

Resolution No. 1

Support For the Employee Free Choice Act

BACKGROUND:

A. The 2009 8th Congressional District Democratic Convention (the “Convention”) and its constituent Democrats are concerned about the reported pervasive violation of the rights of working people when they attempt to exercise their basic freedom to form unions and bargain collectively for a better life.

B. The Employee Free Choice Act (H.R. 1409 now pending before the 111th Congress, 1st Session (the “Free Choice Act”) is the first step to fixing this badly broken system by strengthening penalties for companies that break the law by coercing or intimidating employees. It will also establish a third-party mediation process when employers and employees who cannot agree on a first contract, and enable employees to form unions when a majority expresses their decision to join the union by signing authorization card. It makes real the principle that the free choice about whether to form unions should belong to workers.

C. The Employee Free choice Act (H. R. 409) is now spending before the 111 Congress, 1st Session (the “Free Choice Act)

D. Congressman James Moran of the Virginia 8th District Congressional District and Congressman Gerald Connolly of the Virginia 11th Congressional District are co-patrons of the Free Choice Act.

E. The Convention wishes to support passage of the Free Choice Act as the same may be amended with the support and approval of the Virginia Congressional members specified in Recital D above.

ACTION:

Now therefore, be it, and is hereby RESOLVED that the Convention does hereby endorse passage of the Free Choice Act as the same may be amended with the support and approval of Congressmen James Moran and Gerald Connolly of Virginia and grants permission for this Resolution to be used on material that may be reproduced and distributed to the press and to the general public.

Resolution No. 2

Promoting Early Voting

BACKGROUND

A large portion of the Eighth District work far from home, making in person voting on Election Day during regular polling hours a difficult challenge.

Early voting is allowed with no excuse required in 31 states, leaving Virginia as only one of 16 states with no provision for no-excuse early voting.

In 2004, 22 percent of voters cast an early presidential ballot.

Governor Tim Kaine sought legislation in the 2009 session of the Virginia General Assembly to authorize early voting only to have this legislation blocked by Republicans who are not sympathetic to the desire of Northern Virginians to participate fully in our democracy.

ACTION

The Eighth Congressional District Democratic Convention urges the General Assembly to make the adoption of no-excuse early voting a high priority in the 2010 session of the Legislature.

Resolution No. 3

Endorsing the National Popular Vote Bill

BACKGROUND

Under the United States Constitution, the President and Vice President are elected by the Electoral College rather than by popular vote. The Constitution gives each state the exclusive and plenary power to allocate its electoral votes, and each state may amend its laws concerning the awarding of electoral votes at any time. Under the National Popular Vote Bill, all of the state's electoral votes would be awarded to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The bill would become effective when adopted by states with a majority of electoral votes.

The National Popular Vote Bill has been enacted by Hawaii, Illinois, New Jersey, Maryland and Washington, and the bill is currently endorsed by 1,666 state legislators.

The National Popular Vote Bill was introduced as SB 824 in the 2009 session by Sen. Yvonne B. Miller, but it died in the Privileges and Elections Committee. Del. David L. Englin also introduced it as H 2742.

If adopted, the bill would provide all Americans an equal voice in the selection of its leaders without regard for state boundaries. It would also prevent the decision from ever reaching the U.S. House of Representatives.

ACTION

The Eighth Congressional District Democratic Convention urges the General Assembly to adopt the National Popular Vote Bill in the 2010 session of the Legislature.

Resolution No. 4

Support and Fund the Strong Start Initiative

BACKGROUND

On December 17, 2007, Governor Tim Kaine announced his initiative to provide pre-Kindergarten education for more of Virginia's four-year-old children. Scientific studies have demonstrated the important and lasting impact that pre-Kindergarten programs can have on child development. However, recent budgetary constraints have hampered the full deployment of this important initiative.

ACTION

The Eighth Congressional District Democratic Convention urges the General Assembly to fully fund Governor Kaine's pre-Kindergarten initiative in the 2010 session of the General Assembly.

Resolution No. 5

Torture is a Criminal Act (Sandra J Klassen)

Background

The rule of law demands that we investigate alleged criminal acts -- especially when they are committed by high-ranking government officials.

Some in the Bush Administration violated our core values as Americans and undermined our reputation in the world. To move forward as a country and make sure this never happens again, we need to identify these abuses of power and and make clear that these actions are inconsistent with America's principles.

