

**RESOLUTIONS RECOMMENDED BY
THE 2008 8TH DISTRICT DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION
TEMPORARY RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE**

DATE: May 14, 2008

**(Resolutions Numbers Below are the Original Numbers
Assigned When the Resolution Was Filed)**

- 1. Resolution to End the United States Occupation of Iraq – submitted by S. Klassen – Approved April 23, 2008 and reconsidered and approved on May 12, 2008.**
- 2. A Fair and Balanced Energy Policy for the Commonwealth – submitted by R. Platt – Approved April 29, 2008**
- 3A. Repudiate Torture as an Instrument of U. S. Policy – submitted by S. Klassen – Approved with amendments on May 13, 2008**
- 5. Superdelegates to the National Democratic Convention – submitted by Dick Hobson (as adopted by the Alexandria Democratic Committee) – Approved April 29, 2008**
- 6. Health Care Resolution in Support of Federal Legislation – (HR676) – submitted by Howard Jennings – Approved April 29, 2008**
- 7. Restoring Ex-Felons’ Right to Vote – Richard McKee – Approved April 29, 2008**
- 8. Endorse the 21st Century GI Bill – S. Klassen – Approved April 29, 2008**
- 10. Undocumented Immigration to the United States – Jesse Fewell – Approved as amended on May 13, 2008**
- 13. Virginia Transportation Funding Resolution – Prepared at the Committee’s Request by Alfonso Lopez – Approved as amended on May 13, 2008**

TO: Delegates and Alternates Elected to the 8th Congressional District Democratic Convention to be Held on May 17, 2008 in Alexandria, Virginia

FROM: Dick Hobson, 8th District Convention Temporary Resolutions Committee Chair

CC: Susan Kellom, Margo Horner, Lynn Humphreys, Hazel Rigby, Dorothea Peters, Jerome Chapman, Courtney Dozier, Bryan Spoon, Stephen Bunn, Pixie Bell, Frank Leone, and Members of the 8th Congressional District Democratic Temporary Resolutions Committee

DATE: May 14, 2008

RE: Report of the 8th Congressional District Democratic Temporary Resolutions Committee

Attached hereto are the resolutions as shown on the attached list that are recommended to the Convention by the Temporary Resolutions Committee. Please bring your copy of this memorandum, the list and the proposed resolutions with you to the Convention. A limited number of copies hereof will be provided, but in order to save costs, we are transmitting these to you in advance electronically.

If you have any questions and need to contact me before the convention, my office number is 703-712-5437, my home telephone number is 703-370-1858.

I look forward to seeing you at the Convention.

Respectfully Submitted,

The 2008 8th Congressional District Democratic
Convention Temporary Resolutions Committee

Rosaura Aguerrebere
Steven T. Bunn
Wasim Entabi
Dick Hobson, Chair
Barbara Hyde
Sandra Klassen
Alfonso Lopez
Richard McKee
Marjorie Niehaus
Bob Platt
John Sullivan

END THE UNITED STATES OCCUPATION OF IRAQ

BACKGROUND

The Eighth Congressional District Democratic Convention supports with gratitude the brave men and women deployed in Iraq and honors the memory and service of those who have been wounded or lost their lives and their families.

The Bush administration's primary justifications for the invasion of Iraq; weapons of mass destruction and links to Al-Qaeda; have proven to be completely unfounded.

The invasion and the occupation of Iraq divert military reserve and National Guard forces that should be protecting and serving us at home; squander national treasure away from domestic needs such as education, health care, alternative energy development, and national security; contribute to staggering national deficits and debt; and threaten the rule of law and civil liberties at home.

The invasion and the occupation of Iraq increase oil prices and uncertainty in the global marketplace; and diminish our nation's credibility, prestige, and influence in the world.

