

Democrat

The Newsletter of the Fairfax County Democratic Committee

October 2016 Volume 3, Issue 8

Election Day Is Near



Yes, we have plenty to boo about. And his name is Trump. But we also have plenty to be excited about. And her name is Hillary. And his name is Tim.

MAKE A PLAN. The most important thing you can do in the next few weeks is VOTE! If you haven't voted yet (and thousands have), be sure to vote on



November 8. We have Hillary Clinton, we have Tim Kaine, we have Gerry Connolly, we have Don Beyer, we have LuAnn Bennett, we have Herndon Mayor Lisa Merkel, and we have Herndon Town Council members Jennifer Baker, Jeffrey Davidson, Signe Friedrichs, Bill McKenna, Sheila Olem, and Grace Han Wolf Cunningham.

As of October 15, over 14,000 Fairfax County residents had voted early/absentee-in-person. YOU CAN, TOO! See details in this month's Letter from the Chair, Sue Langley. (You will have to choose one of 19 different rationales for not voting on Election Day.)

Finally, if you can help Get Out The Vote on the days leading up to and including Election Day, please call your local DPVA organizer, or stop by the Hillary office in Reston at 1635 Washington Plaza North or in Alexandria at 6452 Landsdowne Center. LET'S WIN THIS!



The Meals Tax Referendum: Why It Must Pass

by Pat Hynes, Fairfax County School Board

Member (Hunter Mill)

Our schools need it. Pure and simple.

Advocating for revenue is part of the job of a school board member: the people of this community expect excellent schools with world-class curricular and extracurricular programs, and we're smart enough to know that you get what you pay for.

We send at least three times as much revenue to Richmond as we get back for our schools and other critical public services. And then Richmond ties our hands when it comes to raising revenue locally for local needs. A meals tax is one of very few options available to local governments, which is why 2/3 of Virginia counties—and most cities and towns—have adopted meals taxes to help balance their reliance on property taxes.

Local revenue since 2008 has not kept pace with growing population and rising costs. That is certainly

(continued on page 3)

Deadlines for *The Democrat*

November 2016 Edition

Friday, November 11,
2016

December 2016 Edition

Friday, December 9, 2016

Articles/ photos must be submitted as attachments to thedemocrat@fairfaxdemocrats.org. All submissions are subject to a word limit and editing. For more information, contact thedemocrat@fairfaxdemocrats.org.



Message from the FCDC Chairman

Sue Langley

By the time you read this message, we will probably have 2–3 weeks to Election Day. This election is so important. It's not about just Democrats or just Republicans, it is about our futures and our kids' futures. We have never had a year like this one, where one presidential candidate, with no qualifications, is out there preaching hatred, and the other, with extraordinary qualifications and experience, is working to bring us together.

As members of this committee, it is your duty to work as hard as you can to make sure that 'good trumps evil.'

I do not have to tell you all about why we need to work hard to win this. We all have the same goals, despite some occasional disagreements. Hillary Clinton is a known commodity with a very long list of accomplishments. Here are some in my bucket: tirelessly working to help insure 8 million children, pushing a bill to get health care for the 9/11 first responders and volunteers, helping expand health care and family leave for military families, advocating for marriage equality . . . and the list goes on.

Here are a few things I need you to do:

- Recruit volunteers to hand out FCDC blue sample ballots at various satellite locations as well as the Fairfax Government Center. See the list below.
- Help with Coordinated Campaign activities; sign up here—www.hillaryclinton.com/events.
- Sign up to help cover your polling place to hand out sample ballots and make sure voters vote the Democratic ticket and vote NO on question #1 in order to protect working families, and YES on the rest, including YES on Fairfax County's meals tax to support our kids.

Let's do these things and make sure that democracy prevails in our beloved country!

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*Views expressed do not necessarily
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expressly approved by an appropriate
committee resolution.*

The Meals Tax Referendum: Why It Must Pass

by Pat Hynes, Fairfax County School Board Member (Hunter Mill)

(continued from page 1)

true for the school system. Between 2008 and 2015, the gap between revenue and needs was so wide that by fiscal year 2015 the school system was spending \$1,000 *less* per child in constant dollars than in 2008. We got there by freezing teacher pay and raising class sizes several times, along with annual central office cuts.

