

News**Baskerville to Run for Lt. Gov.
Richmonder to officially announce in late February****Amy Biegelsen***Richmond.com*

Tuesday, January 25, 2005

Capital News Service -- The website's up and running, but Del. Viola O. Baskerville (D-Richmond) won't be able to officially announce her candidacy in the democratic primary for lieutenant governor until after the legislative session ends February 26.

State law prohibits elected officers from fundraising during the legislative session. Some speculate that Attorney General Jerry Kilgore left his post before the term was up to avoid the same law and begin raising money for his likely gubernatorial campaign.

Until March, Baskerville is focusing on nailing down her campaign finance report, hiring a campaign manager, and build up a campaign resume by passing her own legislation in the assembly. Baskerville's bills address issues of small businesses, medical malpractice reform, and military families.

First and foremost, Baskerville says she's working to "level the playing field for small minority and women owned business." According to Baskerville these businesses make up 98 percent of all businesses in Virginia but receive only two percent of monies from the state procurement office in charge of granting contracts on behalf of the state.

Among her proposals aimed at helping small businesses, Baskerville points out that whether a small firm is seeking a contract to supply staples or a large corporation wants to build and furnish a new office building, all businesses seeking state contracts pay a flat fee of \$500 just to apply.

"The fees that they're paying is to manage and support the whole filing system," says Baskerville. "We need to determine what the states needs in money's and have a sliding scales fee that's fair."

Baskerville is also supporting legislation that would provide a "fair and progressive way to make sure that medical malpractice cases are referred to mediation rather than automatically going to trial." She argues that with escalating malpractice costs doctors and patients--who are also consumers--lose out. Mediation would let the parties sit down face to face, provide a forum for people to apologize for honest mistake, "and keep my husband's malpractice insurance down!" jokes Baskerville whose husband is a doctor.

Finally, Baskerville wants to make sure that all active duty military and dependents receive in state tuition. "Military families are some of the lowest paid families," says Baskerville. "They sacrifice a tremendous amount in moving about and defending our country."



Amy Biegelsen/Richmond.com

Viola Baskerville plans to make a run for Lt. Gov.

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Military spouses who move with their enlisted spouses give up their jobs and should at least be able to go to the Virginia employment office and receive compensation. She would also like to see an infrastructure fund that the government can administer that would pay for projects—like power line installations, for example—

That would benefit both the locality and military post.

Capital News Service is staffed by students from the School of Mass Communications at Virginia Commonwealth University. They provide state government news coverage for news outlets throughout Virginia including Richmond.com.

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