



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

HOUSE OF DELEGATES

RICHMOND

**WILLIAM J. HOWELL**  
SPEAKER

TWENTY-EIGHTH DISTRICT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

January 13, 2010

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## **William J. Howell Re-Elected Speaker of the House at Opening of 2010 General Assembly Session**

**RICHMOND, VA** – Following his unanimous re-election to his fourth term as Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates, Speaker William J. Howell (R-Stafford) today gratefully accepted the honor and charge of continuing to lead the nearly 400-year old Virginia House of Delegates, which is the oldest continuously elected legislative body in the New World. Immediately after his re-election, the Speaker delivered brief remarks on the opening day of the 2010 General Assembly Session.

Speaker Howell expressed his appreciation at being re-elected as the leader of the House of Delegates and welcomed the 20 new delegates who joined returning members in being sworn into office today. He noted the negative effects the national economic recession have wrought on Virginia families and businesses, in turn creating enormous budgetary challenges for the Commonwealth. Despite those deep financial challenges, Speaker Howell also noted the many positive opportunities that exist to advance practical solutions that will promote economic prosperity and improve the quality of life for all Virginians.

The following are the prepared remarks delivered by Speaker Howell from the dais on the House floor:

“Thank you, members and friends of the House of Delegates. I gratefully accept your honor and the charge of continuing to lead this distinguished body in which we all are so proud to serve.

“Last year, the people of our great Commonwealth bestowed their trust in each of us as their representatives in government. Today, you have just renewed your trust in me as Speaker. Now as always, I am sincerely humbled by the opportunity we share to serve our citizens and the One who created us.

“As Speaker, I remain committed to performing my duties with respect for this historic institution and each of you as individuals and by ensuring fairness in the vital conduct of the people’s business. And, all the while, let us be mindful that every single delegate here assembled has been blessed by God to live in a free society and that the noble purpose to which we aspire is larger than ourselves.

“Today, we just swore in 20 new House members. That is a near record number of new faces and fresh vitality. It also says to me that electoral politics in Virginia – and the choices it affords us – is healthy, robust and very responsive.

“On behalf of the entire House – Democrats, Independents and Republicans – I warmly welcome our many new colleagues.

“It is a privilege to serve the people of Virginia in this the oldest continuously elected legislative body in the New World. No moment in the nearly 400 years of history that preceded today is exactly the same. I cannot tell you what awaits in your time in office. Nevertheless, I encourage you, as leaders, to seek out and embrace each opportunity that presents itself.

“To be successful, we must work with all members – be they new or returning delegates, Democrats, Republicans or Independents – to meet head on the challenges facing Virginians and create the new opportunities they desire and deserve.

“As with our 20 new delegates, soon we will be welcoming a new Governor. He has a lot of legislative experience gleaned from his 14 years of impressive service in this very chamber. Like so many, I know our new Governor not only as a friend but also as a leader with the utmost integrity, a sharp intellect and an innovative spirit that will serve him and our Commonwealth well.

“I look forward to working with Governor-Elect Bob McDonnell to pursue practical solutions that deliver real results in the areas that will directly impact and improve the quality of life for all Virginians.

“As with previous governors, Democratic and Republican, the House has been a strong advocate for the principles and policies important to people from all walks of life. Accordingly, we pledge to remain proactive partners who will continue advancing policy solutions – many of which already have helped lead our Commonwealth for over 10 years to continued recognition as a national leader on so many fronts.

“With a new, capable leader on the Third Floor, I am confident we will often find the common ground necessary to create more hope, jobs and opportunities for Virginians. That will be even more vital this Session given the tremendous tasks at hand.

“It is no secret that the recession has and continues to cast a tremendous pall over our Commonwealth. People across Virginia are struggling. The distress caused by the current fiscal crisis – and the lack of jobs and opportunity – is real, personal and painful.

“Because of the weak economy and decline in state revenues, the General Assembly and Governor face the most difficult budget situation confronted by Virginia’s leaders in at least 70 years. Yet, we still have an important obligation to produce a balanced state budget.

“In sharp contrast to and unlike those up in Washington, we cannot simply print more money or just deficit spend.

“As Virginia confronts stark budget realities and forecasts of lackluster economic growth for years to come, we absolutely must focus like a laser on job creation and economic growth. That requires us to promote entrepreneurship and investment. It means holding down taxes and reducing costly regulations. And, it means making smart, targeted investments in areas that have been proven to produce positive economic return.

“We can balance the budget and lay the foundations for renewed economic prosperity if we resolve to work together, think innovatively about how best government should be structured and make the hard but necessary choices to bring state government spending in line with limited taxpayer revenues.

“The challenges before us this Session are real.

“But, so are the opportunities.

“There are opportunities to make state government simpler, smarter, more efficient and more fiscally responsible.

“There are opportunities to promote job creation, entrepreneurial investment and small business growth that will, in turn, help spur Virginia’s economic recovery.

“There are opportunities to increase the quality and number of educational choices we offer parents and students.

“There are opportunities to increase mobility and improve daily commutes.

“There also are opportunities to communicate the fact that states ought to have more parity with the federal government as the U.S. Constitution clearly intended.

“As delegates, we all know that leadership is hard work. But there will be plenty of time and other venues to discuss and debate how best to take advantage of these and other opportunities.

“So, I will close by sharing an insight by one of my heroes that offers a powerful admonition – one that we would all be wise to heed.

“Winston Churchill once declared that ‘the pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity, while the optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty.’

“On this first day and throughout the 2010 Session, let each of us approach our tasks as true optimists – seeking opportunities to work for the common good and to improve the quality of life for all Virginians that we serve.”

William J. Howell is the 54<sup>th</sup> Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates and has led the 100-member chamber since 2003. First elected a delegate in 1987, he represents the 28<sup>th</sup> House District, which includes parts of Stafford County and the City of Fredericksburg. As Speaker, Howell performs a number of duties, including assigning all bills to House committees and appointing the chairs and members of each of the 14 standing committees of the House. More information about Speaker Howell is available on his website – [www.williamjhowell.org](http://www.williamjhowell.org).

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