The invasion and the occupation of Iraq violate international law and just-war criteria; strain international alliances that prevailed through two world wars and a cold war; undermine the foundations of international security established since WW II; destabilize the Middle East; fuel rather than deter worldwide terrorism; have undercut cooperative international intelligence gathering and law enforcement efforts against terrorism; establish a dangerous precedent for preemptive war condemned at Nuremberg and contrary to international law enshrined in Articles 2 and 51 of the United Nations (UN) Charter, the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact, and the Hague Conventions on Warfare.

United States (US), Iraqi, and other families have paid a heavy price for the US involvement in Iraq with the deaths of more than 4,000 US troops; the wounding and disabling of more than 30,000 US military personnel; the deaths of up to 650,000 Iraqi civilians; the internal displacement of over 2 million Iraqis; the external displacement of over 2.5 million Iraqi refugees; and the deaths of hundreds of non-US troops, journalists, and contractors.

Columbia University professor and Nobel Prize winner in economics Joseph E. Stiglitz and Harvard University budget expert Linda Bilmes have calculated that the real cost to the US of the Iraq war and occupation is likely to be between \$ 2 trillion and \$ 3 trillion, and American families are bearing these costs.

The war and continued occupation have resulted in the devastation of Iraq's physical and social infrastructure and led to widespread resistance to the US occupation that continuously threatens US and other occupying troops as well as Iraqi civilians.

The presence of US forces in Iraq and the torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo Bay, and other facilities have inflamed anti-American passions and increased the terrorist threat to US citizens, both at home and abroad.

The civilian leadership at the Department of Defense has failed to adequately equip and support US armed forces in Iraq and to train them to carry out an occupation.

US military commanders in Iraq have repeatedly stated that there is no military solution to the turmoil in Iraq.

Polls reveal that over 80% of Iraqis are strongly opposed to the presence of US troops in their country.

The American people voted in the November 2006 elections for a change in US Iraq policy in favor of military disengagement, and current polls reveal that nearly two-thirds of the American people are against the occupation.

ACTION

The Eighth Congressional District Democratic Convention concurs with the majority opinion of our fellow Americans and urges the US government to:

1. Commence an orderly and rapid withdrawal of US military personnel and all security forces under contract or subcontract with the US Government and working in Iraq, as expeditiously as possible, and
2. Prohibit use of funds to continue the US occupation of Iraq and to establish permanent military bases in Iraq, and
3. Guarantee quality health care for veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and other conflicts, and
4. Repeal *The Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002* (Public Law 107-243; 50 U.S.C. 1541 note), and
5. Offer US assistance for social and economic reconstruction and reconciliation in Iraq, and
6. Pursue security and stability through diplomacy, in Iraq, and throughout the Middle East. Facilitate and support international efforts to promote Iraq's peaceful transition to full sovereignty, in consultation with the government of Iraq (both legislative and executive branches), and enlist the participation of regional neighbors, including Iran and Syria, relevant organizations including the UN; the Arab League; the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC); the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); and others to implement viable collaborative strategies including:
 - a. Convening a regional peace conference to negotiate a cease-fire among armed factions in Iraq; and
 - b. Constituting, deploying, and funding a Pan Arab stabilization force to Iraq to enhance public security in conjunction with the withdrawal of US armed forces; and
 - c. Facilitating and contributing to Iraqi social and economic reconstruction and reconciliation.

The Eighth Congressional District Democratic Convention also calls upon the US Congress to redirect the financial resources used to prosecute the occupation of Iraq to address the urgent domestic needs of America; including health care, education, alternative energy development, and national security.

COMMONWEALTH ENERGY POLICY

BACKGROUND

The 8th Congressional District Democratic Convention favors a fair and balanced energy policy and finds:

The Commonwealth needs a balanced energy policy with much greater emphasis on increased efficiency.

The Commonwealth has an important role to play in meeting the global challenge of carbon change.

The Commonwealth's utilities are affected with the public interest, and have been regulated to assure that they serve the public convenience and necessity.

Washington Gas has experienced costly and dangerous natural gas leaks which their experts have attributed to greater use of liquefied natural gas (LNG) in Prince Georges County Maryland, and Washington Gas is currently in court seeking to stop the spread of unblended LNG to the Virginia and Montgomery County suburbs.