The vileness of these alleged crimes and the brazen contempt those in power showed for the Constitution demands an independent and thorough investigation.

No one is above the law. Those high-ranking government officials who broke the law must be held accountable.

Action

The Eighth Congressional District Democratic Convention urges the US government to fully investigate and hold accountable all high-ranking government officials responsible for acts of torture committed under USA authority with the purpose of preventing such future violations.

Resolution No. 6

Support (HR 676) The United States National Health Care Act (Expanded and Improved Medicare for All Act) (Sandra J. Klassen)

Background

Every person in Virginia and in the United States deserves access to affordable, quality health care.

Approximately one million Virginians lacked health insurance in 2007. Today, it's clear that the economic downturn has driven those numbers far higher.

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

Whether insured or not, many families now often experience burdensome medical debt and sometimes life-threatening delays in obtaining health care. One-half of personal bankruptcies are due to illnesses or medical bills. Strikingly, three-quarters of the medically bankrupt were insured. But their coverage was too skimpy to protect them from financial collapse.

In most states, insurers can deny health insurance to individuals, not buying through group plans who have preexisting health care problems, or charge them much higher premiums.

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.

Private health insurers spend more than twice as much as Medicare on the administration of their plans, evincing the inefficiency of such systems in contrast to a universal "single-payer" system.

Consumers who buy insurance on their own without being part of a large group pay very high administrative expenses, which can be more than half of their premiums.

Altogether, U.S. hospitals could save about \$120 billion annually on bureaucracy under a single payer system. And doctors in the U.S. waste about \$95 billion each year fighting with insurance companies and filling out useless paperwork.

Significantly, these massive potential savings on bureaucracy can only be achieved through a single payer reform. As long as multiple private plans coexist

with the public plan, hospitals and doctors would have to maintain their costly billing and internal cost tracking apparatus.

A single-payer reform would make universal, comprehensive coverage affordable by diverting hundreds of billions of dollars from bureaucracy to patient care. Lesser reforms — even those that include a public plan option — cannot realize such savings. While reforms that maintain a major role for private insurers may seem politically expedient, they are economically and medically nonsensical.

Even President Obama has said, "If I were designing a system from scratch, then I'd probably set up a single-payer system."

The majority of Americans favor a comprehensive single-payer system of high quality national health care.

United States Representative John Conyers has introduced (H.R.676), the United States National Health Care Act, in the 111th Congress, and this act would provide a universal, comprehensive, single-payer system of high quality national health care.

Action

Like Congressman Conyers and the seventy-four House cosponsors of (HR 676); like the thirty-seven state AFL-CIO councils and more than 500 union organizations that have endorsed that legislation; like the American Medical Student Association, the California Nurses Association and the thousands of doctors associated with Physicians for a National Health Program; like 59 percent of the Americans surveyed in January by CBS News and the New York Times; the Eighth Congressional District Convention strongly supports the establishment of a quality, national, single payer, guaranteed, healthcare system for everyone in this country as comprehensive as that proposed in H.R.676.

Resolution No. 7

Repeal the Military Commissions Act of 2006 & Restore Habeas Corpus (Sandra J. Klassen as amended by Jaime Areizaga-Soto)

Background

WHEREAS

- (a) Over the past 7 years, approximately 800 individuals whom the Department of Defense has ever determined to be, or treated as, enemy combatants have been detained at Guantánamo;
- (b) Some individuals currently detained at Guantánamo have been there for more than 6 years, and most have been detained for at least 4 years;
- (c) The Military Commissions Act of 2006 provided for the limitation of the constitutional privilege to a writ of habeas corpus;
- (d) In 2008 the United States Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the Military Commissions Act's limitations on the privilege to a writ of habeas corpus;
- (e) On January 22nd, 2009, President Obama issued three Executive Orders on Guantanamo Bay Detainees; Detainee Policy; and Interrogation;
- (f) The Executive Order on Guantanamo Bay detainees reaffirms that the individuals currently detained at Guantánamo have the constitutional privilege of the writ of habeas corpus;
- (g) Through the Executive Orders, President Obama ordered, among other,
 - (i) the closure of the Guantanamo Bay detainee facility within one year;
 - (ii) the immediate halt to any Military Commissions Act prosecutions;
 - (iii) the banning of the use of enhanced interrogation techniques; and
 - (iv) the appointment of a task force to review the disposition of the cases of the remaining detainees in Guantanamo Bay; and
- (h) Habeas corpus, the basic right to have a court decide whether a person is being lawfully imprisoned, is a legal right and core American principle that distinguishes American rights and liberties from those afforded by many other countries' systems of law.

