

## Notes From WLRT - Wednesday, February 8, 2017

**Senator Dave Marsden**, 37<sup>th</sup> District Fairfax County, spoke on the subject of how the state has become so divided, that each “side” needs to try harder to listen to the other. Has a theory that the next development in the give and take of the three branches of government will come down to the judiciary as the locus of struggle.

**Delegate Vivian Watts**, 39<sup>th</sup> District – Parts of Fairfax County

Vivian Watts is a long-time League member. Former LWVFA leader.

Echoed Senator Marsden point by telling the story of an urban- centric bill to stop hunter’s dogs running onto someone’s property. Rural delegates defeated it; it lost by one vote.

Watts’ Bill: to help prevent fraudulent contractors; to break up fraudulent rings Defeated by 10 votes. The point is to help the elderly against exploitation. Hopes to engage with AARP and the like – for the membership to understand the need to go after them.

**Alfonzo Lopez (D-49<sup>th</sup>)**

Part of Arlington and Fairfax County

First Latino Democrat ever elected to the GA. 8.7 % of the population of Virginia, but he’s the first elected. There are 108 languages spoken in his district.

Says he has to work with others in Virginia to explain the richness of the American fabric in Virginia. Fights against the notion that the immigrant as “other.”

**Refugee Crisis in Syria** – the worst since WWII. Takes two years to get admitted into the US. We already have extreme vetting for people who are fleeing terror.

**Two Bills:**

**Child Labor in Tobacco Farms.** Killed in Commerce Committee. Very dangerous. Kids get acute nicotine poisoning. Has a greater effect on children. Washington Post did an article about it.

**Dream Act:** children were brought here at very young age. Decision of 1982 – educate every child within US K to 12. We spend over \$10K per year per child in public education. But we put up a stop sign – cut off our nose to spite our face.

**DACA** (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) – from President Obama.

Delegate Lopez wants these students to get in-state tuition.

Delegate Lopez’ mom was a guidance counselor in Arlington and invited students over for three day barbecues because she knew they didn’t have enough to eat on weekends. His mother was also the guidance counselor of the children of LWV Arlington member extraordinaire, Marjorie Signer, including her son, Mike Signer, who is now the mayor of Charlottesville.

<http://www.charlottesville.org/departments-and-services/departments-a-g/city-council/council-members/mike-signer>

**Senator Mamie Locke (D-2<sup>nd</sup>)**

Part of Hampton, Newport News, Portsmouth

Voter Suppression. Registered to vote in 1972 (?) in Jackson, Mississippi, at age 18, first year that 18 years old could vote.

Hinds County, Mississippi

Had to register to vote in two places; in the county seat and in the city in which you lived – was designed to suppress the vote of African Americans

SJ 223 – it's a Constitutional Amendment to suppress the vote. Has to do with the restoration of rights of felons. Makes no distinction between violent and non-violent felons as well. Also strips the governor and any future governor of the right to restore felons' rights to vote. Bill says the fines have to be repaid before the rights are restored. Gov. McAuliffe had waived that and restored people's right to vote. It wasn't waived completely – it's just that they had to pay it at some point. The problem is that it's difficult for felons to get jobs.

Has passed the Senate 21 to 19; Will pass the House. Will have to pass next year's as well (i.e., for two years) and then will likely go on the ballot as a Constitutional Amendment in 2018.

Delegate Cole's bill passed the House – requirement for registrants to show citizenship documents. Probably will pass the Senate; gov. would veto.

“You don't make public policy through the Constitution, but through legislation. “