

Virginia Probation and Parole Association
 829 Oliver Hill Way
 Richmond, Virginia 23219
www.govppa.org

Toss Up: Virginia Elections 2005

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Richmond - The Gubernatorial race is about to move into the home stretch, and the candidates have whips in hand for what appears to be a very close election. Since June, pollsters have repeatedly stated that the race is too close to call. Recently, the Association President wrote to each of the Gubernatorial Candidates and the two candidates for Attorney General and posed this question: Why should Probation Officers and employees of Community Corrections vote for you in the upcoming election?

The candidates were told that their responses would be published in *The Journal*. All of the candidates for Governor responded. Creigh Deeds, the Democratic candidate for Attorney General also responded. Bob McDonnell, the Republican candidate for Attorney General, however, failed to provide a respond to multiple requests.

The Association, of course, does not take any position on any candidates, but encourages members to vote and to consider the following unexpurgated letters provided by the candidates.

Tim Kaine, Democratic Candidate for Governor Writes:

Dear Ms. Tarr,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts with you and the membership of the Virginia Probation and Parole Association on these important issues. In your letter of August 24, you ask, "Why should Community Corrections personnel consider voting for you in the upcoming election?"

I ask for your support, because I have a proven record of supporting law enforcement, ensuring that they have the tools they need to keep themselves and our community's safe and of fighting crime with comprehensive, innovative approaches as a Mayor and Lt. Governor.

When I became Mayor of Richmond, the city had the second-highest homicide rate in the country. I took on the toughest crime problem in the state and helped cut the city's homicide rate in half and the violent crime rate nearly in half. The Richmond example proves that strong leadership that supports local police and aggressively enforces existing laws through innovative programs like Project

"The Gubernatorial race is about to move into the home stretch and the candidates have whips in hand . . . "

Toss Up (Kaine Continued)

Exile can make a real difference in the fight against crime.

As Lieutenant Governor, I stood with Governor Warner to fight for budget reform so that we could invest in our top priorities, including public safety. As a result, I helped secure funds for competitive salaries for law enforcement ensuring that we were able to attract and keep needed personnel.

Budget reform included nearly \$2 million for 25 new probation officers, to ease staffing pressure and better serve the community. With this investment, we can maintain the current caseload of 72 cases per officer by the end of fiscal 2005. We also fought for \$2.4million for transitional facilities in Newport News, Roanoke and Harrisonburg. Additionally, budget reform provided nearly \$2 million for substance abuse treatment for over 2,000 offenders on probation or parole and nearly \$1.2 million for additional juvenile probation officers.

If the opponents of budget reform had had their way, we would not have been able to make any of these investments.

As Governor, I will continue to practice the fiscal discipline that allows us to make public safety a high priority. I will also focus on making the law enforcement profession more attractive, through enhanced retirement, compensation and health care benefits. I will take a comprehensive approach to fighting crime and also ensure that we listen to the needs and advice of law enforcement and place them in strategic positions in my Administration.

Thanks again for this opportunity. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you need more information on my campaign to Keep Virginia Moving Forward or visit my website at www.kaine2005.org.

Sincerely,

Tim Kaine

Jerry Kilgore, Republican Candidate for Governor Writes:

Dear VPPA Member:

I am writing to you to ask for your support of my campaign for Governor.

As a former state and federal prosecutor, Secretary of Public Safety and Attorney General, I have spent my entire career as part of the law enforcement community. I am the one candidate in this race who has been a part of, and a partner with, law enforcement. I will be an advocate for law enforcement and have the credibility, given my background, to work with you to ensure that you have the proper tools to carry out your duties.

As Secretary of Public Safety in the Allen Administration, resources for law enforcement increased by approximately 35 percent. I am committed to providing additional resources to law enforcement and making sure you are paid commensurate with the important job you perform. I view retirement benefits as an integral part of recruiting and retaining a quality law enforcement body, and we need to work to provide these incentives. Providing a competitive salary, along with substantial retirement and health benefits, allows for the recruitment and retention of the best and brightest officers. I will be a partner with you in advancing an increase in the retirement multiplier and expanding health care benefits for law enforcement personnel.