Action

The Eighth Congressional District Democratic Convention:

1. Supports the repeal of the Military Commissions Act of 2006;
2. Commends President Obama for his leadership in restoring the United States moral high ground especially as regards those individuals in U.S. custody or under U.S. control;
3. Commends President Obama for his decision to order the closure of the detainee facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba;
4. Commends President Obama for his vow that the United States will not engage in torture;
5. Condemns and calls for an end to arbitrary determinations of enemy combatants and the indefinite detentions of enemy combatants;
6. Condemns any limitations on a person's right to a writ of habeas corpus;

7. Urges prohibiting the use of private contractors for activities relating to the capture, custody, control, or other pertinent interaction with a detainee or prisoner in U.S. custody; and
8. Calls for those senior government officials determined to have authorized or ordered illegal acts of torture and abuse to be held accountable.

Resolution No. 9

Support The National Criminal Justice Commission Act of 2009 (S.714)

(Sandra J Klassen)

Background

The National Criminal Justice Commission Act of 2009, introduced by Senator Jim Webb on March 26, 2009, will create a blue-ribbon commission charged with undertaking an 18-month, top-to-bottom review of our entire criminal justice system. Its task will be to propose concrete, wide-ranging reforms designed to responsibly reduce the overall incarceration rate; improve federal and local responses to international and domestic gang violence; restructure our approach to drug policy; improve the treatment of mental illness; improve prison administration; and establish a system for reintegrating ex-offenders.

This Legislation is urgently needed.

The United States has by far the world's highest incarceration rate. With five percent of the world's population, our country now houses twenty-five percent of the world's reported prisoners. More than 2.38 million Americans are now in prison, and another 5 million remain on probation or parole.

- Our prison population has skyrocketed over the past two decades as we have incarcerated more people for non-violent crimes and acts driven by mental illness or drug dependence.
- The costs to our federal, state, and local governments of keeping repeat offenders in the criminal justice system continue to grow during a time of increasingly tight budgets.
- Existing practices too often incarcerate people who do not belong in prison and distract from locking up the more serious, violent offenders who are a threat to our communities.
- Transnational criminal activity, much of it directed by violent gangs and cartels from Latin America, Asia and Europe, has permeated the country. Mexican cartels alone now operate in more than 230 communities across the country.
- Mass incarceration of illegal drug users has not curtailed drug usage. The multi-billion dollar illegal drugs industry remains intact, with more dangerous drugs continuing to reach our streets.
- Incarceration for drug crimes has had a disproportionate impact on minority communities, despite virtually identical levels of drug use across racial and ethnic lines.
- Post-incarceration re-entry programs are haphazard and often nonexistent, undermining public safety and making it extremely difficult for ex-offenders to become full, contributing members of society.

The Commission shall review all areas of Federal and State criminal justice practices and make specific findings, to include an examination of:

- Reasons for increase in the U.S. incarceration rate compared to historical standards
- Incarceration and other policies in similar democratic, western countries
- Prison administration policies, including the availability of pre-employment training programs and career progression for guards and prison administrators
- Costs of current incarceration policies at the federal, state & local level
- The impact of gang activities, including foreign syndicates
- Drug policy and its impact on incarceration, crime and sentencing
- Policies as they relate to the mentally ill
- The historical role of the military in crime prevention and border security
- Any other area that the Commission deems relevant

The Commission shall make recommendations for policy changes designed to:

- Re-focus incarceration policies to reduce the overall incarceration rate while preserving public safety, cost-effectiveness, and societal fairness
- Decrease prison violence
- Improve prison administration, including competence & career enhancement of administrators
- Establish meaningful re-entry programs for ex-offenders
- Reform our nation's drug policies
- Improve treatment of the mentally ill
- Improve responses to international & domestic criminal activity by gangs & cartels
- Reform any other aspect of the system the Commission determines necessary

Action

- The Eighth Congressional District Democratic Convention commends Senator Jim Webb for his
- vision and outstanding work, and further commends cosponsors Senator Mark Warner and their
- 27 colleagues, and urges Congress to enact (S.714).

Resolution No. 11

Support Middle East Peace

Background:

Achieving a negotiated, sustainable Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement that addresses the needs of both parties is central to American, regional and world security.

