



BEARING DRIFT
VIRGINIA'S CONSERVATIVE VOICE

Bryan Rhode, Candidate, 22nd Senate District

2011 GOP Senate Candidate Questionnaire

These questions were asked via email on May 3, 2011 between J.R. Hoeft and Mr. Rhode

So, why the state senate? Why now?

I started becoming involved with grassroots Republican politics after my time in the Marine Corps and finishing my education. After spending several years trying to ensure we elect the good people to office, I decided that if I really felt strongly about government and politics, I needed to be willing to run myself. It's Burke's philosophy in a slightly modified form - all that is necessary for government to go astray is for good people to sit on the sidelines.

If you are not the nominee, will you support the nominee?

Yes.

What are your views on the Tea Party?

I fully agree with their views on fiscal responsibility and ensuring government adheres to its constitutional limitations. The Tea Party acts as a healthy check on the Republican Party which engaged in excessive spending in the early 2000s. Much of that spending excess was because government strayed beyond its constitutional limitations.

What bills really caught your attention this past session? Which senator and on what bills are you most looking forward to working on?

The bill to regulate abortion clinics on the same level as hospitals was one I followed closely. I am pro-life, and that bill was a step in the right direction.

Your first plank is to reduce the size and scope of government - what areas in the state budget will you cut or eliminate?

Government should focus on its core responsibilities: public safety, education and infrastructure. Entitlement programs are the biggest threat to budgetary sustainability because they grow inexorably. Expansion is always politically easy, and reduction politically difficult, if not impossible. The General Assembly needs to take a hard look at all state entitlement programs, particularly Medicaid.

If you knew you were going to win the party's nomination and the general election, what's the first bit of legislation you'd start working on?

Part of this campaign is going to be listening to the people of the 22nd Senate District and trying to determine what they need most. This district is obviously new, covers a vast expanse of territory - 9 localities - and touches three metro areas. Currently, my priority will be to work on bills to bring economic development to the district. Part of that will be ensuring the necessary infrastructure is in place to create jobs.

The state is actually starting to collect more revenues than what it spends. What should it do with that surplus?

Ensure core responsibilities like public safety are adequately funded, and then return the surplus to the taxpayers.

Do you think a citizen legislature is antiquated, given the complexity of the problems we face? Should we have a full-time legislature? Will you remain with the Commonwealth's Attorney office as a legislator?

No, Virginia is consistently one of the best managed states in the country and while I understand the arguments, I can't help but think: if it's not broke, don't fix it.

I will remain with the Commonwealth's Attorney's office at least initially. My priority will be my Senate duties, so if the two conflict in any way, I'll look for a new day job.

What about the governor? Do you think they should be elected for two terms?

No, for the same reasons as above.

Localities feel stressed by mandates placed upon them by the state - how do you feel about the Dillon Rule and do you think localities should have more control?

Government closest to the people governs best. While Virginia has managed to become and remain a wonderful state under the Dillon's Rule (the only remaining state I believe), it is probably time to start considering some changes. The Dillon's Rule becomes more and more difficult to maintain as the state grows, particularly in areas like Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads because it inhibits creative solutions to new problems.