

EDITORIAL PAGE

ENDORSEMENTS

Split ticket

After conversations with candidates, careful consideration, and much deliberate discussion, The Times-Dispatch Editorial Board is pleased to share ideas about the Nov. 6 elections. We focus on the four contests most important to central Virginia: the races for U.S. Senate and three Richmond-area seats in the House of Representatives.



THE SENATE

In a world gone nearly mad, Sen. **Tim Kaine** remains a voice of reason. He's not always right but he is — except when running for vice president — almost always knowledgeable, persuasive, and respectful. He listens, a skill not mastered by all of his colleagues in the Senate. Kaine is a fierce partisan — which is just fine and frequently a sign of deeply held principles — whose temperament could make him a leader if Washington ever decides to conduct an experiment in expanding bipartisan compromise.



ALEXA WELCH EDLUND/TIMES-DISPATCH
Sen. Tim Kaine campaigned in Richmond this spring.

The senator is a natural-born legislator who seems to revel in the essential details of public policy creation. He is conversant in the art of the pretty good deal. We'd like to see him deploy his exceptionalism more aggressively in pursuit of a less imperfect union, especially in Congress. He's displayed the necessary skills in his dogged pursuit of reforms to the most important process conducted by any national government — deciding when and if the country should go to war.

Kaine has served for nearly a quarter of a century as a Richmond city councilman and mayor, as lieutenant governor and governor, and since 2013 as a United States senator. We are happy to endorse his re-election. He has earned the trust of his constituents.



FIRST DISTRICT

When Rep. **Rob Wittman** went to Washington in 2007, he was only two years removed from his tenure on the Westmoreland County Board of Supervisors. Amiable and able, Wittman appeared almost too affable to tangle with the hard cases that populate Congress. But he has more than held his own. From his seats on the House Armed Services and Natural Resources committees, he has developed the expertise to represent the interests of his eastern Virginia district famed for its waterways and rural beauty. Wittman, who drives almost every night from the Capitol to his home on the Northern Neck, is the ideal incumbent: skilled and informed, yet unsullied by the cynicism that infects too many of his colleagues. We enthusiastically endorse his re-election.

We also offer congratulations to challenger Vangie Williams for running a civil, energetic campaign. Her positive approach is admirable.



FOURTH DISTRICT

We don't always agree with Rep. **Donald McEachin's** political positions, but we admire his legislative skills, which are refined, and his commitment to his constituents, which is beyond question. In his 17 years in the General Assembly, he emerged as a leader always attuned to the needs and struggles of the least among us. He is an advocate for those at risk — and an effective one. In his first term in the U.S. House, he has managed to help advance legislation that assists military spouses, intervened on behalf of residents suffering in substandard public housing, and sought bipartisan solutions to the food-desert challenge in many urban areas. McEachin is a talented and experienced legislator, and we heartily endorse his re-election.

His challenger, Ryan McAdams, is a different kind of Republican. A pastor who was once a social worker in Williamsburg, he is a passionate spokesman for expanding opportunity and freedom for all. He faces an uphill battle this year, but we hope he follows his calling to serve, perhaps by seeking a state or local office.



SEVENTH DISTRICT

You would never know it from the television ads, but Virginia's Seventh District is blessed with an abundance of able and impressive candidates. Libertarian Joe Walton is a former county supervisor who skillfully communicates his party's "socially inclusive, fiscally responsible" message. Democrat Abigail Spanberger has built an impressive record of service to her country in law enforcement and in the CIA. She speaks persuasively of her hopes for a more effective and bipartisan Congress. She appears to possess the skills necessary to advance that objective. Spanberger is a gifted candidate and would make an able congresswoman.

Rep. **Dave Brat** has not, during his two terms in Congress, always been associated with bipartisan efforts. He has, however, been one of the most principled members of the U.S. House — an energetic original thinker who's never afraid to speak truth to power. He brings much-needed economic sophistication and understanding to a national capital sorely deficient in both. He has been relentless in his efforts to educate constituents and colleagues about the rising national debt caused by too much federal spending. He was wise enough to grasp that faster growth will result from the Republican tax reform package he supported — and will be part of the long-term solution to America's budgetary woes. His economic expertise and judgment give Brat the edge in a race that was a close call — and we are pleased to endorse his re-election.

Richmond Times-Dispatch

VIRGINIA'S NEWS LEADER

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"Falling Springs Fog," (Falling Spring Falls, Covington), Yung-Han Chang

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Strong communities create strong schools

EDITOR, TIMES-DISPATCH:

As I read the editorial, "Chesterfield tries to be more like Richmond," I kept thinking of how proud I am to be a student in Chesterfield. In the first grade, I attended a school in Richmond and after transferring to Chesterfield, I saw a huge difference.

Recently, I read some statistics that demonstrated Chesterfield's success when it came to educating its students. Our graduation rate is 91 percent. Richmond's graduation rate is 75 percent. We're not far from each other, yet there is a vast difference between the two districts that needs to be addressed.

I hope to see Chesterfield's success continue and Richmond make the necessary changes to decrease the amount of drop-outs in its schools. Start with the students and get them engaged in their community, because a strong community will affect and contribute to a strong school.

ANNELY MEJIA,
RICHMOND.

Do any politicians still follow the Constitution?