The new administration of President Barack Obama has made it clear that - in stark contrast to 8 years of the US ignoring diplomatic efforts to achieve a sustainable Middle East peace - the US has once again taken a leadership role in diplomatic efforts to achieve “a lasting peace between Israel and its neighbors”, a decision emphasized by the appointment a Special Envoy for Middle East peace.

Secretary of State Hilary Clinton has stated that the US will maintain our commitment to Israel’s security and also bolster the Palestinian Authority and alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

The Obama Administration has stated that the “United States strongly supports the goal of two states, Israel and a Palestinian state, living side by side in peace and security.”

The Obama administration has joined all previous administrations in calling for an end to settlements in the occupied territories.

Action:

The Eighth Congressional District Democratic Convention strongly supports the efforts of the new administration of President Barack Obama to reinvigorate the Middle East peace process, and to:

1. Be a fair and balanced arbiter for a comprehensive and sustainable peace agreement; and
2. Vigorously and robustly support:
 - A. Sustainable peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians.
 - B. Justice and democracy for all the peoples of the Middle East.

Resolution No. 12

PRESERVING VIRGINIA'S NATURAL RESOURCES¹

A. Preamble

We believe that we can both protect the environment and expand the economy. We believe all Virginians should be able to enjoy Virginia's natural heritage. We should be assured that the air we breathe is pure, the water we drink is clean, and the land we live on is safe from environmental hazard. We recognize that achieving substantial independence from imported oil is a national security imperative, and that we need to bring a transformative change to our national energy policy. We acknowledge our sacred obligation to protect the earth and preserve our quality of life for future generations.

B. Support for Tackling the Threats of Climate Change

BACKGROUND:

President Obama and the Congress have recognized the need for prompt action on climate change. The Obama Administration has made Federal climate change legislation a high priority for the new Congress.

However, many states have not waited for Federal action. In the meantime, ten states have formed the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) ² -- Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont – which implemented the first mandatory cap-and-trade program in the United States to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. RGGI establishes a multi-state CO2 emissions budget (cap) that will decrease gradually until it is 10 percent lower than at the start. RGGI provides a valuable test bed for the cap-and-trade approach pending implementation of a Federal program. The ten states will use revenues from CO2 allowance auctions to boost investment for energy efficiency and renewables, while creating green jobs and accelerating the regional shift to a clean-energy economy.

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System provides for standards in determining environmentally sustainable construction. Since its establishment in 1998, a number of local governments have established incentives for LEED-certified buildings, and others have adopted policies requiring that new government buildings be LEED-certified.

¹ http://www.vademocrats.org/pages/2008_convention_platform/

² <http://www.rggi.org/states>

ACTION:

The Eighth District Democratic Convention supports policy measures that will effectively and immediately address climate change. We encourage incentives for individuals and businesses to implement energy efficiency. We support increased research and investment in green technologies to foster alternative energy sources such as wind, solar, and geothermal, which can create millions of new jobs in America.

Virginia should negotiate participation in RGGI.

Virginia should provide incentives and policies to encourage the construction of LEED-certified buildings.

C. Support for a New Energy Policy

BACKGROUND:

Under the Bush Administration, both crude oil and retail gasoline prices reached historic levels. Meanwhile, in 2007, Virginia enacted a renewable portfolio standard for its electric utilities setting a goal of 12% renewable electric sources. The legislation provided utilities with positive incentives for reaching this goal by 2022. Other states have also adopted renewable portfolio standards, and there is a proposal currently pending in California to set a 30% renewable goal for that state.

The Obama Administration has recognized the advantage of deploying "smart grid" technologies to better manage the distribution of electricity and the curb demand at peak times. A smart electric grid would allow individual appliances (e.g. a warehouse ventilation fan) to communicate with the utility's central computers, so that non-essential electric usage could be curbed during peak moments. By shaving the size of an electric system's peak demand, costs can be greatly reduced. In addition, advances in microelectronics allow existing power lines to operate closer to their maximum capacity, avoiding the need to construct additional expensive new power lines.

ACTION:

The Eighth District Democratic Convention supports the need to bring transformative change to our national energy policy. We need a fresh approach that invests in renewable energy and eliminates our dependence on foreign oil. By making new investments, we can create millions of new world-class jobs here at home and make our nation more secure. We believe a new energy policy will also help us address climate change, letting us reassert America's moral standing in the world. While the Obama Administration will develop national initiatives on Energy Policy, Virginia should not passively wait for Federal action. Virginia should increase its renewable portfolio standards to 20%³ and establish regulatory structures to foster the deployment of "smart grid" technologies.

