

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

HOUSE OF DELEGATES

RICHMOND



WILLIAM J. HOWELL
SPEAKER

TWENTY-EIGHTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
RULES (CHAIRMAN)

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Statement of Speaker William J. Howell on the Unveiling of 2012 Joint Republican Legislative Agenda

RICHMOND, VA – Following today’s Joint Republican Agenda press conference, Virginia House of Delegates Speaker William J. Howell (R-Stafford) issued the following statement:

“Building upon the successful 2011 Joint Republican Agenda, I was proud to stand with my fellow Republican leaders today and to announce our ambitious legislative agenda for the 2012 General Assembly Session. Our Caucus will continue to press for efficient government, common-sense reforms and economic development alongside Governor Bob McDonnell, Lieutenant Governor Bill Bolling, Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli and Senate Republican Leader Tommy Norment,” said Howell.

The Joint Republican Agenda is centered on the key principles of effective government, fiscal responsibility and promotion of education throughout the Commonwealth. Specific joint initiatives include efficiency-minded government restructuring proposals, increased access to capital, strengthened Right to Work laws and improved access and variety in K-12 public education. Many of the critical initiatives the Joint Republican Leadership are pursuing – including Project Labor Agreement legislation and Educational Improvement Scholarships - will be carried by members of the House Republican Caucus.

“Educational Improvement Scholarships in Virginia would dramatically improve education for thousands of children, save the state millions of dollars and buoy the public school system. All three of these facts have been documented, via numerous independent studies and Florida’s model ten-year existing scholarship tax credit program,” said Del. Jimmie Massie (R-Henrico), who will carry legislation promoting private-sector funded scholarship programs, which increase educational access for children, particularly those underserved areas. “I look forward to working with Governor McDonnell and the Senate towards providing Virginia’s families with this very important educational choice during the 2012 General Assembly session,” said Massie.

Also building off of last year’s successes, including Virginia being named the “*Best State for Business*” by CNBC, the House Republican Caucus will offer various proposals to increase strategic economic investments and further protect Virginia’s Right to Work climate. Such proposals include

House Bill 33 which forbids the use of so-called Project Labor Agreements, which impose union rates and rules on construction projects for state and local government contracts.

“House Bill 33 is common-sense legislation that will stretch our tax dollars on infrastructure projects and will guarantee that free enterprise and full and open competition will determine how public construction contracts are awarded,” said Del. Barbara Comstock (R-Fairfax) patron of the anti-PLA measure.

“Mandated project labor agreements have been estimated to raise costs by 10 to 20 percent or more with the most egregious example being Boston’s ‘Big Dig’ debacle. Legislation similar to House Bill 33 already has been passed in 11 states as diverse as Louisiana and Michigan. This will ensure that the 96 percent of the Virginia private construction workforce who choose not to join a labor union have a fair opportunity to compete for projects funded with our tax dollars,” said Comstock.

“The Joint Republican Leadership has a great opportunity to come together and promote legislation that flows from guiding Republican values – innovation in business, efficiency in government and improvement in our schools. I look forward to working with all of my colleagues in the General Assembly and Executive Branch as we tackle these important issues together,” said Howell.

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