



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF VIRGINIA

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**2010 Session of the General Assembly
Women's Roundtable Report**

Legislative Forum

*meets every Wednesday during session 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. 3rd floor conference room West
Notes by Amy Burgett of Richmond*

March 3, 2010

The WRT was opened by **Anne Sterling**, LWV-VA Legislative Coordinator.

Delegate Jimmie Massie, (R- Richmond) on his way to the Education Committee meeting, apologized for his brief visit to let the WRT attendees know how much he and other legislators value the work done by the WRT.

Senator John Miller (D-Newport News) noted that he has seen the WRT convene, as his office is on the same floor, but that it took him a while to appreciate that it wasn't just for women, or only to address women's issues.

- He expressed disappointment that the redistricting bill, SB173 (Sen. Deeds) was "killed" last evening in committee, and vowed to put in a Constitutional amendment next session, so that the redistricting process is in the code, and not subject to renegotiation every 10 years.
- He also regretted that SB83, (Sen. Howell) to permit absentee voting for any reason had been tabled in the House subcommittee.
- Senator Miller has patroned **SJ 31 Public schools; JLARC to study reading proficiency among third graders**. It has been voted out of House Subcommittee for a full vote. There are several correlations being made using the 3rd grade reading test as a predictor for future corrections, and a study will validate or invalidate the correlation.

Olga Hernandez, LWV-VA President and Moderator of the WRT thanked Senator Miller for coming, and recognized:

Delegate Mark Keam (D-Fairfax) sponsored legislation,

- **HB 1123 Second Chance Act; Secretary of Public Safety, et al. to study and make recommendations**. This was continued to 2011 on recommendation of House Militia, Police and Public Safety.
- **HB778, Legislative Support Commission; publication of House and Senate voting records**. (**LeMunyon, R, Oak Hill**) to foster greater accessibility by the public to votes of legislators. "Publication of House and Senate voting records. Provides that, beginning with the 2011 Regular Session of the General Assembly, the Legislative Support Commission, through the Division of Legislative Automated Systems, from information and data provided by the Clerk of the House and the Clerk of the Senate, must post on the legislative electronic information system (LIS) the recorded committee, subcommittee, and floor votes of each member of the General Assembly on legislation acted upon in each house. The information pertaining to the voting records of legislative members must be electronically accessible to state agencies, political subdivisions, and the public. "The bill passed the House and has been referred to the Senate Committee on Rules, which will consider it on Friday, 3/5. Del. Kean has spoken with Legislative Information Services, and the programming is not unduly complex or costly, and would allow the general public to quickly find legislators' votes.

Delegate Paula Miller (D- Norfolk) echoed the importance of transparency in government, as is responsibility. She elected not to put forth any measures that required significant funding, noting the budget shortfall. She did sponsor:

- **H.B. 1256 Concealed weapon; certain law-enforcement officers who have resigned eligible to carry**. A

substitute bill was carried.

- **H.B. 1257 Purchase of service handguns; law-enforcement officers who resign in good standing may purchase.** Passed Senate.
- **HB 254 Juvenile records; DJJ to provide information in an investigation of criminal street gang.** This legislation has been assigned to Senate Courts Special Subcommittee.
- **HJ 151 Norfolk's Light Rail project; Auditor of Public Accounts to conduct financial audit, report.** This bill was left in House Rules, but a commission has been appointed and part of the commission's mandate is to review cost overruns.

Delegate Charniele Herring (D-Alexandria) read to the assembly "House Joint Resolution 210, commending the League of Women Voters of Virginia on the occasion of the organization's founding and historic 100th anniversary of its precursors' participation in the suffragist movement." The full text of this resolution can be found on the LWV-VA website, www.LWV-VA.org.