³ The current standard is 12% by 2022.

<http://www.dom.com/about/companies/vapower/rereg.jsp>

D. Support for Access to Safe Drinking Water

BACKGROUND:

Governor Tim Kaine has lead Virginia to make safe drinking water available to all Virginians. Thousands of Virginia homes still lack adequate plumbing. Some older urban water systems are in need of upgrades, and parts of the Commonwealth struggle to acquire a sufficient water supply.

ACTION:

The Eighth District Democratic Convention supports efforts to develop a comprehensive statewide water strategy to ensure access to affordable clean drinking water for all Virginians. We support smart, environmentally friendly water supply planning and we support investing in the necessary infrastructure to provide all Virginians access to clean, safe drinking water.

E. Support for Clean Rivers, Streams, and the Chesapeake Bay

BACKGROUND:

Through Governor Kaine's roles as Chairman of the Chesapeake Bay Executive Council and of the Southern Governor's Association, Governor Kaine has pledged to work for more aggressive policies for Bay cleanup.⁴

In 2008, Virginia Resources Authority issued Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund Bonds to finance \$187,566,687 in wastewater treatment upgrades statewide. These bonds financed 10 projects in nine localities across Virginia, with \$50 million going to Arlington County to upgrade its waste water plant. (A portion of the waste water that goes to the Arlington plant comes from the City of Alexandria, so that both Arlington and Alexandria benefit.) The majority of the projects will provide system upgrades to reduce nutrient pollution being discharged into tributaries that feed the Chesapeake Bay. This will have a positive impact on marine life and the overall health of the Chesapeake Bay.⁵

ACTION:

The Eighth District Democratic Convention supports efforts to restore the quality of the waters in the Commonwealth with meaningful tributary strategies, reduction of the number of nutrients entering our waters in excessive amounts from non-point sources or specific facilities, and protection of non-tidal wetlands. We support the vigorous pursuit of the goals of the 2000 Chesapeake Bay Agreement and its promise of improvement in this significant

⁴ <http://www.governor.virginia.gov/Initiatives/RenewVirginia/>

⁵

<http://www.governor.virginia.gov/mediarelations/NewsReleases/viewRelease.cfm?id=788>

natural resource.

F. Support for Preserving Open Space

BACKGROUND:

Governor Tim Kaine has set a goal of preserving 400,000 of open space acres by 2010 with state land conservation grants. On January 19, 2009, Governor Kaine announced that the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) permanently protected 64,840 acres across 64 localities through conservation easements in 2008, making it the second-biggest year in VOF's 42-year history, surpassed only by the 71,227 acres recorded in 2006. VOF now protects roughly 525,000 acres across 102 cities and counties – an area two-and-a-half times the size of Shenandoah National Park and more than half the size of Rhode Island.⁶

ACTION:

The Eighth District Democratic Convention supports efforts to preserve Virginia's natural resources, which are important to Virginia's economic future and our quality of life as citizens. We support significant and reliable funding for open space (both urban and non-urban) and land conservation initiatives. We support innovative programs that encourage the preservation of farmland for agricultural use. We support state and local efforts to encourage appropriate development by providing necessary information and technical assistance as well as efforts to limit suburban sprawl.

G. Support for Outdoor Activities

BACKGROUND:

Virginia's Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is funded from Federal gasoline tax revenues. Under Governor Kaine, a number of recreational trails have been funded throughout the state and in Northern Virginia, including the Seneca Connector trail. As Northern Virginia expands its urban footprint, there is an urgent need to protect our outdoor resources including our streams, rivers and recreational trails.⁷

ACTION:

The Eighth District Democratic Convention recognizes that hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreational activities are essential components of the Virginia lifestyle. We believe that the opportunity for Virginia families to enjoy nature's bounty is an important part of our heritage. We support the public ownership of fish and wildlife, and the streams and rivers of our Commonwealth, and believe that the Commonwealth holds these resources in trust for the beneficial use of its citizens.

