



## Last Chance for Annual Meeting First Look at Council Program

Reservations for LWVFA’s Annual Meeting, set for 9:30 a.m. Saturday , April 5 at Clyde’s in Tysons, may still be possible by the time you receive this *VOTER*. The deadline is March 31 and the form and directions are repeated from last month inside this issue. Please plan to attend the important milestone. In the spirit of March’s “Sunshine Week,” our speaker is Va. Del. James LeMunyon, Vice Chair of Virginia’s Open Government Council. Don’t forget to bring the Blue Program Booklet found in the March *VOTER*.

Also appearing in this issue is an invitation to attend a luncheon and panel as part of LWV-VA’s biennial Council, which occurs in off years from the state League’s conventions. Our ever-energetic State Voter Advocacy Coordinator Therese Martin has put together a high-powered panel of election officials from Loudoun, Prince William and Fairfax Counties to compare Virginia’s election laws and practices with the Recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration. Two voting delegates from each League are expected to participate in the morning’s business meeting but the luncheon and panel (or panel only) are open to all and most encouraged.

### Calendar

#### April

- 1 April Fool’s Day
- 5 **Annual Meeting - Tysons Corner**
- 7 *VOTER* deadline
- 11 LWVNCA Board meeting
- 14 Passover Begins (1<sup>st</sup> Seder)
- 14-18 School holiday
- 15 Tax Day
- 20 Easter
- 22 Earth Day
- 23 **Board meeting**
- 23 General Assembly reconvened session
- 25 LWV-VA Board meeting
- 26 **LWV-VA Council - Fair Lakes**

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## Presidents' Message



Hello Spring! As I write this it is below freezing and we have 6 inches of snow on the ground. Spring must be here by the time you read this. We hope to see you at our Annual Meeting on April 5 at Clyde's in Tysons. We are trying to vary the locations of our meetings to have travel distances a shared experience for all members.

We want to thank the members of the Nominating Committee (Dianne Blais, Mia Merin, Wendy Fox-Gage, Therese Martin, and Charleen Deasy) who worked successfully to fill the many LWVFA positions it takes to have an effective leadership group. We also want to thank the candidates who said yes to the call. By making shared and more focused positions, we hope more of you will continue to agree to serve. Are you interested in filling the positions of Action or Natural Resources/Environment Chair? Having a "chair" often attracts other committee members who are very willing to help but are waiting for a leader.

March is/was an active month. Helen prepared letters to the Board of Supervisors and the press. Julie served on the committee to select the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Association's Citizen of the Year. The Fairfax County Office of Management and Budget sent representatives to discuss and answer questions about the proposed 2014-15 budget. Along with members of the Voter Service committee, we met with the Fairfax County Office of Elections' outreach personnel to plan future activities. We attended the LWV-VA Spring Awards Luncheon, "Making Democracy Work", in Richmond where our nominee, Kathleen Pablo was honored. LWVFA's two-part consensus meetings on the LWVUS Agricultural Update were completed and our responses were compiled to submit.

We are making plans for City and Town Spring Elections and June attendance at LWVUS National Convention in Dallas, Texas. Would you like to join us? We have these opportunities and more. It is your interest in good government, at all levels, that helps LWVFA grow in many ways.

*Julie and Helen*

## League Co-Presidents Salute Elections Officials For "Sunshine Week" Transparency

LWVFA Co-Presidents Jones and Kelly observed "Sunshine Week" by saluting the Fairfax County Electoral Board, the General Registrar and employees of the Office of Elections for their "transparency and willingness to share information with the public in the follow-up to the 2013 general election." They continued: "That integrity is essential to our system of government to work."

Their letter details the admirable way the officials handled reporting, canvass, provisional ballot determinations and recounts in the races for Virginia Attorney General and 33rd District Senate seats. "The Office of Elections frequently published updates on election reporting problems and the extended provisional ballot determination process, later on providing details about the progress of the recounts, all the while describing the safeguards in place to protect the integrity of the ballot."

Addressed to local newspaper editors, the letter was sent during the mid-March observance of the value of open government.