Please see *Toss Up* on page 3

Toss Up (Kilgore Continued)

As Governor, I plan to build on my career of working with the public safety community to make our streets and communities safer. Throughout my career, I have worked with law enforcement for effective solutions to our crime problems. As Secretary of Public Safety under then-Governor George Allen, I worked with you on abolishing parole, establishing truth-in-sentencing, reforming the juvenile justice system and expanding the DNA databank. As Attorney General, my work focused on combating gangs and domestic violence, cracking down on child pornographers, stiffening the penalties for the manufacturing of meth, and making sure we have anti-terrorism laws to make our communities more secure. As I have throughout my career, I will continue to work with law enforcement and you will always have a seat at the table so that we can best address the concerns in your community.

On issues important to public safety in Virginia, I stand with the VPPA. I believe that the current law giving the Governor of Virginia the responsibility and discretion of restoring civil rights to those convicted of a felony should be preserved, and, after considering the impact on victims, I will restore the rights to those individuals who I believe have demonstrated over a period of time that they are rehabilitated and prepared to take on the responsibility that accompanies our civil rights. Unlike my opponent, I support the use of the death penalty in Virginia, especially for those who murder law enforcement officers.

In my campaign for Governor, I have put forward an initiative to combat the growth of gangs in Virginia that will further eliminate false IDs, made it a capital offense to murder a witness, prohibit those with suspended sentences or probation from associating with gang members, allow civil lawsuits against gangs and expand the death penalty to include gang leaders who order killings, and promote treatment and anti-gang education programs. I have also proposed expanding the death penalty for gang leaders who order gang members to carry out murders. This legislation is even more necessary because of recent “green light” orders by gang leaders directing their members to kill police officers at will.

To deal with the all too silent crime of domestic violence, I have proposed implementing Jessi & Christina’s Law. This legislation, named after two sisters who were killed by their mother’s abuser, will require mandatory jail time for domestic abusers who violate protective orders, creating a separate criminal offense for committing domestic violence in the presence of a child, making it a crime to interfere with the operation of a domestic violence shelter with the intent to intimidate or harass and encouraging public-private partnerships in the workplace to combat domestic violence.

I want to personally thank you for all that you do to keep our streets and communities safe. I have always worked with you, and as Governor I will continue to work with you to enact honest reform in public safety. Whether it is crafting new laws to punish criminals or providing more resources to law enforcement, I will always seek your input. Working together, we will continue to make Virginia an even better and safer place to call home.

With kind, personal regards, I remain

Sincerely,

Jerry Kilgore

Toss Up (Continued)

Russ Potts, Independent Candidate for Governor Writes:

Dear Suzanne,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address the members of the Virginia Probation and Parole Association with regard to my candidacy for governor.

I am the only candidate that serves on the Senate Finance Committee's Public Safety Sub-Committee. I know firsthand, the day-to-day issues that face our law enforcement community.

Not once, have my opponents showed up for the Senate Finance Committee to support your issues. In fact, they have done nothing to support your cause.

Some people talk the talk, and some people walk the walk. I walk the walk.

I introduced legislation in 2004 to increase salaries for sheriff's deputies, and supported increases for the State Police. In 2005, I supported pay increases for across the board pay increases for state employees.

In 1999, I supported adding Adult Probation and Parole Officers to the Virginia Law Officer's Retirement System (VALORS).

I will continue to support the study of adding other members of the law enforcement community to the VALORS program.

My door has always been open to addressing the concerns of your membership. You are on the front lines in safeguarding the citizens of the Commonwealth. You have my utmost respect. As Governor, I will continue with that open door policy.