Being lean is a good thing—we are stewards of the public’s resources and we take that responsibility seriously. In 2013, the state paid for a comprehensive efficiency study of Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), which found just \$10 million in potential savings, all of which the school system implemented in the first year. According to the Washington Area Boards of Education comparison guide, FCPS has far and away the leanest central office in the region, which includes other large systems with similar economies of scale.

We also, unfortunately, have one of the lowest teacher salary scales in the region, \$5,000–\$10,000 a year lower than market average and as much as \$20,000 a year lower than neighboring Arlington County. And our elementary class sizes are some of the highest in the

region.

Last year, this community advocated loud and clear for the school system, and the Board of Supervisors responded with a shot in the arm that has allowed us to make some important reinvestments, including bringing our teacher salary scale halfway to market average. That was great news, but



we have farther to go—and the 4-cent property tax increase that paid for that extra revenue is simply not a sustainable approach.

So, the proposed 4-percent meals tax: just 40 cents on a \$10 lunch tab, or \$1.60 on a family’s \$40 dinner bill. Most surrounding jurisdictions in Northern Virginia already have a meals tax. When we eat in Arlington, Alexandria, Falls Church, Fairfax City, Vienna, or Herndon, we are helping those communities pay for their important public services and high

quality of life. If we want to keep our great teachers—and the families and companies who choose Fairfax County for its great schools—Fairfax County must implement a modest meals tax.

Some have said that a meals tax would be regressive. With 65,000 Fairfax students living in poverty, you can be sure that the school system is on the front lines daily attending to their educational and personal needs. The extent to which a lower income family pays a small tax on prepared meals strengthens our ability to serve their children effectively. Those pennies on the dollar are repaid to them many times over.

Finally, some restaurants say that the tax would mean fewer customers, which would also hurt their wait staff. Is it reasonable to think that 4 cents on the dollar will dissuade those who would otherwise dine out? I don’t think so. Further, 28 percent of this income for our schools is expected to come from residents of other jurisdictions who eat in Fairfax County.

So please help our schools by voting for this modest tax, bringing us in line with all of our neighboring cities and towns. Our children thank you.

Interested in EARLY (IN-PERSON ABSENTEE) VOTING?

When: October 17--November 4, weekdays 8:00 am to 4:30 pm (Thursdays till 7:00 pm) Saturdays through November 5, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Where: Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Conference Rooms 2/3

Early (In-Person Absentee Voting) Available in the Following Satellite Locations

When: October 17--November 4, weekdays 2:00 to 8:00 pm Saturdays through November 5, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Where: Satellite locations include:

- Providence Community Center, 3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax
- Franconia Governmental Center, 6121 Franconia Road, Alexandria
- McLean Governmental Center, 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean
- North County Governmental Center, 1801 Cameron Glen Drive, Reston
- West Springfield Governmental Center, 6140 Rolling Road, Springfield
- Mason Governmental Center, 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale
- Mount Vernon Governmental Center, 2511 Parkers Lane, Alexandria
- Sully Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Boulevard, Chantilly
- *New Saturday-only location:* Lorton Library, 9520 Richmond Highway, Lorton





Right to Work on November Ballot Virginia, Just Say “NO” by James McCarthy

The Right To Work (RTW) debate in this nation was recently revived in Wisconsin, where a circuit court judge held that an RTW statute championed by the governor was unconstitutional because it takes property without just compensation. In translation, the decision means that prohibiting unions from receiving dues or fees for representing all workers in the workplace is a deprivation of property.

Through a long and often bitter national history of legal battles, unions have been forced to accept that their dues or fee income must be limited to activities that are directly related to collective bargaining, legally required grievance representation, and general administration of the bargaining organization. This evolution destroyed the “closed” or “union” shop, where workers were required to be members to obtain or continue their employment.

