

Legislative Update - February 3, 2012

Greetings from Richmond:

We are now in the heart of the 2012 General Assembly Session. Between subcommittee and committee meetings to House floor sessions I am working on bills for small business credits, expanding educational opportunities, strengthening laws to protect children and many others. It sometimes makes for a quick pace, but is worthwhile as we strive to make our Commonwealth a better place for our families.

Legislation:

For the most part, my pieces of legislation are still developing in committees. House bill 632, amending the Charter for the Town of Windsor, passed unanimously in the House of Delegates and has been sent to the Senate for consideration.

This week the Virginia House and Senate voted to ban mandatory project labor agreements on state-funded construction projects, a move proponents argue will help protect the state's right-to-work laws and create a level playing field in contract bidding. In addition, the House passed a repeal of the state's decades-old "Kings Dominion" law, requiring school systems to open after Labor Day each year. Although this bill has the support of Governor McDonnell, the future is unclear because an identical bill was shot down in the Senate committee.

Education funding has been a major topic of discussion thus far. House Republicans, working with Governor McDonnell, are committed to giving every child in the Commonwealth the opportunity to receive a top-quality education. The House Republican Caucus has highlighted K-12 education reforms designed to improve education in Virginia. One reform would permit businesses to sponsor educational improvement scholarships for lower income children – particularly those in underserved areas of the Commonwealth. Another reform would allow any institution of higher education in Virginia to operate a college partnership laboratory school. Another reform would replace current teacher contracts with performance-based contracts. These and other announced reforms, along with Governor McDonnell's proposed investment of an additional \$492 million in our schools, will give our teachers the additional resources and tools needed to provide the top-quality education our children deserve and ensure the solvency of the teacher retirement fund.

As always, I am working to help bring jobs to our district, preserve our constitutional freedoms, and make our Commonwealth a great place for families. To track the legislation that interests you please visit <http://lis.virginia.gov/>

Visitors:

I am ever grateful for constituents who take the time to contact my office, either in person, or via mail or phone, to share their thoughts and opinions regarding issues facing the General Assembly. It is a great help to receive your input, so I know how best to represent the 64th district.

This week I had the pleasure of meeting two students who participated in my Delegate-For-A-Day program. These students were selected because they exhibit leadership skills, professionalism and a keen interest in government and politics. My first Delegate for a Day was a senior from King's Fork High School in Suffolk, and the second was an eighth grade student from Smithfield Middle School. Each student showed great aptitude for the workings of state government, and I hope they each went home with a greater understanding of the process.

Other visitors to my office this week included: employees of the Isle Wight Credit Union, representatives of the Virginia Conservation Network, public safety officers from correctional facilities in the 64th district, representatives from the Franklin-Southampton Chamber of Commerce, employees of the local humane society, Isle of Wight Sheriff Mark Marshall, the Virginia Grain Association of Isle of Wight, students in the 64th district who currently attend Virginia Tech, and employees of the Denbigh House who serve patients with brain injuries.

Many participated in our first telephone town-hall on January 26, which provided a great opportunity for meaningful discussion on issues pertinent to the 64th district. Our next one is likely to take place in March. In addition, I will be conducting several town hall meetings throughout the district. Please check my website for announcements regarding future similar events.

www.delrickmorris.com.

Contact Me:

As always, my staff and I are here in Richmond to serve you. We want to hear what you think about the legislation pending before the House, or if there's anything we can do to help you in dealing with a state government agency. My office can be reached at (804) 698-1064 or via the Internet at DelRMorris@house.virginia.gov. If you are planning to visit Richmond during Session, I encourage you to visit me in Room 817.

Thank you again for allowing me to serve as your Delegate.