Your friend,

Russ Potts

Creigh Deeds, Democratic Candidate for Attorney General Writes:

The top priority of the next attorney general must be to keep Virginia safe and secure by continuing the progress of Gov. Warner. With his leadership, we formed a bipartisan coalition to reform our budget and make historic investments in public safety. I will continue to advocate for full funding of our law enforcement and public safety commitments. And, I will work with the General Assembly to pass my comprehensive security agenda, which among other things, improves our sex offender registry, brings a new approach to cracking down on home methamphetamine labs, and will bring more federal homeland security dollars to our ports in Hampton Roads. There's no way to measure the cost savings, or the benefit to all Virginians, of preventing crime. However, when it comes to investigating crimes and prosecuting criminals, there is not cost too high for protecting Virginia families.

Points of Interest

Many members have been inquiring about when the new VPPA Directory will be coming out. All of the information is presently being collected and it will be sent to print shortly. Hang in there members, we want to give you the most current and update information available.

Have you bought your raffle tickets???? VPPA is currently selling raffle tickets for a \$1,000 gift card to Best Buy. The drawing will be held on October 21, 2005 at the Conference. They are only \$1 each.....contact your representative or any board member to purchase yours today.

Don't forget about all of the VPPA merchandise available. There are shirts, pants, jackets, sweatshirts, koozie can holders and a lot more. Most recently, badge key rings are available for purchase. A listing of the merchandise available will be coming to the VPPA website soon. In the interim, if you want to show your support for the association, contact your representative or any board member for additional information.

The VPPA also recently had euro-style (or OBX style) windows stickers printed as a promotional item. They will be available at the upcoming conference. Although they were designed as a promotional tool, members are being encouraged to make a small donation (\$1.00 is suggested) to help cover the printing expenses.

Conference News

Have you made your hotel reservations and sent in your registration form? Time is running out as the Joint VPPA/VCA Training Conference is fast approaching. On October 19, 2005, the event will commence with the promise to provide useful training, great networking opportunities and as always a lot of fun and laughs. By day, you will have wonderful training workshops that will stimulate the intellect, and by night, you will have the hospitality suite, casino night and dancing to keep you entertained. The festivities will end on October 21, 2005 with some of our very own being honored at the Awards ceremony. Mark your calendars today. For an overview of the conference workshops and schedule visit our [event page](#).

President's Letter

We are applying some last minute touch up paint on the conference, and looking forward to seeing you there. I am confident it will be an exciting and significant training and social event. The 2006 conference will be held in Richmond and preliminary planning is in the works for the Capitol City Conference.

While we are looking forward to dining on stuffed mushrooms and scallops wrapped in bacon, I am reminded that workers are still sifting through the detritus in Louisiana and Mississippi. The dank putrid floodwaters have receded, and there is a temptation to let the memories of the needs left by Katrina's race along the Gulf Coast recede from our thoughts. And so I would remind you, as I remind myself, that tremendous need continues to exist, and we are told it will persist for a long time, even years. During the upcoming conference, the Association will be collecting donations that will be sent to the Red Cross. But I think it would be wonderful if the Association also undertook a special relief project. If you have some ideas along those lines and want to volunteer to work on such a project please contact Doug McDonald, our President Elect, or me.

Presidents Letter (Continued)

In the last issue of *The Journal*, I commended Peggy-Anne Miller for her commitment and perseverance toward obtaining formal recognition as a not for profit association. Again, I want to thank her and all the others who worked on this project. We are now - as many may already know - officially sanctioned as a non-profit organization. With our non-profit status now confirmed we are exempted from most, if not all federal, state, and local taxes, and we can devote a larger proportion of our resources to the goals of the organization.

One of those goes is to expand our scholarship and endowment work. If you go to the Scholarship page on our website and you will find one of our unfulfilled objectives is a fully funded endowment. <http://www.govppa.org/scholarships/default.htm> I would like to see the Association pursue this objective in the coming year. Our recently confirmed non-profit status will be an asset in pursuing this objective, because donors receive favorable tax benefits from their contributions.

