

Robin Abbott, 93rd District

2009 Virginia House of Delegates Candidate Questionnaire:

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

As a working mother who often had to choose between medical care for my children and putting food on the table, I know firsthand what it is like to struggle in tough times. I am running to create good paying jobs by fixing our transportation mess and cutting taxes for the middle class. As a principled consumer rights advocate, I will bring new transparency and accountability to Richmond.

My parents instilled in me the values of hard work, family, community, and strong faith. At the age of ten, I started working multiple part time jobs, babysitting, cleaning homes, and washing cars, to help my family make ends meet.

Even though I was a top student throughout high school, my family could not afford to send me to college, so when I graduated from high-school I knew that I would have to work hard and strive to achieve my goals on my own. Later in life, I came down with a grave illness for several months, and during that time there was an outpouring of support from neighbors, friends, and even strangers who helped to take care of my family. These amazing members of my community waited at my house for my children when they got off the bus from school, to make sure they were fed and had someone to look after them. And these fine people made certain that while I was ill, my family would be protected from financial ruin. When I was lying in that hospital bed, I decided that I would give back to the community that had so selflessly supported my family and me. As well, I was determined to go to college to get my law degree to become an advocate for the mentally and physically challenged, as well as military families and the hard working people who could not defend themselves from those seeking to exploit them financially. I have dedicated my life and career to this endeavor.

As a military spouse and then as a single mother of three sons, one with severe mental and physical disabilities, I've seen the very real hardship that military families go through every day. As a consumer rights advocate, I have focused my time on military families and hard working families protecting them from predatory payday lenders and predatory auto dealers.

In the courtroom, I have had judges tell me, "Mrs. Abbott, if you do not like the law, go to Richmond and change it." And that is why I am running for the House of Delegates, because I believe that we need state government to work for all of us again.

As I walk door to door day after day campaigning in my district, I am constantly reminded of the real struggles that every family is facing, whether it is because they cannot find a job, or they are afraid of losing their homes, or they are frustrated by sitting in hours and hours in traffic. Just like those military families and hard working folks whom I have spent years fighting for, I want to go to Richmond to fight for the hard working families of Newport News and James City County.

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

Like most families in Hampton Roads, I have sat in hours of traffic taking my kids to school and going to work. Traffic and congestion keep us away from our families, make us less productive at work, and waste our hard-earned dollars. The gridlock on our roads threatens our overall quality of life and our potentially our safety. This is a crisis, and fixing transportation is an environmental imperative, an economic necessity, and vital to ensure homeland security. We have to bring people together to find new and innovative solutions to ease congestion. In Richmond I will work with colleagues of both parties to improve and expand affordable public transit including bus rapid transit and commuter rail. We must also work with our partners in the federal government to invest in high-speed rail from Hampton Roads to Richmond to Washington.

But political gridlock in Richmond has held us back, and instead of reliving the same old partisan battles, we need to think outside of the box. There are a number of creative solutions such as providing tax incentives for companies to allow their employees to work from home or telecommuting centers. Fundamentally, the only way that we will solve our transportation problem is by coming together, agreeing to a viable plan, and making execution of the plan a priority. We must make sure that Hampton Roads gets its fair share of funding for transportation projects, and we need to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse in state government.

And, if we make the critical investments in transportation to solve this crisis, it will be a driving force in our local economy, creating good-paying jobs and allowing businesses to expand. We have an opportunity here to generate new revenue from the economic growth that will come from a comprehensive transportation solution.

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?

This is the worst economy that I have seen in my lifetime, and as I walk door to door I hear the stories of families who have lost their jobs and who are struggling to make ends meet. My top priority in Richmond will be to create good jobs in Newport News and James City County by fully funding our children's education, fixing transportation, and by making Virginia a renewable energy leader in the future. In Richmond, I will fight to lower the tax burden on middle class families, and provide incentives to small business and new companies to create jobs right here in our community. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and we should do everything we can to make sure that they can hire new workers and provide good benefits. By creating new jobs and bringing new business to Virginia, we can generate revenue to pay for the critical investments that we need. I will fight to fully fund the Governor's Opportunity Fund, and increase other economic incentives to lure new businesses to Virginia.

I understand the sacrifices and struggles of families in our current down economy, I have lived them myself. As your State Delegate from the 93rd District, I will dedicate my public service to protecting their livelihoods, and expanding their opportunities.

Robin Abbott

Democratic Candidate for the House of Delegates VA 93rd District