Action

The 8th District Democratic Convention recommends steps:

- To promote greater efficiency of energy use, including “smart grid” initiatives and demand-side management.
- To seek the permanent end to coal-fired generation of electricity at the Mirant Plant located in the City of Alexandria or full compliance at that plant with environmental standards.
- To place the economic burden of adapting to imported LNG on the LNG importers rather than on natural gas rate payers.
- To emphasize the use of renewable energy sources through renewable portfolio standards which increase over time.

REPUDIATE TORTURE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF US POLICY

BACKGROUND

The Abu Ghraib prison torture photos of detainees spurred investigations that exposed evidence of torture in American-controlled detention centers worldwide. These revelations undermined US security by arousing anti-Americanism that has further fueled terrorism, alienated allies, and created new enemies.

The violation of foreign detainee rights under the Geneva Conventions has undermined the protection of the law of war for US troops and corroded US military discipline.

Inhumane treatment of foreign prisoners destroys American credibility as a proponent of human rights, violates US and international law, and invites other states to do the same, while often producing unreliable intelligence.

In 1994 the US ratified the United Nations Convention against Torture, which includes injunctions against cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Prisoners not entitled to protection of the 1949 Geneva Conventions are protected by the "fundamental guarantees" described in Article 75 of Protocol I of 1977 to the Geneva Conventions, and the US Anti-Torture Act criminalizes acts of torture of prisoners in US custody, including those occurring outside US territorial jurisdiction.

Although US abuse of detainees preceded the Bush administration, White House discussions of torture methods involved Cabinet-level officials, and the Department of Justice developed elaborated justifications for the use of methods universally recognized as torture, which memoranda remained in effect for months.

Former Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, as White House Counsel from 2001 to 2002, approved legal memoranda that laid the groundwork for circumvention of the Geneva Conventions regarding the interrogation of prisoners and fostered mindsets that regard torture as a legitimate safeguard to US national security.

In violation of US and international law, beginning in 2002, the National Security Council's Principals Committee, including Vice President Cheney, former National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Colin Powell, as well as CIA Director George Tenet and Attorney General John Ashcroft discussed and approved specific details of torture methods the CIA could use on high-value al Qaeda suspects.

Other high-ranking US civilian and military leaders, including the Secretary of Defense, the former CIA Director, the Commander of US forces in Iraq, and the former Commander of the prison camp at Guantanamo Bay, made decisions and issued policies that facilitated serious and widespread violations of US and international law.

By 2005, the US Army Inspector General's report had identified 94 separate incidents of unjustifiable detainee abuse in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Schlesinger report identified five cases in which detainees died as result of abusive interrogations, and the Taguba report concluded that egregious acts and grave breaches of international law had occurred at Abu Ghraib/BCCF and Camp Bucca, Iraq, and there has been, to date, no serious attempt to address the failings of senior civilian or military leadership.

The Military Commissions Act of 2006 (MCA) creates an extra-judicial system of trials of suspected foreign terrorists who are denied rights guaranteed Americans, such as the centuries -old *writ of habeas corpus*, the right to examine and refute the evidence against them and cross-examine hostile witnesses. The MCA enables the US government to continue to imprison people indefinitely without charges and to set up arbitrary and discriminatory means for prosecuting them.

The Bush administration recently vetoed a bill that would have required officials of US intelligence agencies to follow the interrogation guidelines in force in the US armed forces, which specifically prohibits methods of torture such as waterboarding.

With America's integrity and morality at stake, the public interest demands that our government take measures to reassure the American people and the world that our nation will fairly and fully prosecute all US violations of the laws prohibiting torture, wherever they occur.

ACTION

The Eighth District Democratic Convention calls upon the US government to reaffirm its commitment to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Geneva Conventions including Article 75 of Protocol I of 1977; and all other laws, treaties, and conventions against torture to which the US is a signatory; and forswear any and all acts of torture by officers and agents of the US wherever they or their prisoners are located.