### LWVFA Fairfax VOTER 2013 - 2014

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Please e-mail address corrections to the office  
or call 703-658-9150

# Photo ID Plans on Hold Until July 1 - Local Leagues Urged to Help Oversee the Process

By Therese Martin, LWV-VA Voter Advocacy  
Coordinator

The continuing question that you, we, and everyone interested in voting and voter is: What is happening with implementation of photo ID in Virginia, which is due to take effect on July 1, 2014? There was no action or even any public information about any specific attempts during the General Assembly session to amend, delay or repeal the legislation (SB1256). Thus, it is still due to become effective on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

We have continued to monitor implementation plans to the extent possible, but progress on all fronts was stymied due to a lack of SBE staff and other resources. One result of this monitoring is that we were able to review plans and address the SBE meeting where the “application form” was recently discussed. We had a couple of minor suggestions, but really complained about the threat associated with requiring a signed “felony penalty” statement. Members were recently asked to contact election officials protesting this wording.

We and the public are not alone in our lack of information. Local Virginia election officials were as much in the dark, maybe even more so than others. A recent training session for election officials described “Five Easy Steps” for issuing a Photo ID: 1) Accept paper application 2) Lookup applicant’s voter registration 3) Take picture 4) Capture signature 5) Submit.

While there has been a lack of publicity about photo ID implementation, there are some valid (I hesitate to call them “good”) reasons for this:

- The voter outreach plan that SBE is contracting out was delayed by the need to develop the implementation plan, lack of staff and unavailability of the funding until July 1. We would want to coordinate our efforts with the outreach plan to the extent feasible.
- We also don’t want to confuse voters until the city and town and June primary elections are completed. Please be very aware of this situation in your localities.
- Nobody knew what might happen with regard to attempts to change the effective date or other aspects of the legislation – realize that it is difficult to argue against a requirement that is not yet in place.

We will try to keep you informed about this as we get further information. Along these lines, I will let you know something that we just yesterday discovered and that your local election officials might be thinking of too: In addition to the Five Easy Steps listed, there could well be another one or two that come into play: If the applicant is found to have a DMV ID when the registrar checks their registration status (they usually check DMV records too), the applicant could be refused a voting photo ID and asked to go to DMV and get a replacement for the one that they lost.

I haven’t had time to think of the scenarios that would arise, but you can imagine that there will be some disappointments and problems. There could also be some complications that arise because an applicant is found not to be registered. They can have their photo and signature taken but will have to wait to get their voting card until any registration problems are solved. And what if they are found to have a DMV ID? Please consider other possible impacts.

What can you do? Now that the plan has been rolled out to local election officials, you should let them know that you are interested in what specific plans they have, particularly with regard to outreach and taking the equipment out into the community. Explain that you know that they are just beginning the planning process, but that you want to be involved. If your jurisdiction has city or town elections, they will probably be concentrating on those at this point.

What else can you do in your community(ies) to help the registration and voting processes?

- You can monitor your electoral board meetings. These meetings are open to the public. Get on the mailing list and show up, with LWV button on, to let them know that you are interested in seeing what is going on in the community. It would help if two persons went, one of whom serves as an election officer. If your electoral board meetings are anything like those in Fairfax, you will learn an awful lot about the election process. Be sure to ask the monitors to report to your LWV board.
- You can testify at your local governing body public meetings on its budget for the office of elections. I doubt that anyone else does this. Read the public documents about the budget, talk to your elections

office if need be (they can't lobby for their budget, but you can.) Prepare a statement and tell the governing body that you want to have adequate support for elections in your jurisdiction. Be as specific as possible. And tell them to make sure to have funds in reserve, if not already available, to purchase new voting equipment on hand and tested prior to the 2016 presidential elections. LWVFA always testifies on the election office budget (among a minimum of other things) and believes that it can claim some credit for the fact that the elections office has received increases instead of cuts and has a reserve to purchase new elections equipment. Having a bipartisan commission on elections certainly helped matters; how can they turn their backs on recommendations of a commission that they appointed??

- Speaking of budgets, the LWV-VA lobbied the General Assembly in support of budget amendments to provide additional resources for the SBE, its activities and the funds it provides to localities. To no avail. They again have to take a cut this year. This is something that you should aim to get included in your jurisdictions' governing body legislative program. The success of getting additional state aid for local elections offices will depend on the success we have with the SBE budget. Do your part at the local level.

LWV-VA has applied for another PAVP grant and will be seeking help from localities. If we receive the grant, we will be focusing even more on voter protections issues.

