



County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County

April 4, 2011

Electoral Board

Sent via electronic mail

Seth T. Stark
Chairman

Honorable Robert F. McDonnell, Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia
Honorable Charles J. Colgan, President pro tempore, Senate of Virginia

Hans A. von Spakovsky
Vice Chairman

Honorable William J. Howell, Speaker, Virginia House of Delegates

Carol Ann Coryell
Secretary

Dear Governor McDonnell, President Colgan, and Speaker Howell:

General Registrar

Edgardo Cortés

Upon reviewing the proposed House and Senate redistricting plans, the members of the Fairfax County Electoral Board on a bipartisan basis unanimously express our deep concern over the unprecedented number of split precincts present in these proposals. We believe that all of you share our desire to minimize the disruption caused to voters by new legislative district lines. From our experience, split precincts only increase the confusion caused to voters, as well as impose increased and unnecessary financial burdens on local jurisdictions such as Fairfax County that process voter registration and administer elections. We urge you, in the strongest possible terms, to reduce the number of precincts split by state legislative and congressional districts in the final adopted redistricting plans.

Split precincts will confuse voters who are already dealing with the impact of new district boundary lines and new legislative representatives. Voters will be perplexed as to why their neighbors are voting for different representatives despite being part of the same neighborhood and the same community. Also, voters will have less confidence that they are voting in the correct precinct, or are being given the correct ballot, when they arrive at their polling place on Election Day and see their neighbors waiting in a separate line and receiving a different ballot.

In addition to our primary concern over the potential chaos and voter confusion in the polling place, split precincts place an increased and undue financial burden on localities. Administering a split precinct requires purchasing additional voting equipment, materials, and signage; printing additional ballot styles; and recruiting additional election officers to administer elections and ensure voters receive the correct ballot. This comes at a time when it seems to become more difficult every year to recruit enough qualified citizens to work in the polls as election officers.

There is no question that split precincts impose an unfunded mandate on local budgets that are already strained through several rounds of budget cuts. Both the state government and local governments all over the Commonwealth of Virginia have been

Office of Elections

12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 323

Fairfax, Virginia 22035-0081

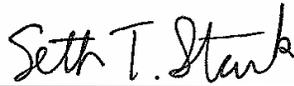
Phone: (703) 222-0776 FAX: (703) 324-2205 TTY: 711 (Virginia Relay)

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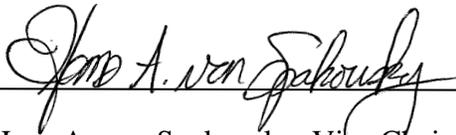
working extremely hard to balance their budgets in a time of economic austerity, and the additional costs of split precincts are an unnecessary and easily avoided expense.

Splitting an existing precinct between two legislative districts is an option that should only be implemented as a last resort. We urge the General Assembly in the strongest possible terms to minimize as much as possible the splitting of existing precinct boundaries in the final redistricting plans adopted by the legislature. We thank you for your consideration of this matter.

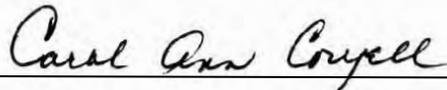
Sincerely,



Seth T. Stark, Chairman



Hans A. von Spakovsky, Vice Chairman



Carol Ann Coryell, Secretary

CC:

Honorable Janet D. Howell, Chairman, Senate Privileges and Elections Committee
Honorable Mark L. Cole, Chairman, House Privileges and Elections Committee
Fairfax County Delegation to the General Assembly
Honorable Charles Judd, Chairman, Virginia State Board of Elections
Members, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Lawrence Haake, President, Voter Registrar's Association of Virginia
Renee Andrews, President, Virginia Electoral Board Association

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