⁶ <http://www.governor.virginia.gov/Initiatives/RenewVirginia/#>

⁷ http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/trailfnd.shtml

Resolution No. 13

Resolution Honoring Jane Vitray

Jane Gallien Vitray and her husband G. Alain Vitray registered voters in the African American neighborhoods of Northern Virginia and gave them rides to the voter registrar's office and to the polls in the early 1960's. They also helped lead the fight against segregation in Fairfax County schools.

Jane Vitray served leadership positions in campaigns for Gus Johnson and George Rawlings, Jr. for Congress and Henry Howell for Governor. She served in the Democratic National Committee's Office of Women's Affairs and helped plan the 1976 Democratic National Convention. She worked on Jimmy Carter's presidential campaign and served as treasurer for Chuck Robb in his campaigns for Lieutenant Governor, Governor and Senator. She was also an aide to Delegate Raymond E. Vickery, Jr.

Jane Vitray was elected the first woman chairman of the Fairfax County Democratic Committee in the late 1960's and early 1970's. She was a past chair of the Fairfax County Commission for Women and helped start the first shelter for battered women in 1978. She was one of the founders of the Good Ole Girls and the Farm Team designed for networking and to mentor women to become more active in politics and run for elected office.

Jane Vitray was Secretary of the Fairfax County Electoral Board from 1982 to 1983. She served as an elder and Circle member of the Vienna Presbyterian Church and supported the Haiti Mission Project.

Resolved that the Eighth Congressional District Democratic Convention hereby express its deep appreciation for Jane Vitray's dedicated service to Democratic candidates and elected officials, the Fairfax County Democratic Committee, and the Fairfax County community.

Resolution No. 14

Honoring the Life and Work of Marwan Burgan (1954-2009)

Background:

Marwan Burgan, a Palestinian, was born in Jordan and became an American. After receiving his Masters in Sociology from American University, Marwan Burgan served in Congress from June 1985-January 1993 becoming Administrative Assistant, (chief of staff), in the Washington Office of Congressman Mervyn M. Dymally, a ranking Democrat on the Foreign Affairs Committee

Marwan Burgan served on the Fairfax County Democratic Committee Steering Committee as a member of the state Central Committee and a precinct captain in Mason District.

Marwan Burgan was awarded the Grass Roots Award for the Eleventh Congressional District at the Virginia state Jefferson Jackson Dinner in 2006 and was a national delegate in 2004.

Marwan Burgan was an active leader in the Arab-American community and was awarded the Distinguished Public Service Award by the Arab-American Institute for his service

Marwan devoted his life to public service and actively sought to expand the Democratic Party's by encouraging new Americans to become politically active.

When Marwan Burgan was diagnosed with cancer, he immediately started a project to involve new Americans not just in democracy but also in leadership. Marwan Burgan's legacy includes the Project for American Civic Engagement, (PACE), an organization he founded that helps place under-represented minorities and New Americans in internship positions on Capitol Hill.

Action:

The Eighth Congressional District Democratic Convention:

1. Honors the life and deeds of Marwan Burgan, and extends its appreciation to Marwan Burgan and his family for a lifetime of public service.

2. Encourages the Democratic Party of Virginia to establish an annual "Marwan Burgan New American Public Service Award" for Democratic activists who have done an outstanding job to involve new Americans and under-represented minorities.
3. Encourages the Fairfax County Democratic Committee to award the "Lynda J. Robb Community Service Award" to Marwan Burgan in recognition of his efforts to serve the larger community.

Resolution No. 15(A)

Support Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Background

The Nation's right to maintaining and protecting the integrity of our borders;

Americans cherish the outstanding contributions of our Nation's immigrant heritage;

Americans reaffirm that our country is founded on the rule of law;

Reports indicate that there is a large number of immigrants living in the United States without legal status;

Immigrants have contributed, are contributing and will continue to contribute dramatically to the economic, social and cultural development of the United States;

The current guest worker programs are insufficient for the needs and demand of the American economy; and

The current state of affairs is not sustainable;

Action

The Eighth Congressional District Democratic Convention urges:

A. The Federal Government to continue to enforce fully our immigration laws in the Nation's borders and ports of entry;

B. The Congress to approve comprehensive immigration reform that:

1. Incorporates a pathway for current residents to regularize their stays in the United States through a transparent, just and fair system in order for them to integrate into civil society;

2. Provides for such pathway to be founded on keeping families united and helping employers find workers for jobs that continually go unfilled;

3. Ensures that those residents that have been convicted of a violent crime are excluded from the path to regularize their status;

4. Provides for a guest worker program for seasonal or particular jobs with high demand in the United States;

5. Provides an effective employer verification system and expanded, stronger legal protections for employees;
6. Provides for tough penalties against employers that employ persons not authorized to work in the United States;
7. Ensures that the legislation is revenue-neutral;
8. Ensures the use of reasonable and fair fees for services;
9. Provides for a future immigration process that allows sponsors (family, faith-based organizations, not-for-profit, and employers) to coordinate organized migration to the United States.