The Eighth District Democratic Convention recognizes that the reciprocity inherent in the Geneva Conventions protects American soldiers as well as those from other nations, and that US compliance with the Geneva Conventions and all other laws, treaties, and conventions against torture will help restore the historic moral stature and authority of America.

The Eighth District Democratic Convention urges the US Congress to repeal the Military Commissions Act and to create a special commission to investigate prisoner abuse.

Resolution No. 5
(Approved April 29, 2008)

THE 2008 DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL
NOMINATION PROCESS

BACKGROUND

1. The current vigorous campaign for the Presidential nomination of our party has brought the greatest participation of registered democrats and independents in the Democratic presidential primaries and caucuses, in history;
2. This robust exercise in democracy has been healthy and good for the party, as well as the country;
3. It has become more clear as each primary or caucus has been held that neither Sen. Clinton nor Sen. Obama will have enough pledged delegates, by the completion of the primary and caucus process in June to be assured of the nomination;
4. We, the Democrats of the 8th Congressional District of Virginia, believe that it would be harmful to the election prospects of whoever the party's nominee is in November, as well as to the chances for our party to increase the number of seats it holds in both the United States Senate (including the election of Mark Warner in Virginia) and the House of Representatives, for the nomination battle to drag on until the party national convention in August in Denver;
5. As the party of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, who believed that democracy is the bedrock principle on which this nation was founded, the Democratic Party of Virginia should follow that principle at all times unless there are sound and substantial reasons not to;

Action

THEREFORE, the 8th Congressional District Democratic Convention resolves that:

1. The Democratic Party of Virginia should strongly urge all uncommitted superdelegates to announce no later than June 10, one week after the end of the primary and caucus process, their support for the candidate that they favor.
2. The Democratic Party of Virginia should, upon adopting this resolution, immediately notify the Democratic National Committee and the Democratic Party of each state and territory, of the adoption of the resolution and urge them to adopt the same or a substantially similar resolution as quickly as possible.

Resolution No. 6
(Approved April 29, 2008)

IN SUPPORT OF FEDERAL LEGISLATION ESTABLISHING A QUALITY,
NATIONAL, SINGLE PAYER, GUARANTEED, HEALTHCARE SYSTEM FOR
EVERYBODY IN THIS COUNTRY

BACKGROUND

Every person in Virginia and in the United States deserves access to affordable, quality health care, yet according to the Virginia Healthcare Foundation, approximately one million Virginians lacked health insurance in 2007 and nearly 47 million Americans lacked health insurance in the same year.

We have a crisis in health care in the United States of America, which includes rising health care costs, increased insurance costs, and out-of-pocket medical expenses. In addition, the U.S. poverty rate is increasing, as employee layoffs and outsourcing of the workforce is increasing.

Even those who are insured often experience burdensome medical debt and sometimes life-threatening delays in obtaining health care, and one-half of personal bankruptcies are due to illnesses or medical bills. The rising cost of insuring state employees and teachers can best be met not by limiting benefits, but by expanding them under a national, publicly-funded health insurance program.

Today's private health insurance systems typically spend approximately 33 percent of their cost on the administration of such plans, evincing the inefficiency of such systems in contrast to the less than 3% typically expended to administer a universal "single payer" system. A universal "single-payer" system would be publicly financed, but privately driven by the needs of patients and the judgment of doctors--accessible to all.

Rationing health care according to ability to pay has diminished the overall health of our citizens to the point at which the United States ranks shamefully low at thirty-sixth in quality by the World Health Organization.

ACTION

The Eighth Congressional District Democratic Convention strongly supports the establishment of a quality, national, single payer, guaranteed, healthcare system for everybody in this country such as proposed in H.R. 676, and commends Representatives Jim Moran and Bobby Scott along with 86 other Members of Congress for co-sponsoring H.R. 676.