## LeMunyon Will Be Keynote Speaker at Annual Meeting



Our Annual Meeting speaker will be the The Honorable James M. LeMunyon, 67th District's representative to the Virginia House of Delegates and Vice Chair of Virginia's Open Government Council. Jim LeMunyon is a 30-year resident

of Northern Virginia. He and his wife, Robin, have three children who are college graduates and alumni of Oakton High School. The LeMunyons have been active in the community for many years through organizations including church, Scouts, PTAs, and sports and music boosters.

Jim is a Republican and was first elected to the Virginia House of Delegates in November 2009. During his first campaign, Jim walked 533 miles and knocked on 10,821 doors to listen to voters and share his ideas. Jim continues his door-knocking tradition each year on behalf of other candidates and himself. He serves on three committees: General Laws, Education, and Transportation. Delegate LeMunyon is a Deputy Whip for the Republican majority. He also serves on three state-sponsored commissions that address specific issues: Transportation Accountability (Technology Subcommittee Chair), the Code Commission, and the Freedom of Information Act Advisory Council (Vice-Chair). Since he was first elected in 2009, 24 of Jim's bills have become law in addition to his resolution requiring Members' voting records be easily retrievable online.

## Delegates Needed For LWVUS National Convention

The 51st National Convention of the League of Women Voters will be held June 6 – 10, 2014, in Dallas, Texas, at the Omni Dallas Downtown Hotel.

Join hundreds of national, state and local League leaders from around the country for this lively biennial event - to hear powerful and informative speakers, learn more about the issues important to the organization and the nation, participate in training sessions and join in the discussion and networking that make the League a strong and vital force in our democracy.

The Fairfax League has 5 delegate seats at the convention. If you are interested in attending, please contact Rona Ackerman at [league@lww-fairfax.org](mailto:league@lww-fairfax.org) or 703-282-2262.





~ You are cordially invited to attend ~



**LWVFA Annual Meeting**  
on  
**Saturday, April 5, 2014**  
at  
**Clydes of Tysons Corner**  
**8332 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, VA**

Meeting Agenda

- 9:30 a.m. Registration & Coffee
- 10:00 a.m. Business Meeting
- 11:00 a.m. Speaker: Hon. Jim LeMunyon
- 12:00 noon Luncheon (Cost \$35 per person)
- 2:00 p.m. Conclusion of Business Meeting

**Find Clyde's of Tysons Corner From I-495**

Take Exit 47 (Tysons Corner), Route 7 West (Leesburg Pike). Go west (.9 miles). Tysons Corner Center Shopping Mall will be on the right. Go under the Route 123 overpass. Make a right at the light onto Westpark Drive. Make your next right at the light onto Greensboro Drive. Go to the next traffic light and make a right onto Pinnacle Drive. Go to the end of the road and make a right. Clyde's will be located 150 yards down on your right.

**Deadline for Reservations: March 31, 2014**

Please choose – Pan-Seared Salmon \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken Marsala \_\_\_\_\_ Seasonal Vegetable Pasta \_\_\_\_\_

Program is free; Luncheon, \$35 per person.

Make checks payable to LWVFA and mail with reservation form to:  
2014 Annual Meeting, 11020 Burywood Lane, Reston, VA 20194

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Lunch @\$35 ea. \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number & E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Guest Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Lunch @\$35ea. \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

For special dietary needs or questions, call Viveka at 703-404-0498

**LWVUS**  
**National Convention**  
**Dallas, Texas**  
**June 6-10, 2014**

**LWVFA**  
**Annual Meeting**  
**Tysons Corner**  
**April 5, 2014**

## IRS Proposes Significant Rule Changes Regarding 501(C)(4) Organizations

Last November, the IRS proposed very significant changes to the regulations governing political activity by 501(C)(4) organizations, like the League of Women Voters. The proposed new regulations would significantly impact the ability of 501(C)(4) social welfare organizations to use money from undisclosed sources to influence elections, however the proposed regulations would also significantly impact the ability of the League to conduct truly nonpartisan voter service activity. That is because in defining 'candidate-related activity' that would be prohibited for 501(C)(4) groups, the IRS included voter guides, voter registration, and candidate events without making any distinction for the truly nonpartisan work.

Through these regulations, the IRS has the opportunity to force the secret dark money that has been flooding our elections into the open, but it is critical that in doing so, truly nonpartisan election activity that voters depend on is protected.