In states without RTW laws, non-union members may be required to pay “fair share” fees that go toward the union’s cost of representing them. It’s illegal for such dues to be used for political advocacy as might ordinary union dues. This was the issue in the recent California case where a 4-4 Supreme Court split left standing the federal court ruling in favor of the fair-share fee. Unlike Wisconsin,

Virginia’s RTW law was not a novel concoction of a newly elected Republican legislature seeking to promote some radical American conservative ideology. Rather, here in Virginia, RTW has existed since 1947.

Only in America is RTW dedicated to proscribing the capacity of unions to recruit members and receive financial resources to accomplish their purposes. Weirdly enough, federal law allows states to adopt RTW laws that make it illegal to require fair-share dues—without also freeing unions from the requirement to represent all workers at a union work site. Internationally, RTW means pretty much what the words state: every person has a right to work to earn a living. If anything, the American RTW version abridges the rights of workers to associate in labor organizations for purposes of pursuing economic goals.

Despite not citing any evidence that Virginia’s law was under attack, Republican proponents of the RTW ballot measure argued the necessity of a constitutional amendment to prevent future lawmakers from changing the law. That seems contrary to democratic government. Also, without any evidence, proponents asserted that the new amendment would continue to attract business to the state. With the original statute in place for nearly 70 years, advocates of the new amendment should be able to identify some Virginia businesses that chose the Commonwealth due to its RTW.

Moreover, proponents stated—again, with no evidence—that the RTW statute might be “subverted.” Perhaps most insulting to Virginia voters is that the amendment is to be included in Article I of the Constitution which, as every Virginian knows, is its Bill of Rights. On this point, one proponent, an erstwhile educator, equated RTW with the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Since the 75-word amendment parrots the existing statute, its authors did not have to call upon intellect to create it; simple plagiarism sufficed. Approval of the referendum will mean:

- the addition of 75 redundant words for a legislative policy successful since 1947,
- acceptance of political opinion as a substitute for facts to amend the Constitution,
- the expenditure of over \$131,000 in taxpayer funds for a redundant \$1,748-per-word, and
- supporting political opportunism for a few legislators to capitalize on the use of taxpayer funds to satisfy an ideological ego trip and enjoy free campaign publicity.

Republicans know how to take advantage of The Virginia Way. In effect, they convert taxpayer funds into a PAC for their reelection.

Virginia, Just Say No!

National Affairs Committee (NAC)

NAC Briefed on Rep. Gerry Connolly's Signature Technology Work; Asks Congressman to Spearhead Climate Summit *by Stephen Holl*

At its September meeting, the National Affairs Committee (NAC) heard from James Walkinshaw, chief of staff to Congressman Gerry Connolly. After summarizing the congressman's long career of public service—14 years as a Fairfax County supervisor (5 as chair), and four terms (8 years) representing Virginia's 11th Congressional District in Congress, Walkinshaw discussed Connolly's work in depth, including his less-well-known technology priority.

Gerry Connolly is a long-time advocate for improving federal information technology. In fact, his pre-congressional background is in IT: before entering government service he led the Washington office of SRI International. The federal government spends \$86 billion annually on IT in all its forms. A signature legislative accomplishment of his was sponsorship of the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA).

Two key features of the act are (1) giving agency chief information officers the power to start or stop IT projects across their agencies, and (2) accelerating the move to the cloud. Because so much federal information still resides in legacy data centers, the environmental payoff alone will be substantial. Further, these legacy systems cannot support data encryption, so the move to the cloud is critical to better protecting the nation's data. Congressman Connolly is also a sponsor of new legislation, the

Modernizing Government Technology (MGT) Act, that will reform federal government IT by authorizing a significant upfront investment to retire vulnerable, large-scale legacy systems, and allow agencies to invest savings generated by FITARA and other reforms to accelerate our transition to the cloud. (The House passed the MGT Act unanimously on September 22.)

In the area of climate change and the environment, Congressman Connolly co-chairs the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition (SEEC)—one of the largest ideological caucuses in Congress, with nearly 60 members.

As a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Connolly either chairs or co-chairs country caucuses for Georgia, Korea, Morocco, Taiwan, and Turkey.