RESTORING EX-FELONS' RIGHT TO VOTE

BACKGROUND

- The right to vote is a key tenet of democratic government;
- Virginia permanently deprives ex-felons who have fully completed their sentences of this right;
- The laws that disenfranchise ex-felons were passed during the “Jim Crow” era to restrict the right to vote, particularly of African-Americans;
- Over 350,000 Virginia residents -- one out of 14 citizens and one out of five African-American citizens -- have thus been deprived of their right to vote;
- Exercising the right to vote has been shown to reduce the likelihood that an ex-felon will be subsequently convicted of a crime;
- The procedure by which an ex-felon may petition the Governor to exercise his or her sole discretion to restore the right to vote of an ex-felon is complicated, time-consuming, and expensive;
- Governors Mark Warner and Tim Kaine issued executive orders to streamline and simplify that procedure, enfranchising several thousand Virginians annually;

ACTION

- The Eighth District Democratic Convention urges the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates to repeal the laws that permanently disenfranchise ex-felons who have fully completed their sentences and any other obligations, thus making them equal citizens of the Commonwealth again;
- The Eighth District Democratic Convention urges the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates to provide for restoration of voting rights following a reasonable period after completion of sentences and any other obligations; and
- The Eighth District Democratic Convention commends Governors Mark Warner and Tim Kaine for their dedication to democratic government and human rights as shown by their efforts to facilitate the restoration to ex-felons of their right to vote.

ENDORSE THE 21ST CENTURY GI BILL (S.22; H.R.5740)

BACKGROUND

- Our nation's men and women in uniform deserve a GI Bill that rewards their service and invests in their future.
- The bipartisan Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act (S.22), is designed to expand the educational benefits that our nation offers to those who have served us so honorably since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The bill closely resembles the educational benefits provided to veterans returning from World War II.
- The bipartisan House companion bill is H.R. 5740: To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a program of educational assistance for members of the Armed Forces who serve in the Armed Forces after September 11, 2001, and for other purposes.
- Our country has a tradition, since World War II, of offering educational assistance to returning veterans. In the 1940s, the first "G.I. Bill" helped advance equality in American society. The World War II G.I. Bill provided for veterans' tuition, books, fees, a monthly stipend, and other training costs. Approximately 7.8 million veterans used the benefits given under the original G.I. Bill in some form, out of a wartime veteran population of 15 million. For every dollar invested in veterans, seven dollars were generated.
- Currently, veterans' educational benefits are administered under the Montgomery G.I. Bill, a program designed primarily for peacetime, not wartime service and, therefore, not as expansive as our nation's original G.I. Bill. Three former Presidents, a dozen U.S. Senators, three Supreme Court Justices and fourteen Nobel Prize winners went to school on the G.I. Bill. Under today's Montgomery G.I. Bill, these same leaders would receive only a fraction of the money necessary to get the same level of education.
- The newly proposed G.I. Bill would increase the educational benefits available, proportional to their service, to all members of the military who have served on active duty since September 11, 2001, including activated reservists and National Guard.
- The G.I. Bill of the World War II era sparked economic growth and expansion for a whole generation of Americans; a more robust G.I. Bill holds the same potential for today's economy.
- A strong and reliable G.I. Bill will have a positive effect on military recruitment. Better educated veterans also have a more positive readjustment experience and lower levels of post-traumatic stress disorder.
- The education of our nation's veterans is a cost of war. A G.I. Bill that properly rewards honorable service is the right thing to do. The estimated \$2 billion a year needed for the program equals less than one week of war in Iraq.
- As of April 17, 2008, The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act (S.22) has 57 cosponsors in the Senate, including lead co-sponsors Jim Webb (D -VA), Chuck Hagel (R-NE), John Warner (R-VA), and Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ).

- The House companion bill, H.R. 5740, re-introduced by Rep. Harry Mitchell (D-AZ), Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA), Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite (R-FL), and Rep. Peter King (R-NY), has 218 cosponsors in the House, a majority of its membership.
- The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act (S.22) has been endorsed by the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), The American Legion, the Military Officers' Association of America (MOAA), Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), AMVETS, the Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA), the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS), the Student Veterans of America (SVA), the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC) and the Partnership for Veterans' Education, a consortium of military, veterans, and higher education associations such as the American Council on Education (ACE) and the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU).