Nearly every League, national, state and local, is organized as a 501(C)(4) social welfare organization. At the national level, in many states and a few localities, the League is also organized as a 501(C)(3) charitable organization. Most of us are accustomed to distinguishing between our advocacy work which we do in the C4 and our voter service work

which we do in the C3 or education fund. At the local level, this is true even though the overwhelming majority of our local Leagues do not have their own separate education fund. Nevertheless, when we do candidate debates, voter guides and voter registration, we are scrupulous in following rules established by the IRS for 501(C)(3) organizations. These rules have served us and our communities well for many years. We are asking the IRS to use that definition to distinguish truly nonpartisan voter service work from candidate-related activity for C4s as well.

The 501(C)(4) structure has been abused by those who wish to influence our elections precisely because the current IRS rules do not require C4 organizations to disclose their donors. The code also recognizes tax-exempt 527 organizations designed to engage in candidate activity and required to disclose donors. Our comments urge the IRS to clearly define and restrict candidate related activity for C4s because any group of individuals wishing to engage in this kind of activity can do so through a 527.

While this is a complex subject, our goals are simple: restrict or eliminate the secret money flowing into our elections and guarantee voters the nonpartisan information they have come to depend on. Because of our voter service work, because we do not support or oppose candidates, the League was in a unique position to influence this process.

*[from a message from LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara]*

## State League President Announces Formation of New Working Group

Anne Sterling, President of the League of Women Voters of Virginia, has asked LWV-Arlington member Karen Kimball to co-chair a working group to develop legislation for future legislative sessions. The group will consist of members who have interests in subject areas related to the League's mission. Together members will work to identify subject areas where the League has a position and will draft legislation that will be proposed for consideration by the General Assembly. It is anticipated that work will begin after the close of the current legislative session.

The subject areas related to the League's mission are as follows:

- **Agriculture**
- **Ethics in Government**
- **Election Laws**

- **Fiscal Policy**
- **Transportation**
- **Women's Rights and Virginia Law**
- **Natural Resources:** Air Quality; Land Use; Water Supply and Distribution
- **Social Policy:** Adult Domestic Violence; Child Care; Children at Risk; Education; Adult Justice; Juvenile Justice; Restoration of Civil Right for VA Felons; Mental Health

If you have experience drafting legislation and/or if you are passionate about and have knowledge of any of these subject areas, please contact Karen Kimball at [karen\\_kimball@netacc.net](mailto:karen_kimball@netacc.net) or 941-922-2370. This is an excellent way to get to know other LWV members and to directly influence our Virginia General Assembly.

## New Inmate Discharge Policy Facilitates Timelier Access to Services

March 12, 2014

The Fairfax County Sheriff's Office has traditionally released inmates at 12:01 a.m. on the day their respective sentences are complete. Therefore, an inmate serves only one minute on the last day of his or her incarceration. "While this 'early release' policy may seem like a gift, in practice it complicates life for many inmates and the community," said Sheriff Stacey Kincaid. "Inmates who are homeless are put out on the street in the dark of night with no safe place to go. Families with small children or the elderly have difficulty doing a midnight pickup. Public transportation is limited or unavailable. Inmates who need medical or mental health treatment may have to wait several hours for doors to open."

To address these issues, Kincaid established a new policy, effective March 4, 2014, that changes the inmate release time to 8 a.m., a time when resources and services are more readily available. Her goal is to provide inmates with the best opportunity to safely and productively re-enter the community.

"I've been with the Sheriff's Office for 27 years," said Kincaid. "The only explanation I've heard for the midnight release is that we save money by not serving inmates breakfast on the day they leave. That is not a good enough reason to put people on the street at midnight."

"The change in the Sheriff's Office's inmate release time is a welcomed adjustment," Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova said. "Midnight release times can pose numerous challenges for newly released inmates, especially those in need of important medical or mental health services with no place to go. By extending the release time to 8 a.m., the Sheriff's Office is enabling an easier transition for inmates after they are released."

Steve Weiss is the director of jail-based behavioral services for the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board. "A high proportion of inmates who are incarcerated at the ADC have significant impairments due to substance abuse and mental health issues," he said. "It isn't unusual for these individuals to be released from jail with few resources and limited options for transportation and housing. Sometimes they need assistance and support in order to find a safe place to go and to develop a reasonable plan for what comes next. This change in policy represents a major step in the right direction. It helps individuals access services that they need, and it affords a higher level of safety – both for individuals coming out of jail and for the residents in nearby communities."