The congressman is also the ranking Democrat on the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. About 50,000 federal employees live in the 11th, along with a like number of federal retirees. Over the 6 years that the Republicans have controlled the House, federal employees have suffered an assault on their pay and benefits equivalent to a 5.3% pay cut. Congressman Connolly has introduced the Federal Adjustment of Income Rates (FAIR) Act to give federal employees a 5.3% "raise," restoring what they lost.

Regarding Metro, while this trans-

portation mode is vital to the functioning of the federal government, that federal government contributes nothing toward its operating costs, which must be borne by local jurisdictions. Congressman Connolly supports the passage of a bill for annual federal contributions to Metro's operating costs.

Finally, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) was among the topics raised in the question-and-answer session. Connolly is on record as a probable "yes" if it comes to a vote in the 2016 lame duck session of Congress. This is unlikely, however, as the Republican leadership has said that the votes to pass it are not available.

In closing, NAC chair Sandra Klasen asked Walkinshaw to convey the committee's requests that Congressman Connolly:

(1) In view of his SEEC leadership role, his record of working to combat climate change, and Virginia's emerging national influence, join with Reps. Don Beyer and Bobby Scott and lead the effort to convene a climate summit within the first 100 days of the new administration, in accordance with the 2016 DNC platform: We believe the United States must lead in forging a robust global solution to the climate crisis. We are committed to a national mobilization, and to leading a global effort to mobilize nations to address this threat on a scale not seen since

(continued on page 7)

NAC Briefed on Rep. Gerry Connolly's Signature Technology Work; Asks Congressman to Spearhead Climate Summit

by Stephen Holl (continued from page 6)

World War II. In the first 100 days of the next administration, the President will convene a summit of the world's best engineers, climate scientists, policy experts, activists, and indigenous communities to chart a course to solve the climate crisis; and

(2) Spearhead congressional initiatives to establish a 21st-Century:

(a) Media Fairness Doctrine,*

(b) Congressional Office of Technology Assessment.**

*DPVA resolution "The Virginia 2016 Democratic Convention Calls for Media Fairness and Disclosure" was ratified June 18, 2016.

**The Congressional Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) was in operation between 1972 and 1995. OTA's purpose was to provide congressional members and

committees with objective and authoritative analysis of complex scientific and technical issues. Newt Gingrich's Republican-controlled Congress abolished OTA.

400 YEARS AGO

In 1616, Pocahontas sailed to England with her husband John Rolfe and their young son, Thomas. Before she could return to Virginia the following year, she passed away. Powhatan, Pocahontas's father, was chief of the Powhatan, a confederacy of Algonquin tribes in the Virginia area. The Pamunkey, perhaps the largest of the Powhatan confederacy, in 2015 became Virginia's first federally recognized Native American nation; its reservation is located in King William County. Since 1691, Virginia had forbidden intermarriage between whites and non-whites. In its 1924 *Racial Integration Act*, the Commonwealth reiterated this prohibition, defining as white any person who has no trace whatsoever of any blood other than Caucasian. An exception was made for some elite white Virginians with less than 1/64 Indian blood and no African-American blood who claimed descent from Pocahontas. History records some descendants as Elizabeth Wilson [wife of President Woodrow Wilson], Nancy Reagan, and the Byrd family, including Harry F. Byrd. Despite the epithet by Donald Trump, there is no evidence that Senator Elizabeth Warren is a descendant of Pocahontas.

50 YEARS AGO

On March 24, 1966, SCOTUS issued its decision in *Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections* (6 3), holding the state's poll tax unconstitutional under the 24th Amendment, which banned poll taxes in federal elections, and the 14th Amendment, guaranteeing equal protection of the law among the states. The Court declared a state in violation "...whenever it makes the affluence of the voter or payment of any fee an electoral standard. Voter qualifications have no relation to wealth nor to paying or not paying this or any other fee." Virginia's statute, sec. 173 of its Constitution, was adopted at the state's 1901-02 convention, assessing \$1.50 per year to be paid in the three years prior to an election. An interesting side note is the dissent by John Marshall Harlan II, who, prior to his elevation to SCOTUS, was a founding director and volunteer counsel to the NYC Pioneer Fund, which provided grants for eugenics advocates to advance the propagation of white persons. Annie Harper, the named plaintiff, was a resident of Fairfax County.