There are no pre-existing standards for these endowments. It could be a large endowment that would be given to a family member of an Association member who is attending college – perhaps studying in a criminal justice field. It could be funding for a special field of education for an association member, something such as drug training, gang training, sex offender training, etc. The possibilities are unlimited. Please let me know if you have some ideas to share on this matter, or if you know of a potential endowment source.

Hope to see many of you at the conference in October!

Suzanne Tarr

The Soap Box:

Just Call Me PO

By D. Maurice Dean

I made my first appearance at a neighborhood civic association a few months ago, and instantly found myself in the tow of a charming septuagenarian with smoky blue hair. The self-appointed social facilitator moved me through the gathering and introduced me first by name and vocation. She made no mention that I was a Probation Officer, rather she grandly intoned, “He does research for the judges in the Richmond Circuit Court.” The introduction was her euphemistic take on a profession too pedestrian to articulate in the company of distinguished ladies sipping tea from little china cups with pinkies suspended in the air.

Perhaps I am to blame for the disingenuous introduction, because when we first met - after telling my introducer that I was a probation officer - I had told her that my responsibilities principally consisted of writing background investigations for the court. I enjoyed the humor of her introductions, but it prompted me to pause and ask myself why I felt it necessary to add anything to my job title. After all, I am proud to be a Probation Officer.

A lot has changed over the years. There was a time (and I will not pine for the return of that time lest I sound like an old man reminiscing for the good old days) when all Probation Officers were expected and required to be masters of many skills. Now, it seems, we might be leaving that behind. We have field workers, case managers, report writers, drug offender specialists, sex offender specialists, gang

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Soap (Continued)

Specialists, etc. I am not critical of this shift, although I have seen some get so caught up in their specialty that they seem to lose touch with the fact that we are all probation officers. With increased specialization, it takes more effort to build office teams and departmental camaraderie and cooperation.

When we all supervised cases, did field work, and wrote reports, things were easily quantified, and there seemed to be less interoffice tension and more cohesion. After all, if everyone had 100 cases and 4 reports a month, it was difficult to complain. But how do you quantify work and balance assignments in this time of specialization? Do four sex offender cases equal 1 murder case, 3 drug cases, 3 fraud cases, 2 burglary cases and 1 habitual offender case? How many home visits does it take to equal one anger management class?

Given the difficulty of comparing apples and oranges (or comparing pedophiles and drug addicts), there has been some inevitable discord, as folk questioned the fundamental fairness of work distribution. Now the Department has constructed a tier that threatens to fracture further our solidarity. The intent of the new system, at least from what I have been told, is to provide more money to probation officers. This is a laudable goal, but the initial effort seems flawed and it has created restlessness in our ranks.

My situation, while perhaps not typical, is at least illustrative of the situation many officers find under the new system. Approximately a decade ago, before computers were ubiquitous, my Chief asked me to be part of a pilot program to develop the PSI software system. It was a special distinction and privilege with the special benefit of being one of only four people in the office with a computer. I considered my work was valuable to the office and the department. Since that time, I have continued to focus on writing reports. But now, under the new tier system, I am told that the work valued by my Chief ten years ago, has been devalued and does not merit the same compensation as some of my peers.

There is no doubt in my mind that offices benefit from the special expertise of fellow officers. It is good to have officers who focus on special needs. But the benefit of a specialist has value only to the extent that it furthers the goals of the office (team). The new tier system has the potential for exacerbating a trend that has manifested itself all too often in Probation and Parole: call it elitism, separatism, isolationism, or any other antonym for teamwork. I have watched those who have been trained in special areas – either through department training or personally funded education – work hard to protect their turf. It is as if the specialist thinks, “If I tell you what I know about my specialty then you will know it too, and I will no longer be the specialist.”

Knowledge and education are the foundations of specialization. To have an effective team that knowledge must be conveyed and shared. But when knowledge is dispersed among the employees in a given work unit, the scarcity of the knowledge is reduced, and the value to the original possessor is diminished. Therefore, original possessors, rather than sharing and cooperating in a team effort, sometimes hoard knowledge, and this tendency, I suspect, will be more powerful when it is tied to income.