The Fairfax County Adult Detention Center is located within the Fairfax City limits. The city's mayor, R. Scott Silverthorne, echoed support for the new release time. "Thank you, Sheriff, for addressing this policy head-on and for the attention you are paying to the City of Fairfax."

*[ from NewsWireDailyUpdate@FAIRFAXCOUNTY.GOV ]*

## Kaplan Selected as Reston's 2013 Citizen of the Year Award

New LWVFA member Kathy Kaplan has been selected as Reston Citizens Association's 2013 Citizen of the Year. The Selection Committee was swayed by her tireless and highly impressive work in exposing the library Beta Plan and mobilizing both the community and our elected officials to take action to protect the funding and book collections of our library system.

Kathy has also volunteered to serve as the League's representative on the Engineering Standards Review Committee.

### Annual Meeting Reminder

Deadline to register for the Annual Meeting is rapidly approaching. Don't miss out on this important event. The registration form is found on page 9.

**Domestic Violence Hotline**  
**703-360-7273**

## Farmers Markets Receive Grant to Support Much Needed Expansion



Fairfax County **Farmers Markets** have received two grants to support expansion of the SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) at-market benefits program, formerly known as food stamps. The 2014 awards will allow for an expanded program which will make farmers markets more accessible to low-income families shopping for fresh, locally produced food. The number of locations that will accept SNAP benefits has increased to four, and a corporate partner has provided funding for a summer intern who will coordinate community outreach and education for the program.

Locations accepting SNAP benefits include the **Reston, Lorton** and **McCutcheon/Mount Vernon** farmers markets, as well as the Farm Stand at **Frying Pan Farm Park**. Expansion of the program was made possible through partnerships with Cornerstones, Arcadia, INOVA and the Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. The summer internship will be funded through the ExxonMobil Community Summer Jobs Program.

Also received in February was a scholarship from the Wal-Mart Foundation and MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, which enables Farmers Market

Coordinator Mae Carroll to attend this year's National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference. "This conference is a great opportunity to learn from SNAP outreach and advocacy programs across the nation," said Carroll.

Three Fairfax County Farmers Markets will offer matching dollar programs, in which the amount of money spent by SNAP recipients will be matched up to ten dollars for fruits and vegetables. The intent of the matching program is to enable recipients to choose healthier options without spending more of their SNAP funds. Reston, Lorton and the McCutcheon/Mount Vernon markets are all funded for matching dollar programs. The Farm Stand at Frying Pan Farm Park accepts SNAP but will not participate in the matching dollar program this year.

The matching dollars programs at Lorton and McCutcheon/Mount Vernon markets are supported by Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food and Agriculture. The matching dollars program at Reston is supported by INOVA. Fundraising efforts continue through other community organizations and grant opportunities to expand this program.

Fairfax County's 11 Farmers Markets, including a new location this year at the Fairfax County Government Center, are supervised by the Fairfax County Park Authority through the Community Horticulture office at Green Spring Gardens in Alexandria, VA. Volunteer Market Masters manage daily operations of the markets. For more information call 703-642-0128 or visit **Fairfax County Farmers Markets**.

*[From the NewsWireDailyUpdate@FAIRFAXCOUNTY.GOV]*

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## LWV-VA April Council Meeting to Be Held in Fair Lakes - Powerful Panel to Discuss Virginia's Election Practices

One thing you will probably notice in this month's issue is that there is no program information. That is because our Annual Meeting is taking place so early in April (the 5<sup>th</sup>) that we had to put the details in the March Voter. Hope to see you all there.

HOWEVER, an important programmatic event is taking place at the end of April as part of the biennial LWV-VA Council Meeting. This is a business meeting that fills the gaps between our biennial state conventions. This year our ever-energetic LWV-VA

Voter Advocacy Coordinator Therese Martin has lined up a high-powered panel of election officials to compare Virginia's election laws and practices with a recently published report, recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration, as an addition to the Council meeting. Although only two local League members are voting delegates to the morning session, all members are urged to attend the luncheon and panel, or the panel only. Reservation form for the luncheon is on Page 9 **Page 6**, the panel only is free.





