

House of Delegates Candidate Forum
League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, Virginia
16 October 2009

Questions asked during the Forum (not in order):

1. Bob McDonnell has said he would sell the ABC stores in order to raise monies for roads. If he were elected, would you support such a move? If passed and it failed to generate enough funds to meet Virginia's road needs, what other measures would you support to meet our transportation needs?
2. Will you support accepting federal stimulus money for expanding and extending unemployment benefits?
3. What do you think about school choice issues such as charter schools, vouchers, and tax advantages for homeschooling or private school families?
4. In this recession, specifically what would you do to balance the state's budget?
5. I'm concerned about the lack of minority representation in the New River Valley. What will you do to recruit and encourage more minority representation in our local governments?
6. What role do you think incentive programs, like the Governors Opportunity Fund, play in attracting businesses would you support increasing these incentive programs?
7. What public transportation proposals would you support or propose? Please be specific, such as HOV lanes on I-95 between Richmond and Washington or commuter rail in Hampton Roads. And what methods would you support or propose to fund transportation projects (general fund, gas tax, ...)?
8. What is your opinion of the No Child Left Behind Act: How would you respond to the idea that the No Child Left Behind Act forces teachers to teach to a test instead of for the sake of learning?
9. The Joint Legislative Audit & Review Commission has issued a report on the health of the State Retirement System. One option is to change VRS into a "defined contribution" plan. Would you support such a change and why or why not?
10. Will you vote in favor of the establishment of a bi-partisan commission to redistrict Virginia following the 2010 Census? Specifically, why or why not?
11. What can Virginia do to best support alternative energy production?
12. What do you see as the biggest issue facing the New River Valley today?
13. What can Virginia do to help business owners?
14. What is your position on gun owners rights and what changes would you most like to see [involving] regarding Virginia's gun laws?
15. We need to [get the huge trucks off] reduce traffic congestion on I-81. Do you support the facility that Norfolk Southern wants to build in Elliston?

Questions not answered during the forum:

Banking/Regulation

1. How do we fix the problem of payday lending in Virginia?

Economic Development

1. What are your views on providing tax credits for investment in high tech small

- businesses? What do you think is a small business?
2. There are more employees at work in the corporate business park in Blacksburg than the entire university faculty and staff. What can be done to help these small businesses in this economy?
 3. Would you support increasing economic development funding for the area like the Governor's Opportunity Fund?
 4. If the state had an extra \$50 million to spend on economic development, how would you advise the Governor to spend it?
 5. If you have any specific knowledge of technology development at VT, what energy conservation measures/alternative energy R&D makes sense for Virginia?

Education

1. If you could improve one program or sector in our public schools, what would that be?
2. What levels of education (lower, middle, high school, university, junior college) have been most severely effected by State budget cuts; and what is your thinking about how to best preserve these education line items?
3. How do we move to relieve the growing shortage of good, qualified teachers in Virginia? How do you attract good teachers? If teachers are not doing an adequate job, but have been in the job for many years and have tenure, the system needs to have a way to get them out of the system. How do you relieve not so good teachers? Do you agree?

Energy

1. What can be done to slow down AEP rate increases?

Gay Rights

1. Creigh Deeds has said he opposed the marriage amendment that defines marriage as between one man and one woman. In the House of Delegates there has legislation to repeal the constitutional amendment. Would you support the repeal of the constitutional amendment defining marriage as between a man and a woman?

Government

1. Virginia Retirement System: What is your position on maintaining the 5% portion of the VRS for state employees?
2. Do you support the decision to temporarily move the E1 voting precinct to Kipps Elementary and do you think there is anything that can be done to make voting more accessible?
3. What do you believe will be the consequences for the President's proposal to severely cut Medicare benefits?
4. Virginia is running out of unemployment insurance funds, causing us to have to borrow from the Federal Government and causing taxes to be increased. Given these facts, do you think we should have accepted the federal unemployment insurance funding?
5. Do you think it was a mistake for Virginia to reject the \$125 million in federal funds for unemployment insurance benefits?
6. You have probably attended one or two US Congressional Town Hall meetings. Upon reflection, what main themes did you feel were prominent, noteworthy; and how do you think these dominant themes translate into local initiatives at the state level

Gun

1. If you are concerned with firearm safety and kids, would you support an approach such

as we use with auto safety, drugs, STD--e.g. firearm safety class in schools? Why or why not?

Tort Reform/Limits

1. Extraordinary high costs of malpractice insurance for doctors and the ordering of unnecessary tests, plus the difficult issue of the lobbyists, powers of lawyers (since neither of you is a lawyer). What is your solution for tort reform?

Transportation:

1. Recently, the "I-81 States" committed to carrying freight on rails to reduce truck traffic on I-81. Is this something you support?
2. One candidate for Governor, Creigh Deeds, has said that he [would] might sign a tax increase to help fund transportation. Will you vote to put a tax increase on the Governor's desk to fund transportation?