EDITOR, TIMES-DISPATCH:

As we approach the elections, I am hearing the same from each of the candidates and their respective parties, which is essentially "vote for me (or us) because I am (or we are) better than the other guys."

What I find disturbing, is that neither side says, "vote for me because I believe in the importance of the Constitution, and I will honor my oath to uphold the Constitution."

You will never hear a candidate of either party say, "The Congress has not been given the power to do that."

To congressmen and -women, as well as most letter-writers, it seems that Congress' powers are unlimited. Reality is whatever the people want and Congress does, and it is not supported by the language of the Enumerated Powers.

These constitutional transgressions have been going on in earnest for more than 100 years. They've reached the point where they are the norm, and congressional members who follow the Constitution are the exception. The important question that

Contact us

We welcome expressions of all points of view. Letters should be no longer than 300 words and exclusive to THE TIMES-DISPATCH. Each submission must carry the writer's name (preferably a signature), full valid address and daytime phone number; each must appear over the writer's name. We cannot acknowledge submitted letters and will not publish more than one letter from the same writer in a 60-day period. Published letters may appear on our website. We reserve the right to edit for accuracy, brevity, clarity, legality and taste.

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300 E. Franklin St.
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CORRESPONDENT OF THE DAY

Teach students basic responsibility skills

EDITOR, TIMES-DISPATCH:

Your recent editorial, "Is it time for state to declare Richmond Public Schools a disaster area?" noted the problematic issues of student absenteeism and the fact that more white students are enrolled in gifted and advanced classes than students of color and from lower-income families. I would submit what underlies this is families living in poverty with accompanying low parent expectations.

RPS is full of dedicated professionals, but they cannot fix what's wrong at home. Traditionally, parents concentrated on teaching values and responsibility in the home; schools concentrated on teaching skills and imparting knowledge. Good schools are still the result of this partnership — the focus is on the future.

But for those mired in poverty, their focus is on surviving today. Living at a subsistence level takes precedence over everything, including getting children to school. Sad but true. What can be done about this cycle of poverty? How do we break the cycle? Parents

in poverty need help. Schools must become conduits of expectations and responsibility.

An especially thorny issue in schools with at-risk students is misbehavior. It's not just about fighting — it's about disrupting lessons, interaction with others, taking turns — in short, respecting others.

What can be done? How about starting in the elementary school to teach everyday responsibility skills. Active listening, taking responsibility for one's actions; problem-solving, and persistence. Students learn society's expectations for getting along and this also builds classroom community.

And if a child misbehaves and has to be removed, he is sent to a time out room that is not punishment — it's where he is listened to and coached to create a plan to make things right back in the classroom. He is expected to take responsibility for his behavior and his teacher must approve the plan.

The potential for this approach is huge. It would also reduce out-of-school suspensions and teacher turnover. It's about a future of hope, not disaster.

DAVID BURGESS,
CHESTERFIELD.

should concern all Americans, left or right, conservative or liberal, is: How long can America exist in this manner, which is essentially an ad hoc legal system where the constitutional limits on the government's power have essentially become an illusion?

Is it something to think about?

WILLIAM RYAN,
MIDLOTHIAN.

Please remember to stay civil this Election Day

EDITOR, TIMES-DISPATCH:

As we approach the final days of the 2018 elections, emotions are running high on both sides of the aisle. Television ads are more frequent and typically more passionate. Most folks are getting more and more cards in the mail and telephone calls during the dinner hour reminding them to get out and vote on November 6.

As chair of the Powhatan County Republican Committee, I am compelled to mention a problem we are experiencing in Powhatan. For many years there has been an agreement between the two major parties that "sign

Wars" are not to be conducted. That agreement has been breached this season. There have been several incidents of vandalism and theft, the last of which was on Anderson Highway in broad daylight.

Many of us who are involved in politics have experienced the changes in attitudes and behavior and have been calling for civility and respect. Unfortunately, that no longer seems to be the norm.

Our team has done an outstanding job of displaying Republican ticket signs on private property throughout the county. Our diligence has been so thorough that we no longer have any campaign signs left.

As a result, I personally had replacement signs made. The next time you see a non-conventional Republican campaign sign in Powhatan County, please keep in mind that your First Amendment rights (and all the others) are what's at stake this Election Day.

Vote for Dave Brat and Corey Stewart and keep your liberties and rights intact.

JEAN M. GANNON,
POWHATAN.

An invitation

On Tuesday, Nov. 13, the Richmond World Affairs Council is hosting "The North Korea Dilemma" presented by Col. Lawrence Wilkerson and Dr. Todd Sechser.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson is a distinguished adjunct professor of Government and Public Policy at William & Mary. He served as chief of staff to Secretary Colin Powell at the Department of State, and was the associate director of Policy Planning under Ambassador Richard Haass. He served 31 years in the U.S. Army.

Dr. Todd Sechser is a professor of politics at the University of Virginia, a professor of pub-

lic policy at the Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy, a senior fellow at the Miller Center of Public Affairs. He is the former Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and former John M. Olin National Security Fellow at Harvard University.

The Times-Dispatch is able to offer a limited number of tickets to our readers. The lecture will be held at the Jefferson Hotel and begins at 5:45 p.m. Guests should arrive by 5:30 p.m. For tickets, contact Miriam Hamilton at 804-934-9000 or programs@richmondworldaffairs.org. Be sure to mention The Times-Dispatch.