Call to Council
League of Women Voters of Virginia

2014 BIENNIAL COUNCIL MEETING
Saturday, April 26, 2014
Hilton Garden Inn Fairfax
3950 Fair Ridge Drive, Fairfax, Va 22033

9:00 a.m.—Coffee and registration begins

10:00 a.m. Business of the League

(Each local League is expected to send two voting delegates, plus as many other members as desired, to help conduct the business of LWV-VA in the year between state conventions.)

Noon—Luncheon (all Leaguers and guests invited)

1:00 p.m. Panel Discussion

“Virginia’s Election Practices and the Presidential Commission
On Election Administration Recommendations”

(Voters Service directors are especially urged to attend the panel session, but all Leaguers are urged to attend the luncheon and this important discussion.)

Panelists include:

- Judy Brown, Loudoun County Registrar,
•Kimball (Kim) Brace, member of the Prince William Bipartisan Commission on the Election Process
•Brian Schoeneman, Fairfax County Electoral Board Secretary and member of the Fairfax Bipartisan Election Process Improvement Commission.
•Panel moderator: TBA

(Note: Panel session will be videotaped for future presentations)

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Luncheon Registration Deadline April 21, 2014—Cost is \$40

Menu: Deli Buffet, soup dujpur With Vegan Option-grilled vegetable sandwich

Make checks payable to LWV-VA and mail with form to

2014 Council, 507 Monticello Lane, Blacksburg VA 24060

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Lunch @ \$40 each\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number and email: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions: call Elaine at 540-552-0263

NOTE: To pay by credit card, got to http://lww-va.org/donate1.html and click on the General Fund PayPal donate button at the bottom of the page to order your ticket(s). After you place your order, a “Review Donations and Continue” screen will appear. Please indicate if you are an official delegate in the “Special Instructions to the Seller” block if appropriate. Also indicate if you desire the Vegan Option in the same block. Click to finalize your payment.

## General Assembly Notes

### Equal Rights Amendment Ratification SJ78: Failed but the Hearing was Historic

Remarkably, after doubt and delay, Sen. Henry Marsh was able to present SJ78 to the House P&E Subcommittee on Elections Thursday morning. The bill did not pass based on the lack of a deadline extension for ratification by three more states. However, the meeting served as a tribute to Sen. Marsh, a hero for civil rights, and as a celebration that the bill was heard in a House Committee for the first time. Andrea Miller stated firmly that, "This bill is alive!" If S.J. Res 10 that has been introduced by Senator Menendez can pass in the U.S. Congress, the deadline can be extended. As soon as the video of the hearing is available, a message with the link will be sent. It includes the presentation by Sen. Marsh, a statement of support by Del. Minchew that included a story of his mother and the Daughters of the Confederacy meeting Mayor Henry Marsh of Richmond at the statue of Jefferson Davis, and strong statements from women in support.

### Health Care Issue Unsettled

Health care coverage for low-income Virginians remains unsettled, with the House majority opposed to Medicaid Expansion using Federal dollars versus the beginning of support in the Senate for a plan that would accept Federal dollars in the "Marketplace Virginia" plan. Stay tuned for a long period of negotiations. The Senate has indicated that it may concede to an audit of the Medicaid program if the House will consider support for the Marketplace Virginia Plan.

### Felon Rights

Concerning funding for personnel to process the Restoration of Felons' Voting Rights, the House and Senate Budgets that were passed differ significantly. The House eliminated funds in Gov. McDonnell's budget for an additional employee to continue the automatic restoration process. The Senate did not eliminate the funds so the budget joint conference committee must reconcile this.

## Mental Health

Continuing to progress are the bills that would change the time limits for detaining people with mental health crises. SB260 (Deeds) allowing for an extension of the ECO to 24 hours passed the Senate unanimously after its hearing in the Senate Education and Health Committee. The House Courts of Justice Committee passed a substitute that requires the bill to go to the Appropriations Committee for analysis of the costs. Passing the House unanimously was HB478 (Villanueva) that provides for a second two-hour extension to Emergency Custody Orders. The Senate Education and Health Committee recommended the bill with a substitute but the House rejected it, so the bill will go to a conference committee.

Further concern about Virginia's mental health services prompted SJ47 (Deeds) to establish a study by a new joint subcommittee. It passed in the Senate and has now passed in the House Rules subcommittee.

