

WHRV-FM
2009 Virginia House of Delegates Candidate Questionnaire
Delegate Joe Bouchard

1. Specifically, what unique qualities and/or qualifications will you bring to the office you seek?

- As the Commanding Officer of Naval Station Norfolk, 2000-2003, I gained first-hand experience with the wide range of issues facing the communities in Hampton Roads, including transportation, education, public safety, housing, energy and the environment. Being C.O. of the world's largest naval base was like being mayor of a city of 65,000.
- I have been an active participant in regional efforts to bring new jobs to Hampton Roads for many years and understand the region's economy and economic development challenges. While C.O. of Naval Station Norfolk I helped the region win a \$20 million Department of Labor workforce development grant to assist military spouses coming to the region and military personnel leaving the Services find good jobs in Hampton Roads. I have supported Hampton Roads Economic Development Alliance efforts to attract new businesses to the region. I currently serve on the Hampton Roads Partnership's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee, which is drafting "Vision Hampton Roads" to guide regional economic development. In the General Assembly I have patroned bills to create new jobs in the port industry, high technology sector, and renewable energy field.
- As a veteran with 27 years active duty service, including two command tours and high level policy assignments in the Pentagon and White House, I fully understand the unique challenges faced by military families and veterans. While C.O. of Naval Station Norfolk I was responsible for providing vital services for military families and veterans, including health care, child care, and counseling services (including financial counseling). I worked closely with other Federal, state and local agencies that provide services for or impacting military families and veterans. In the General Assembly I have worked closely with the Virginia Guard Bureau, the Department of Veterans Services and the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations on issues affecting military families and veterans, and have patroned and co-patroned legislation to address their issues.

I could give many more detailed examples of my unique qualities and qualifications, but suffice it to say that I have a broad range of expertise and knowledge as a result of my Navy career, post-Navy employment, and extensive involvement in professional, business and community service organizations. I am a nationally recognized expert on national security, homeland security and emergency preparedness, and have made significant contributions in these areas here in Hampton Roads. I am also considered to be an expert and leader in the area of environmental policy and climate change, as evidenced by my service on Virginia's Climate Change Commission and the Virginia Beach Alternative Energy Task Force. In short, probably my most important unique quality and qualification is my broad experience itself, which makes me exceptionally well qualified to address the wide range of issues facing Virginia, Hampton Roads and the 83rd District.

2. What transportation changes or improvements do you advocate and how specifically would you pay for them?

Three measures are needed to alleviate traffic congestion in Hampton Roads: (1) improve transportation planning in Hampton Roads and the Commonwealth to ensure that available funds are spent where they are most needed and have greatest impact on improving transportation, as well as integrating transportation planning across all transportation modes to ensure that all viable transportation solutions are addressed in a unified, comprehensive plan; (2) end the in-fighting among the communities in Hampton Roads so that we can speak with one voice on our transportation needs and solutions; and (3) adopt a comprehensive transportation funding solution that contains broad-based revenue sources that spread the transportation funding burden as widely as possible across all sectors of the economy, while applying appropriate user fees, such as tolls and transit fares, on those who place greatest demand on the transportation system.

There isn't a silver bullet that will fix all of our transportation problems. We have to develop a bipartisan solution that incorporates the best ideas that are on the table. Three approaches to funding transportation have been debated in the last two General Assembly sessions: 1) increasing taxes and fees; 2) public-private partnerships funded by tolls; and 3) transferring general revenue funds from other accounts into transportation. The first two of these three approaches were explicitly included in the Hampton Roads 2030 Plan, which remains the only approved plan for our region today. All three of these approaches were encompassed within the scope of the 2007 transportation funding bill (HB 3202); but the General Assembly elected to delegate its taxing power to regional authorities, which the Virginia Supreme Court declared unconstitutional. Unfortunately, since then the debate on transportation funding has been polarized along party lines, precluding compromise solutions such as was achieved in 2007.

Most business organizations in Virginia have emphasized that revenue sources for transportation should be broad based, rather than focused on specific industries. I support that view. I believe that a combination of diverse revenue sources that spread the transportation funding burden as broadly as possible across all sectors of the economy is the most effective and sustainable solution. But achieving this requires a bipartisan compromise on transportation funding.

In 2007 I pledged to vote for any transportation funding bill that legitimately attempted to solve the transportation funding problem. I have been true to that pledge, voting for a bill that would have restored the HB 3202 approach to transportation funding in a constitutional manner, for a bill accelerating public-private partnerships funded by tolls, and for a bill that would have transferred \$1 billion from general revenues into transportation. I have been criticized for all three of these votes by advocates of individual funding approaches who reject the notion of compromise solutions for the common good.

I knew that none of these bills individually had a chance of being adopted by both houses of the General Assembly and knew that none of them alone offered the comprehensive funding solution that is needed. But we had to start somewhere on negotiating a compromise funding

solution that could pass both houses and any of those three bills offered an acceptable starting point. Unfortunately, there was no interest in such a compromise in the 2008 and 2009 sessions, and even the patrons of these bills portrayed them as unilateral solutions rather than as elements of a comprehensive, compromise solution.

I pledge to continue working toward a bipartisan compromise solution on transportation funding that contains broad-based revenue sources that spread the transportation funding burden as widely as possible across all sectors of the economy, while applying appropriate user fees, such as tolls, on those who place greatest demand on the transportation system.

3. Aside from transportation, what do you believe are two other important challenges facing the Commonwealth? Specifically, what responses do you propose and how will you pay for them?

Jobs and the Economy – I believe that we must work hard to revive the economy and create new jobs in Virginia and Hampton Roads.

Holding the line on taxes – In this economy, the last thing the people of Virginia need is higher taxes. I believe in tax cuts for those who need it, voting to cut property taxes and provide tax cuts for middle-class families and small businesses, and using targeted tax cuts to promote economic development, such as in the area of renewable energy.