I do not believe that my resistance to this new system is rooted in the reflexive objection to change that psychologists tell us is a fundamental part of human nature. Rather, it is instinctual – a gut feeling if you will – a sense that the work we do cannot be easily keyed into a human calculus that some resource specialist pulls from his vinyl pocket protector. My instincts and my experience tell me that those in “value-added” positions and those with specialized knowledge are not always the most valuable or productive employees. There is really no such thing as Human Capital. Human Capital is not like a dollar. A dollar will get you 100 pennies every time. But there is only *Potential* Human Capital because of the human factor. All of us can cite examples from our experiences of Surveillance Officers working harder and longer than Probation

Soap (Continued)

Officers, or Probation Officers working harder and contributing more than Deputies or Seniors, and even of a Deputy who has greater daily value in our work than a Chief. We have had officers working in specialized areas for years, and I have not yet seen where these specialists (and I include myself in that if Presentence Report writing is a specialty) have any more value to the probation team than the non-specialist. The most valuable employees cannot be defined solely by education or title; they are defined by character, work ethic, integrity, and a host of other qualities that cannot be keyed into the calculator.

It seems to me that fragmenting the ranks of probation officers by saying to one Officer that his work has a greater monetary benefit to the organization than the work of another Officer is counterproductive to team building. I personally believe that Community Corrections can get the best return on its investment, if it works toward pay enhancements that benefit all officers, and if it invests in developing and supporting team work. Conversely, when management concocts divisive compensation plans, the expenditures are counterproductive and deleterious to the overall objectives of Community Corrections.

Perhaps, this letter sounds like a tirade against the new tier structure, but that is not the intent. Rather, it is to raise questions about the plan. I think the new tier structure is problematic. I understand that the plan continues under management scrutiny, and until the plan is finalized, I will give management the benefit of the doubt that a fair and equitable plan will emerge. In the meantime, I will offer this unsolicited suggestion to the leaders in Community Corrections: Next time you have money to spend, perhaps it would be prudent to spend it training managers (at all levels) on how effectively to promote team work, instead of introducing pay scales that are divisive.

While management can promote team play and unity, I suppose that it is not ultimately the responsibility of management at any level – statewide, regionally, or locally to create unity. Unity begins with each of us and it springs from our sense of personal and professional pride. It is recognition that our task is service – service to our clients and to our community, and not to ourselves. And when we specialize, it should be to improve our abilities to serve, not for self-aggrandizement. None of us entered this profession (at least none that I know of) thinking it would bring us fame or riches. Of course we want to be compensated fairly, and we should continue to work for pay enhancements for all probation officers. But in the end, our work is a service, and it is good for us to remember that we serve together and that we are all probation officers.

The next time I tell someone where I work and what I do, I will not be saying that I am a Tier 1, 2, or 3 Probation Officer, or that I am a Probation Officer specializing in writing reports for the Court. It is enough to say, I am a probation Officer because I am proud to be a PO.

The Back Page

Michael Marion Wins Award

Michael Marion, Senior Probation and Parole Officer in District #20, was named as Probation and Parole Officer of the Year by the Southern States Correctional Association. He was presented with the award on July 19, 2005 at the Association's annual conference held this year in Ponte Verdra, Florida. Marion was nominated for this award after being named as the Virginia Probation and Parole Officer of Year in May 2004.

Marion began working for the Virginia Department of Corrections in 1991 as a Probation and Parole Officer. Currently, he is a Senior Probation and Parole Officer in District #20 and serves as a Sex Offender Specialist. In addition to his duties as a Probation and Parole Officer, Marion is active with the Sex Offender Program Action Committee, co-facilitates sex offender treatment groups, is involved with the Virginia Probation and Parole Association and is active with citizen groups in his community.

Congratulations to Michael Marion on this award and all of his hard work.