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**Delegate Landes' Legislative Newsletter**  
**By: Delegate R. Steven Landes**

**Week of January 30, 2012**

As we continue to advance in the 2012 Session, we are getting to the point where major legislation is passing out of House committees and being acted upon by all delegates on the floor of the House. My focus continues to be on legislation that helps Virginia businesses create jobs and opportunities, improves the educational opportunities for all, and support reforms to make our state government more efficient and effective. This week, the House advanced a number of important measures that will support open competition on public contracts, improve our public schools, uphold the integrity of elections in the Commonwealth, and remove an outdated infringement to our 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment rights.

**House Passes the Fair and Open Competition in Government Contracting Act**

On Tuesday, the House passed House Bill 33, a bill that prohibits mandatory project labor agreements and guarantees full and open competition in bidding on public contracts. It is estimated that a mandated project labor agreement can raise the cost of a project by ten to twenty percent, so prohibiting these mandatory agreements will help ensure Virginia gets the most out of our taxpayer dollars on infrastructure projects. This legislation also ensures all of Virginia's qualified contractors and their skilled workforces, regardless of labor affiliation, can compete on a level playing field for Virginia projects.

Legislation similar to HB 33 passed the State Senate this week, indicating that this bill will likely pass the General Assembly and be signed into law by Governor McDonnell.

### **“Opportunity to Learn” K-12 Education Reform Bills Pass House**

The House passed two important K-12 public education reform bills that were a part of Governor McDonnell’s “Opportunity to Learn” agenda. First, the House passed House Bill 1061, which will reduce the number of high school diplomas available from seven to three. This will add rigor and relevance to Virginia earned diplomas and ensure that Virginia students are either career ready or college ready upon graduation.

Another bill that passed the House, House Bill 1063, would allow a local school division to establish its own starting date for the school year. While the bill did pass, I opposed this bill because I believe the current law is appropriate and working in the manner intended. Currently, a local school division can apply for and receive a waiver from the General Assembly to start the school year prior to Labor Day, and 77 out of 132 school divisions already have received a waiver. Furthermore, this bill could have a potential negative impact on Virginia jobs and tourism. A recent study found that the repeal of the current law could result in the loss of \$100 million in salary and wages alone. I believe strongly that part of my job as a legislator is to “do no harm,” and this legislation will do more harm than good.

### **Protecting the Integrity of the Electoral Process**

On Wednesday, the House passed House Bill 9, a bill to protect the integrity of our electoral process by requiring a voter to present a valid ID before casting a ballot. Currently, a voter who does not present a valid ID at the polling place can simply sign an affidavit and vote. The current provisions do not provide local Electoral Boards with any mechanisms to prevent a fraudulent vote cast by a voter who doesn’t show a valid ID. Should House Bill 9 become law, voters who do not present a valid ID would be required to sign an affidavit before casting a provisional ballot. Provisional ballots will allow local Electoral Boards to verify the vote cast is a valid vote before being counted. Let me be clear- this bill does not deny anyone the fundamental right to vote. Instead, this measure simply gives our local Electoral Boards a tool to prevent a fraudulent vote from being counted.

### **Legislation**

House Bill 770 provides that an emergency protective order may only be issued against a law-enforcement officer for any action arising out of the performance of his duties if an investigation is conducted by an appropriate law-enforcement agency and just cause is found for the issuance of the order. The section does not apply to protective orders issued to protect a child, based on

family abuse or issued in connection with a pending domestic relations case. This bill was unanimously passed by the House and is currently sitting in the Senate Courts of Justice Committee.

House Bill 771 provides that campus police officers, as appointed by public and private institutions of higher education, are included within the definition of law-enforcement officer. The bill was originally sent to the House Committee on Militia, Police, and Public Safety. The committee reported and referred it to the House Appropriations Committee, where it is currently awaiting further action.

I have long been a supporter of all of our law enforcement agencies and it is my hope that these bills will be passed. We must continue to protect and promote legislation to assist our law enforcement officers as they put themselves on the line each and every day.

### **Visitors**

Our doors are open and more and more visitors continue to come! This week, groups from the National Federation of Independent Business, the Virginia Grain Producers Association, and the Virginia Hospitality and Travel Association stopped by. Terry Team of the Daily Living Center and representatives from JustChildren, stopped in to say hello.

Valerie Kirkman brought visitors representing the Multiple Sclerosis Society and Cheryl Hissong brought members celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Lobby Day by the United Methodist Church. Myron Rummel came down with members of the Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative.

Universities and schools were well represented this week. President Teresa Sullivan brought in a contingency from the University of Virginia and Olivia Beavers came in to represent Virginia Tech. President Linwood Rose was down again for James Madison University. Steve Koleszar, Chairman of the Albemarle School Board, stopped in to discuss issues important to K-12 education.

And not to miss an opportunity to visit, members of the Augusta County Sheriff's Office came down to discuss legislation as well. Another busy week with many visitors and much to discuss!

### **Contact Me**

As always, my legislative aide, Judy Wyatt, and I are here to serve you. We want to hear what you think about the legislation pending before the House, or if there's anything we can do to help you in dealing with a state government agency. Please use the contact information listed below to reach us in the Richmond Office by phone, fax, or email. My office can be reached by phone at **804.698.1025** or by email at **steve@stevelandes.com**. Our Richmond Fax number is

**804.698.6725.** Our Richmond Address is **Post Office Box 406, Richmond, Virginia 23218.**  
Please visit my website at **www.stevelandes.com** for my newest press releases and newsletters.  
Also, be sure to “like” my Facebook Fan Page at **https://www.facebook.com/SteveLandesVA.**

If you are in Richmond, be sure to stop by and visit! I am located in Room 515 of the General Assembly Building, located on the corner of 9th and Broad Streets.

Thank you again for allowing me to serve as your Delegate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Landes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steve Landes

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