



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF THE FAIRFAX AREA

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January 10, 2009

LWVFA Testimony to Fairfax Delegation to the Virginia General Assembly

Good morning, and thank you for holding this hearing. I am Sherry Zachry, President of the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area, speaking on behalf of approximately 350 members living in Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax.

We realize that in the current economic environment, there is not enough money to do everything that we would like and that budget cuts are going to be necessary. That being said, I would like to mention some issues of concern to Fairfax Area League members that we would like the General Assembly to address in the 2009 Session.

- Establish a politically balanced and independent Reapportionment Commission for decennial redistricting. This commission would work with the Virginia Department of Legislative Services to submit a plan to the legislature complying with state and federal law, but focusing on natural and jurisdictional boundaries and communities of interest, not on protecting incumbents or enhancing partisan advantage. The League of Women Voters believes that a new process for redistricting should be in place by the 2010 census and that this session is the ideal time for initiating a new process when control of the houses is split between the Democratic and Republican parties. We especially want to thank Senator Cuccinelli for co-sponsoring SB38, which would have established a bi-partisan redistricting commission, in the last session, and Delegate Plum who has introduced redistricting legislation every year that he has been in the House of Delegates.
- Pass legislation to allow in-person, no excuse absentee voting (The League is supporting SB810).
- Provide a dedicated, stable and reliable funding source for balanced transportation needs in the Commonwealth and for the Metro system.
- Pass legislation that would provide diversified taxing authority for the County.
- Provide incentives for energy conservation, the use of alternative fuels, and steps to combat global warming. Funds for additional clean up of municipal and agricultural waste running into Virginia's rivers and the Chesapeake Bay continue to be vitally needed.
- Support the Virginia and Fairfax criminal justice system with funding for indigent defense and adequate salaries for state court employees who work in Northern Virginia. The legislation that established the new system of magistrates for the Commonwealth needs to be reviewed and amended to remove or revise provisions that are likely to adversely affect the magistrates – and quality of justice in – Fairfax County and City.
- Provide funding for costs of mandated programs in public schools.
- Review other state-mandated programs for which funding is not provided and consider eliminating the mandate or providing funding.

(over, please)

We invite you to attend the Women's Legislative Roundtable, sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Virginia in the General Assembly Building on Wednesday mornings, beginning January 21. Most of us don't get to Richmond every week, but we will be there on January 28 when Leaguers from all over the state visit the General Assembly. We look forward to seeing you then.

Thank you.

Sherry W. Zachry
LWVFA President

Attachment: Invitation to Redistricting Reform Seminar sponsored by LWVFA
January 24, 2009 at Country Club of Fairfax, 10 AM