



BEARING DRIFT
VIRGINIA'S CONSERVATIVE VOICE

Bob FitzSimmonds, candidate, 13th Senate District

2011 GOP Senate Candidate Questionnaire

Are you satisfied with VDOT's efficiency and effectiveness? Do you think they need more funding or greater efficiency? What are your ideas for improvement?

When I served as Del. Lingamfelter's Legislative Assistant during his first term in 2002, we introduced an audit bill that would have reviewed the major departments of state government for duplication, inefficiency and waste. Leaders of both parties were less than enthusiastic about this bill. Del. Lingamfelter introduced audit bills of various forms unsuccessfully each year until Bob McDonnell endorsed the concept during his gubernatorial race. His election and support for Del. Lingamfelter's idea led to the passage of two audit bills, one directed at VDOT. This bill uncovered \$1 billion that is now being directed to road projects throughout the state. Del. Lingamfelter credits me with assisting him in this effort and in encouraging an expansive review of government functions. It is unlikely that these are the only improvements that can be realized at VDOT. This type of open government concept is critical to improve not just VDOT, but most agencies of the government of the Commonwealth.

I support a fundamental restructuring of VDOT and the eventual devolvement of most road maintenance and possibly, construction, to local government, along with the associated funding. Centralizing this function has not created efficiency, but rather chaos. Placing this responsibility with localities unites the functions of road approval with road maintenance.

Do you think Virginia should embrace education reform? Is our current public education system sufficient, or do you think it needs a substantial rethinking and overhaul? If you support reform, what specific reforms do you favor?

I support expansive educational choice to effect reform in the educational system. The absence of market pressures has allowed the cost of public education to skyrocket, without any

improvement in performance. A typical private school space costs less than half what a typical public school space costs. If Virginia adopts a system of tax credits and vouchers (the later probably necessitating a constitutional amendment) which allow real choice for parents, than the public school system will respond by becoming more competitive and less costly. Ideas like merit pay will become reality without a pitched public fight, since they will be necessary for the school system to compete.

The other critical thing that educational choice accomplishes is that it provides a diversity of options for children who may not respond well to a public school environment or who may need a different approach.

We should aggressively fight federal standards (No Child Left Behind). There is nothing in our Constitution that details a federal role in education and it is important that we resist any attempts by the federal government to take this over.

Should new highways be funded through existing revenues, tolls, fuel taxes or some other method? Be specific.

We need to restrict money that is raised for transportation, and supposedly placed in a trust fund, to transportation needs. In addition, we should abandon the myth that General Fund moneys should not be used for Transportation and appropriate from the General Fund when necessary. I believe that tolls are sometimes appropriate for new construction, when they are not in response to the failure of state government to respond.

Do you favor term limits for Virginia legislators?

I do not. As someone who ran against the longest serving senator in Virginia's history, I am sympathetic to those that believe we have to do something about legislators who hang on too long. I just believe that an informed and engaged electorate is the proper term limit.

Explain why you are a better choice than your opponent?

Both of my opponents are good men. Neither one has my experience or record.

I have run for the senate twice, nearly defeating the longest serving senator in Virginia's history and the chairman of the Finance Committee in 2007. While I came up short, garnering 46%, it was the most successful challenger race in 2007, when a number of our incumbents fell. In winning office, John Stirrup seriously underperformed in an insanely Republican District and Dick Black lost a race in 2005 as an incumbent in a Republican District.

I spent 4 years as Legislative Director for Attorney General Cuccinelli, when he was in the Senate. I worked with and developed relationships with conservatives in the Senate and believe I can build on this knowledge once elected. In addition, I have a proven track record of working effectively with some of the liberal members of the senate in areas that are not politically polarizing, like mental health.

While both of my opponents have similar positions to mine on most issues, neither has a record of activism on the range of issues that I do. Whether the issue is:

Right to Life – I have helped start 3 Crisis Pregnancy Centers and led the state Crisis Pregnancy Directors Association;

Anti-Tax – Founding Board member of the Prince William Taxpayers Alliance. Developed an ATR-like pledge for local officials and worked to elect Supervisors who share our views.