Resolution No. 16

Support for the Prompt and Effective Use of the Economic Stimulus Funds

Background

- (a) President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 on February 17, 2009;
- (b) The Republican-led policies directed at providing low-taxes to those making more than \$250,000 a year resulted in increasing the gap between rich and poor;
- (c) The Republican-led economic policies resulted in astronomical deficits at the federal level;
- (d) The Nation's infrastructure needs urgent investment;
- (e) We are very proud of Virginia's ranking as the best-managed state and the best state for business in the Nation;
- (f) Nearly 300,000 Virginians are unemployed;
- (g) Virginia provides some of the lowest unemployment benefits in the country.
- (h) The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provides \$125 million in expanded unemployment benefits for Virginia;
- (i) Employers in Virginia pay an average of \$98 per worker a year for unemployment insurance and the national average is \$258.
- (j) The required changes in Virginia law would increase an employer's unemployment contribution by \$4.58 a year per employee; and
- (k) On Wednesday, April 8, Virginia's Republican-dominated House of Delegates followed the lead of gubernatorial candidate Bob McDonnell and rejected \$125 million in federal unemployment funds for Virginia.

Action

The Eighth Congressional District Democratic Convention:

1. Commends President Obama and the Congress for the adoption of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009;

2. Urges the General Assembly to return to Richmond in a special session and adopt the required changes in the law in order for Virginia to take full advantage of the \$125 million in unemployment benefit funds provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. It's time for all our elected leaders to stand up for Virginia and vote to accept the economic relief we deserve; and

3. Commends Governor Kaine's administration for its active efforts in ensuring the prompt and effective use of the economic stimulus funds in critical infrastructure projects throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Resolution No. 17

Support Our President's Efforts for Diplomacy with Iran

(Sandra J. Klassen)

Background

President Barack Obama promised in his new year address to Iran that he was committed to a new diplomacy that "will not be advanced by threats."

The Obama administration has pursued a paradigm shift from the previous administration's pattern of coercive diplomacy toward Iran.

The Iran-European Union dialogue is showing promising signs, in light of the latest statement by Javier Solana, the EU's foreign policy chief, that praises messages from Tehran as being "constructive" and in presenting "a new opportunity for the advancement of talks."

The consensus documented in the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) by 16 US national intelligence agencies in December of 2007, and reaffirmed in May of 2008, is that Iran ceased its nuclear weapons program in 2003. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) concurred, and in its report of May 2008, that after 14 unannounced inspections in the last 13 months, the "agency has been able to continue to verify" that Iran has not diverted any of its declared nuclear materials to military use.

Given no concrete evidence of imminent danger, it is in US national interest to give the Obama administration's promised "engagement" with Iran a chance to succeed, based on a post-hegemonic frame of reference of "mutual respect" and "common interests" rather than the hitherto failed coercive diplomacy.

Action

The Eighth Congressional District Democratic Convention urges the US Congress to:

1. Support the President's effort to move forward with diplomacy;
2. Oppose any legislation that would undermine his diplomatic efforts.

Resolution No. 18

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS AS PART OF THE HEALTH CARE SAFETY NET

Background:

Community health centers are a vital link in the safety net providing access to health care for people who have no access to private physicians.

As unemployment rises and employer-provided health insurance becomes less common, the need for community health centers to fill the gap in medical coverage increases.

ACTION:

Eighth District Democratic Convention:

1. Commends inclusion of funding for community health center the 2009 federal Economic Stimulus Package; and
2. Urges continued state and federal funding of community health centers that is consistent with the increasing demand for their medical services.

Resolution No. 19

ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS & PATIENT CONFIDENTIALITY

BACKGROUND

The Obama Administration has made funding the conversion of paper medical records to electronic medical records a priority as a means to reduce the administrative cost and increase the efficiency of health care.

Conversion to electronic health records is a component of both the stimulus package and the Administration's health care reform proposals...