## Environment

SB48 (Stuart) concerning oil and gas drilling, passed in the full Senate but failed to pass in the House Commerce & Labor Committee. The hearing on February 27<sup>th</sup> included more testimony in opposition than in previous hearings. Most members of the committee who commented, and the drilling company representative stated that they believe the current regulations for drilling for oil and gas are adequate to protect against harmful effects.

Virginia Energy Plan SB615 (Carrico) passed in both the Senate and the House. The substitute changed the original bill considerably so that it is a plan for analysis of options to control carbon dioxide emission from fossil fuel-fired electric generating units rather than specific requirements that could be less restrictive than those of the EPA.

### Think Green . . .

If just one percent of American homes replaced an older toilet with a new WaterSense labeled toilet, the country would save more than 38 million kilowatt-hours of electricity — enough electricity to supply more than 43,000 households for one month. (EPA, 2008)

# An Open Letter to the Women of Colorado From Pat Schroeder, Former US Senator

*[Editor's Note: While on our recent ski trip in Colorado, a friend showed us this letter from a Denver magazine, which seemed to us to resonate across state lines. It is being used by permission.]*



When **Patricia Schroeder** was elected in 1972, she became the first woman to represent Colorado in the U.S. Congress. Over her 24-year congressional career, Schroeder had a major impact on women's rights and family issues and gained a reputation for biting quips. She retired in 1997 and now resides in Florida, but the beach hasn't dulled her wit, as evidenced in this note to today's generation of women.

## Dear Next Generation,

When I became co-chair of the Congressional Women's Caucus with Congresswoman Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) in 1983, we had a goal. We wanted to have as much done with regard to women's equality by the 21st century as possible. Sadly, despite more than two decades of work, we didn't get many of the things passed we had hoped for: equal pay enforcement, adding the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution, legislation giving women control over their reproductive health, and a family leave act to be proud of. **It took nine years**—and a serious watering down—to pass America's Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which I authored, in 1993. At the time, pediatricians said four months was the absolute minimum we should give women and men to bond with their children. We got 12 weeks.

This year is the Family and Medical Leave Act's 20th anniversary. I was invited to Washington to celebrate its passage, but I refused to go. I am embarrassed this country only gives 12 unpaid weeks to women who work in companies that employ more than 50 employees. It's pathetic.

**The Family and Medical Leave Act's** passage did not stop American industry, as was predicted, and yet Congress still has not moved to increase the number of companies covered or increased the benefits. Work and family issues remain mainly "women's issues" in our country. Not so in others, where children are seen as the future, and people believe it's essential to invest in them with great family leave policies,

childcare, college education, and medical care. In the United Kingdom, for example, every woman is guaranteed 52 weeks of family leave upon the birth of a baby, and, in many cases, 39 weeks are paid.

In America, we see your children as your problem. There have been many articles lately talking about couples deciding not to have children because of the financial stress it imposes. How is that good for America's future?

**In 2020, we will** celebrate women having had the right to vote for 100 years. But there is still much work to do. I collected some headlines from stories last year and changed the word "women" to "men." Take a look and tell me we women don't have any more work to do. I dare you. Are Men Fit to Lead?...Kids Getting Fat Because Fathers Not Cooking Meals...Do Men Have Too Many Choices?...Kids and Career—Can Men Really Have it All?...Makeup Tips for Men Who Look Tired At The End of the Day...Single Men: They're Buying Homes and Working at Jobs But Are They Happy?...How Men's Liberation is Making Men Unhappy.

To the 20-, 30-, and 40-year-old women of today, it's time to hand you the torch. But are you ready to take it? Many of the young women I meet today remind me of women I met in Iran during a congressional visit in 1974. I asked these Iranians if they were worried about all the "noise" in the political arena about getting women back under control. They said the shah would never let that happen. He had Westernized the country, and they bragged they had better daycare and work family benefits. Well, their complacency blew up in their faces. Within years, they were being arrested if they were not fully covered outside of their homes.

**Women's rights in America** made terrific advances in the 1920s only to be derailed by the Depression. Then World War II brought all sorts of advances for women, only to be derailed by the 1950s. Just last year, many states undercut rights women had won, and Congress nearly killed the Violence Against Women Act. So, ladies, complacency is not a solution. Women must do what we did decades ago: Get into the debate, vote, and make your voices heard.

My generation did a lot of grading of the road to create equality for women. Now you need to pave it.

My Best,  
Pat Schroeder



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