Pro-Family – Founding Chairman of the Prince William Manassas Family Alliance. Worked for and lobbied local government and state delegation on range of family issues. Received the Family Foundation of VA Citizen of the Year Award for getting internet pornography banned in our local county library system.

Education – Home schooled our children, run an abstinence program in the Prince William and Fauquier County Public school systems. Have been involved with private, public and homeschool communities for more than a decade.

Finally, while I am very conservative, I also have expertise in areas that will appeal outside the traditional GOP base. I have a background in the mental health community, serving on the Community Services Board in Prince William County and assisting Ken Cuccinelli when he and Senator Janet Howell worked to reform a good deal of the Code dealing with mental health issues. In 2007 I was the only challenger state wide to receive the Virginia Farm Bureau PAC endorsement because of my commitment to market based solutions to maintain open space and my commitment to expanding conservation easements.

Does Virginia government spend too much, too little or just enough?

Virginia government spends too much. Due to the economic downturn, Virginia cut its budget dramatically for the first time in modern history. Virtually no one noticed. Legislators and lobbyists have called for the “restoration” of these funds, but I believe that the cuts were so unnoticed that we should make another sweep at limiting the size of state government and put

limits on the ability of future legislatures to grow government too rapidly, as occurred during our last period of economic expansion.

Name one law you would patron a bill to repeal?

One gun a month.

Several bills that were introduced and passed lately that limited local government's ability to manage growth. One requires the doubling of densities in certain counties in enterprise zones and the other restricts the front loading of development proffers. Reasonable people may argue about these issues, but there is no sense in moving these decisions to Richmond, when localities will deal with the fall out.

I would like to amend the Constitution to allow for vouchers for Educational Choice.

When Virginia receives a surplus, what should it do with the revenues?

Return to taxpayers or place in the Rainy Day Fund. How this would be handled would depend on the size of the surplus. It would make little sense to refund a \$1,000,000 surplus to taxpayers – we would each get pennies.

What areas of government do you feel are best left to private markets or individuals to provide?

As a general rule, any area of government that can be outsources should be. Supplies, security, IT, transportation are all easy targets. We should immediately privatize the ABC stores and many functions currently handled at DMV. Educational Choice is a privatizing of sorts.

Do you consider the Virginia Constitution (as adopted in 1971 and amended since) to grant too much power to state government? If not, why not? If so, what powers given to Richmond would you propose to be restricted or repealed by constitutional amendment?

I do not believe that in general the state government is too powerful. I do believe that it abuses its power from time to time. I would support constitutional amendments locking up trust funds, so that the legislature could not raid them whenever they chose. I would also support a constitutional amendment granting more authority to localities to grant tax relief, which currently is limited to veterans and the elderly. Also, I would support open government and sunshine laws so that Virginia's tax code and budget were intelligible to the common citizen and available online.

When does life begin? When should life be protected under the laws of the United States and the Commonwealth of Virginia?

Life begins at conception and should be protected, without exception, from conception to natural death.

In Virginia, is there too much gun control or too little? What laws would you like to see changed and how?

I think that Virginia's gun control laws are generally okay, though I support several important changes. I support repealing "One Gun a Month" and I support the Castle Doctrine.

I support an easier and cheaper process for issuing concealed carry permits. In my capacity as Chief Deputy Clerk of Court, I participate in the issuance of several hundred permits a month. I believe I would be one of the foremost experts on the concealed carry process in the Virginia legislature.

Do you support the Dillon Rule?

I do support the Dillon Rule. I believe it is consistent with the Founders Vision that sovereignty is vested in the States – not the federal or local government.

Would you support school choice legislation, including legislation to allow parents to receive a tax credit up to a certain amount if their children are not in public school?

Yes. It is my intent to introduce educational choice legislation every year I am in the legislature until it passes. I believe that a system that utilizes tax credits and vouchers for parents, as well as tax credits for businesses is necessary to make it real choice. A tax credit for a middle class family may not be enough to allow them the choice they need, particularly if they have multiple children.