Delegate Vivian Watts (D-Fairfax) expressed concern about the documentation of identification and proof of citizenship offered in this GA session, reflecting its effect on new citizens, senior citizens and the disabled who would find the requirement burdensome (cost, time, travel, accessibility), and might be discouraged from exercising their franchise. She used this example to demonstrate how often when measures are permitted full discussion problems are identified and resolved. However, the budget process this year has not been open, and has suffered from the usual review that would be accorded budget measures. She shared her frustration by reading in full her testimony to the House on Friday, February 26. The text is available by contacting the LWV-VA.

Senator Creigh Deeds (D- Albemarle County (Part), Alleghany County (All), Bath County (All), Buckingham County (Part), Buena Vista City (All), Charlottesville City (All), Covington City (All), Nelson County (All), Rockbridge County (Part) received applause as he approached the speakers place, in recognition of his valiant efforts on behalf of bi-partisan redistricting. Bills for which he is patron:

- **SB173, Bipartisan Redistricting Commission created.** The bill was tabled by voice vote in House Privileges and Elections Subcommittee yesterday. He noted that the Governor can amend redistricting legislation. He would like to see a commission patterned after Iowa (only criteria is population) with the NJ process, but after eight years of championing redistricting legislation, he is unsure whether he will sponsor future efforts.
- **SB 620 Internet Crimes Against Children task forces; created. "Additional fee for Internet Crimes Against Children task forces.** Creates the Internet Crimes Against Children Fund. The fund consists of a \$10 additional fee on each felony and misdemeanor conviction and any appropriations, gifts and grants. Moneys in the Fund will be disbursed to designated entities to support the investigation and prosecution of internet crimes against children." This bill has been reported out of Appropriations.

Andrew Goddard, Million Mom March noted that 53 gun bills were introduced this year, and opined that most of them were bad. He is hopeful that those remaining will be killed in Senate "Special" Subcommittee, which meets tomorrow at 2 pm. Senate Room A.

Anne Sterling read an announcement from **Ben Greenberg**, VOP, who was called away:

- There is a bake sale to help fund VA government tomorrow morning 8 – 10 am in front of the GA building. And an announcement from **Ann Rasmussen** of Voices for Virginia's Children.
- Distribute a handout from the Alliance for Virginia's Students

Tyla Matteson of the Sierra Club spoke about:

- A bill introduced at the request of the Governor, sponsored by Massie, **HB 1395 Public-Private Acts of 1995 and 2002; certain grant agreements. Agreements under the Public-Private Transportation Act of 1995 and the Public-Private Education Facilities and Infrastructure Act of 2002.** "Authorizes state agencies and state authorities, upon the approval of the Governor, to enter into agreements with private entities under the Public-Private Transportation Act of 1995 and the

Public-Private Education Facilities and Infrastructure Act of 2002 for the development of a project by the private entity, which agreements provide for the private entity to be paid grants from a portion of the growth in state taxes attributable to the development of the project. Before any agreement is entered into with a private entity, the respective Secretary shall certify to the Governor and the chairmen of the House Committee on Appropriations and the Senate Committee on Finance that the present value of the state tax revenues anticipated to be collected that are attributable to the development of the project are at least 100 percent greater than the present value of the proposed grant payments to the private entity.

The bill also would allow local governments, agencies, and authorities, upon the approval of the governing body of the locality, to join in the agreement entered into between the private entity and the state agency or state authority. “

Ms. Matteson noted that this would shift public funds to private developers for transportation projects, and encouraged all to oppose this measure.

- **HB 92 Renewable energy certificates; tariff filed by cooperative for electric energy.** (Kilgore, R) has been assigned to Commerce & Labor subcommittee, and would let utility cooperatives advertise “green Power”, while not disclosing how much and what type of green.
- **HB1300** (Kilgore) & **SB128** (McDougle), **Air Pollution Control Board; regulations under the Clean Air Interstate Rule.** Also known as the “Dirty Air Act”; handouts provided.
- **HB1395**, already cited, handout from League of Conservation Voters distributed.

The WRT adjourned at 9:50 am. A decision was reached to hold the WRT next week, even though it is late in the session.