their legal rights. Stamp's ruling appears to be based on technicalities rather than the substantive merit of Sears' and Logar's claim. On January 31, 2012, Sears and Logar filed an appeal of Stamp's ruling with the Fourth Circuit in Richmond, VA where this matter will now be heard.

If you find Senator Manchin's behavior unsettling, you are not alone. There is a choice this year that many have to make. My husband of 33 years, John Raese, is about God, family, country, and standing up for what is right. He will work hard to represent West Virginians well in D.C. and you will always know where he stands.

Moreover, he'll always try to lift up WVU and all our educational institutions, not drag them down. After all, like myself and so many of us, he's a proud West Virginia University alumnus too.

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