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Proposed bill would devastate athletics

By Carl Lukat
 01/24/2006

A state House of Delegates bill limiting hours for community sports events would be “an absolute nightmare” for a flourishing Loudoun sports scene.

The Home Serenity and Tranquility Act, sponsored by Del. Robert Hull (D-Fairfax), would prohibit events at community athletic fields and swimming pools on Sundays, and prior to 8 a.m. and after 6 p.m. on other days, without unanimous written consent of homeowners within 65 yards of the sports facility.

Hull said he does not necessarily support the proposal but put it forth at the request of a constituent.

Loudoun Soccer wants opponents to contact legislators. Details at <http://www.lysa.net>

Loudoun Soccer, which has grown to more than 15,000 registrants a year, is among the youth and adult sports groups that would suffer from the bill.

“It would be an absolute nightmare. This would affect every sport for kids and adults,” said Loudoun Soccer administrator Sharon Wells.

Wells also noted the bill would work against efforts to involve youngsters in an organized activity on weeknights and weekends.

“It would have a tremendous affect on our service,” said Wells. “We have so many programs that it would impact.”

The bill's biggest impact on high school athletics would be the 6 p.m. weekday curfew.

“With our current schedule, we would not be able to field athletics,” said Ron Petrella, Heritage High School athletic director. “The only way would be to cut into student-athletes class time, and I don't think that is what we want to do.”

Del. Hull acknowledged most of the bill was “unworkable,” but said the resident who suggested the bill raises valid questions about a homeowner's right to peaceful enjoyment of his property and the demands placed on public parks.

The bill has been referred to the House Courts of Justice Committee, chaired by Del. Dave Albo (R-Fairfax). Albo has indicated to local officials that he does not expect the bill to advance out of committee.

Contributing: Times-Mirror reporter Dominic Bonaiuto and Jack Lavelle of the Capital News Service.

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Kaine event tires Johnson

Staff
01/17/2006

WILLIAMSBURG -- "We will always remember that what government spends is not its money. It is your money."

The words resonated well to Loudoun County people who sat through a cold, windswept rain Saturday for the 15-minute inaugural address of Timothy M. Kaine as Virginia's 70th governor .

It was the first inauguration of a Virginia governor held here since Thomas Jefferson was sworn in 227 years ago, when Williamsburg was the first capitol of the then-British colony. This year, the capitol building is being refurbished.

Co-chair for the Kaine inauguration was Middleburg businesswoman Sheila Johnson, who said she was "so beat up from working since dawn" on the festivities that she had to miss the inaugural concert she had helped organize the night before. The event at The College of William & Mary featured the Beach Boys.

-- Arthur W. Arundel

Marriage vote

The House voted 76-20 Monday to let voters decide Nov. 7 on whether marriage is exclusively between a man and a woman.

The Senate Privileges and Elections Committee now has the measure.

Loudoun delegation: For – Joe May (R-western Loudoun), Bob Marshall (R-south-central Loudoun), Tom Rust (R-Sterling); against – David Poisson (D-eastern Loudoun) and Chuck Caputo (D-Dulles).

Reproductive limit

The House Health Welfare and Institutions Committee rejected Tuesday a bill by Del. Bob Marshall (R-southwestern Loudoun) to prohibit unmarried women from using artificial

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means to become pregnant.

The tripping point: The bill would prohibit a soldier's widow from using his frozen sperm to become pregnant.

Town hall meetings

Loudoun's newest state delegates will convene town hall meetings this month.

Del. David Poisson (D-eastern Loudoun) will meet constituents on Jan. 28, 10 a.m., at Leisure World, Lansdowne; and 1 p.m., at Potomac Falls High School Auditorium, Sterling.

Del. Chuck Caputo (D-Dulles) will host a meeting Jan. 28, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., in the Richard Frank Room at Sully District Government Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd., in Chantilly.

Feed-tax vote

RICHMOND -- If you are 18 or older and own a horse in Virginia, you can vote this spring on a proposed tax to support promotion of the state's horse industry.

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is holding the referendum, which would authorize a tax of \$3 per ton on horse feed sold or imported for sale in Virginia. That works out to less than 1 cent on a 50-pound bag of horse feed.

The Virginia Horse Industry Board would use the money to conduct programs in market development, education, publicity, research and promotion of Virginia's equine industry.

To be eligible to vote on the measure, horse owners must file a notarized affidavit with the director of the agriculture department's marketing division by 5 p.m. April 14.

Find the form at <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov> (click "Horse Feed Checkoff Form") or by calling 1-804-786-3952.

After sending in the affidavit, you will receive a voting form that must be postmarked or delivered by 5 p.m. May 26.

-- Chris Williams, Capital News Service

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State news of interest

Kaine: Start 'em earlier

From Capital News Service and staff reports
01/24/2006

Gov. Tim Kaine (D) wants to open classrooms to children as young as 4 years old.

"We know that most of a child's brain develops before the age of 5," the new governor told the General Assembly last week. "But nearly all of the money we now spend on education is spent after that point."

Kaine created a 17-member council of parents, educators, legislators and pre-kindergarten providers. "I will charge them with developing guidelines for enrolling more Virginia 4-year-olds in high-quality pre-K programs," Kaine said.

Kaine called on legislators to pass a \$57 million package of early childhood initiatives proposed last month by his predecessor, Mark Warner.

-- Pat Kane, CNS

Minimum wage: Two bills were introduced in the General Assembly to raise the state's minimum wage above the federal mandated level.

Both House Bill 539, introduced by Del. Vincent Callahan (R-Fairfax), and Senate Bill 480, by Sen. Charles J. Colgan (D-Manassas), propose increases to Virginia's minimum wage of \$1 per year over the next three years.

The federal rate is now \$5.15 per hour. Approximately 42,000 Virginians in the workforce of 3.6 million earn minimum wage.

-- Donna-Jo Webster, CNS

Lee birthday

A celebration on Jan. 19, 2007, at Stratford Hall will launch a year of events marking the 200th birthday of Gen. Robert E. Lee.

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The Lee Memorial Commission plans to compile a brochure for statewide distribution promoting the various events and will launch a Web site to plan and coordinate additional activities and events.

A commemorative Lee print will be commissioned for sale in honor of the celebration. A lesser-known image of Lee is likely to be used, because the commission hopes to educate the public about unknown facets of Lee's life.

-- Donna-Jo Webster, CNS

Guard pay

Soldiers can pick up \$2,000 by re-enlisting in the Virginia National Guard under a proposal Gov. Tim Kaine (D) submitted to the legislature.

The measure would cost \$1.4 million in fiscal year 2006. This state bonus is in addition to federal incentives.

Driving the offer: The Virginia Guard has 6,894 soldiers. It's authorized for 7,555. The Guard is losing 100 members a month.

Follow the legislature online at <http://leg1.state.va.us/>

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