

Also on the Ballot
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In addition to voting for president and members of the U.S. House of Representatives, Virginia voters on November 2 will be asked to vote on two state constitutional amendments. Both have been approved by two sessions of the General Assembly with an intervening election as required before constitutional questions can be put on the ballot.

The first amendment is a recommendation of the Secure Virginia Panel which has been studying ways to improve security of the state in cases of terrorist attacks or natural disasters. Under the amendment, the line of succession to the governorship is extended in case of an emergency in which the Governor can no longer serve. Currently, the Governor is succeeded by the Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, and Speaker of the House until the House of Delegates is able to meet to vote on a replacement. The expanded line of succession in case the House of Delegates is unable to meet to choose an acting governor starts with the Lieutenant Governor followed by the Attorney General, Speaker of the House, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and then the Majority Leader of the Senate.

The second ballot question involves the filling of legislative vacancies after legislative redistricting has occurred but before the date of the next general election. After the 2001 redistricting, two Senate seats became vacant. Senator Madison Marye resigned his seat, and Senator Emily Couric died. The Attorney General interpreted existing law as requiring that the elections would have to be held in the new districts.

In the case of Senator Marye, his 39th State Senate district had been moved during redistricting from Southwest to Northern Virginia because of population shifts. When the election to fill his vacancy occurred in the new district, it left his prior constituents without representation until the next general election. Some people in Northern Virginia had two senators for a period of time. Senator Emily Couric was replaced by Creigh Deeds who lived in the new Senate district but did not live within the boundaries of the old district.

If the ballot amendment passes, general elections after a redistricting will be held in the old districts until the next general election. I recommend that you vote for both constitutional amendments.

Fairfax County has several bond issues on the ballot that merit our support. The bonds proposed in the four questions on the ballot would provide much needed facilities for human services, including mental health, mental retardation, substance abuse, and juvenile shelters; public library facilities; additional parks and park facilities; and transportation improvements including highways and mass transit.

If you have questions, call me at 703.758.9733 or email me at kenplum@aol.com. See you at the polls on November 2.