Action

- The Eighth Congressional District Democratic Convention on May 17, 2008 commends the leadership and vision of Senator Jim Webb (D - VA) for S.22 and Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA) for H.R. 5740.
- The Eighth Congressional District Democratic Convention further urges all members of Congress to co-sponsor the new G.I. Bill.

Undocumented Immigration in the U.S.

We are a nation of immigrants, and we have a proud history of immigration. Our nation has been continually reshaped by new groups of people bringing to it diverse cultures, perspectives, and resources. The welcome and sanctuary offered new Americans are at the heart of our nation's immigrant story.

One in ten Virginians was born outside of the United States, and most of us can trace our ancestors back to another country in only a few generations.

Our nation's immigration policies affect millions of people who are seeking to build a better life in this country. However, the current U.S. immigration system is broken and the need for reform is critical.

Over the past several years, Republican Members of Congress have consistently supported divisive and unworkable legislation that would criminalize and call for the immediate deportation of every undocumented immigrant living in the United States.

- Deporting just 8-9 million undocumented immigrants would cost more than \$200 billion over a period of five years—more than double the annual budget of the entire Homeland Security Department.
- Undocumented immigrants account for nearly 5% of the entire U.S. labor force. Losing 5% of our labor force would have an untold cost.

Last summer Democrats and some Republicans in Congress crafted a comprehensive immigration reform package that provided a bridge to legal status for these individuals. However, numerous Republican Members of Congress again effectively blocked progress.

Unfortunately, a series of piecemeal and – at times – mean-spirited initiatives at the local, state, and federal level have sought to fill the vacuum created by the defeat of comprehensive immigration reform last summer. Such a hodgepodge approach to national immigration policy is simply unworkable.

Moreover, this piecemeal approach has contributed to immigrants from many nations being made the victims of exploitation and scapegoating.

We cannot afford to let supercharged political rhetoric unfairly paint a picture of Virginians as a people who are hostile to New Americans.

In 2007, foreign companies announced over \$750 million of investments in Virginia, which will create over 2,000 new jobs. Many of these jobs will be created in parts of our Commonwealth that are hungry for economic development. As Governor Kaine has said, “We are in fierce competition for those jobs, and we cannot afford to give the world the impression that Virginians are not willing to engage with people from other countries in global commerce.”

With that in mind, we must ensure that the debate on immigration reform is conducted in a civil and respectful manner.

Action –

The 8th District Democratic Convention recognizes that creating a modern immigration system is an undoubtedly complex task. It requires achieving the right balance between enforcement, at our borders and at worksites, and establishing mechanisms for bringing the estimated 12 million undocumented residents out of the shadows and creating a workable means for regulating the flow of immigrants into the country.

Moving forward, the President and Congress must find common ground and take action on the two central issues that lie at the heart of this debate.

- First, we must reinforce our borders to deter the more than 2,000 undocumented immigrants who cross them each day. Strengthening the border requires equipping Customs and Border Protection agents with better technology and real-time intelligence, improving infrastructure, and making smart choices about where patrols deploy.
- Second, the President and Congress must pass comprehensive immigration reform that enables the 12 million undocumented immigrants who are already here to start on a viable path that includes the ability to earn citizenship by demonstrating a sound character, a commitment to America, and a strong work ethic.

The 8th District Democratic Convention recognizes that the vast majority of undocumented immigrants are seeking only the American Dream – they work in their communities, pay taxes, and have become an integral part of our society.

While the Republican policy of mass deportation is unrealistic, illegal entry cannot go unpunished. That's why undocumented immigrants should be required to pay a fine, and go through the official nationalization process.

The 8th Democratic Congressional District calls upon Congress and the President of the United States to pass compassionate, fair, and comprehensive immigration reform to establish a viable, humane, and realistic immigration system. Our economic reality compels it.

VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION FUNDING RESOLUTION

BACKGROUND

Transportation infrastructure and congestion issues in Northern Virginia, Hampton Roads, and other parts of Virginia have reached crisis levels.

The Virginia General Assembly must do everything it can to immediately address these critical transportation infrastructure and transit issues.

Such action is necessary to support the continued growth, workforce needs, and long term health of Virginia's economy.

The Commonwealth's statewide transportation infrastructure is also a critical component of the quality of life of all Virginians.

The annual cost of congestion and lost opportunity is now costing Virginia taxpayers more than the amount required to fund necessary improvements and sustain an adequate annual maintenance program as identified in the current six year improvement program approved by the Virginia Transportation Board.

Based on the 2007 Urban Mobility Report, we know that:

- In Hampton Roads taxpayers sit in 25,600,000 hours of delay every year.
- In Northern Virginia, taxpayers sit in nearly 127,400,000 hours of annual delay.
- 51% of all peak-period travelers in Hampton Roads are trapped in congestion.
- 81% of all peak-period travelers in Northern Virginia meet that same fate.
- In Hampton Roads, taxpayers trapped in congestion waste 17,102,000 gallons of gasoline every year.
- In Northern Virginia, nearly 91,000,000 gallons of gasoline are wasted as taxpayers sit in congestion.
- In Hampton Roads the annual cost of congestion to taxpayers is \$467,000,000.
- In Northern Virginia taxpayers lose an astonishing \$2,331,000,000 each year to congestion.¹

Based on current information from the Virginia Department of Transportation:

¹ *The cost of congestion is based on 2005 data and includes a value of \$14.60 per person-hour of delay and \$77.10 per commercial truck-hour of delay. Fuel cost per gallon is the average 2005 price; \$2.24/gallon in Hampton Roads and \$2.40/ gallon in Northern Virginia.*

- The cost of the needed construction projects in the Current Six Year Improvement Program approved by the Virginia Transportation Board exceeds the available gas tax revenues by \$1.1 billion per year.
- Primary, secondary and urban transportation funds have been reduced by 44%.
- Out of necessity we continue to sweep money from the construction fund to meet growing routine maintenance needs.
- Between 2008 and 2014 we will sweep over \$3 billion from construction into maintenance.

Virginia's statewide transportation maintenance deficit is increasingly draining construction accounts and is expected to result in the loss of an estimated \$80 million this year and more than \$500 million over the next six years in state construction money for just Northern Virginia as the cost of individual projects and materials skyrockets.

With this in mind, additional investments of at least \$1.1 billion annually must be made to sustain maintenance and construction costs.

ACTION

The 8th District Democratic convention implores the General Assembly to fund at least 1.1 billion in annual statewide revenue in order to sustain maintenance while meeting urgently needed new construction.

The 8th District Democratic convention urges the General Assembly to adopt a statewide funding package to provide at least an additional \$400 million in new, sustainable and dedicated annual revenue to address regional Northern Virginia transportation construction needs.

The most appropriate solution is a package of revenue generators that are simple, sustainable, and sufficient and accrue from broad-based revenue options. Options that meet these criteria include:

- A cents-per-gallon increase in the motor vehicle fuels tax at the pump
- An increase in the general sales & use tax of up to 1% with revenues accruing from this additional amount dedicated exclusively to transportation funding. These levels were previously approved for regional purposes in HB 3202 by the 2007 General Assembly. We call upon the General Assembly to provide that any increase in the sales tax exclude food and medicine.

These revenues should be used first to fund basic maintenance of Virginia's existing roads and bridges.

To avoid competing with other General Fund priorities, the remaining funds should then be dedicated exclusively to transportation infrastructure, smart growth efforts, and transit improvements.

These statewide increases should be in addition to legislative corrections to existing regional plans, not in lieu of them.

The 8th District Democratic Convention commends the Governor for calling a Special Session of the legislature in June 2008 to address this important issue.