Patient advocacy organizations have raised concerns that electronic health records increase the risks of unauthorized access to health records via means such as hacking and unintended release, and inadequate IT security.

Unauthorized access to patient health records –including by parties such as potential employers and health insurance companies – offer opportunities for people to be discriminated against in actions such as employment and health insurance rates.

ACTION:

8th District Democrats

1. Support government efforts to accelerate the use of electronic health records.
2. Support all government actions necessary to insure that gaining unauthorized access to electronic health records will be prevented and prosecuted.

Resolution No. 20

SUPPORT OUR SERVICE MEMBERS, VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES – MEDICAL, EDUCATIONAL AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

ACTION:

The Eighth District Democratic Convention

1. Expresses its sincere gratitude to the members of our military services and their families for their service to our country at all times, especially during the current period of extended military combat abroad; and
2. Calls on the federal and state government to insure that services and programs are available to address the health care, educational and employment needs of members of the military, veterans, and their families and are fully funded.

Resolution No. 21

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICE OF HON. ELLEN BOZMAN.

Background

1. Arlington, Virginia and the metropolitan D.C. region suffered the loss this year of Ellen Bozman, long-time Arlington County Board member, dedicated Democratic and tireless civic activist working to increase the quality of life for all residents in all ways.
2. Ellen Bozman was a courageous pioneer civic activist, and an inspiration to generations of civic activists in our area.
3. Ellen Bozman's civic activism included her dedicated leadership during the 1960s of Arlington efforts to desegregate the Arlington schools during the state of Virginia's massive resistance policy defying federal law to desegregate Virginia's schools; and
4. Ellen Bozman's leadership, at a time when few women were in leadership positions, provided inspiration, encouragement and mentoring to women wishing to become involved in public service.
5. Ellen Bozman's activism included activities such as strengthening day care programs, initiating services for the frail elderly, promoting affordable housing, supporting cultural activities, and starting the farmers' market, and many programs designed to increase the quality of life in the Arlington and Northern Virginia community at large.

ACTION:

The Eighth District Democratic Convention

1. Extends its appreciation to Ellen Bozman and her family for a life time of work on behalf of her community, work which has inspired a generation of Virginians to follow in her footsteps, which helped to create today's Arlington model of civic activism, and its tradition of providing services to those who most need them, and quality of life for all a community priority.

Resolution No. 24

Support the Equal Rights of GLBT Citizens

BACKGROUND

("GLBT") It is time for the world to end centuries of discrimination against, and sometimes persecution of, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered individuals.

ACTION

The 8th District Democratic Convention requests that all elected officials in Virginia support work for the enactment of non-discrimination safeguards in the areas of public and private employment, public accommodations, and housing.

Resolution No. 25

Support Our President's Efforts for Diplomacy with Iran

(Sandra J. Klassen)

Background

President Barack Obama promised in his new year address to Iran that he was committed to a new diplomacy that "will not be advanced by threats."

The Obama administration has pursued a paradigm shift from the previous administration's pattern of coercive diplomacy toward Iran.

The Iran-European Union dialogue is showing promising signs, in light of the latest statement by Javier Solana, the EU's foreign policy chief, that praises messages from Tehran as being "constructive" and in presenting "a new opportunity for the advancement of talks."

The consensus documented in the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) by 16 US national intelligence agencies in December of 2007, and reaffirmed in May of 2008, is that Iran ceased its nuclear weapons program in 2003. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) concurred, and in its report of May 2008, that after 14 unannounced inspections in the last 13 months, the "agency has been able to continue to verify" that Iran has not diverted any of its declared nuclear materials to military use.

Given no concrete evidence of imminent danger, it is in US national interest to give the Obama administration's promised "engagement" with Iran a chance to succeed, based on a post-hegemonic frame of reference of "mutual respect" and "common interests" rather than the hitherto failed coercive diplomacy.

Action

The Eighth Congressional District Democratic Convention urges the US Congress to:

1. Support the President's effort to move forward with diplomacy;
2. Oppose any legislation that would undermine his diplomatic efforts.

Resolution No. 26

RESOLUTION ON ENERGY SECURITY AND A CLEAN ENERGY ECONOMY

Background

Whereas the Earth's temperature has increased rapidly in the last century and in the last few decades, global temperature was higher than during any comparable period since A. D. 1600,

Whereas scientists have confirmed that human activities are changing the Earth's climate, creating the "greenhouse effect," primarily by the burning of fossil fuels,

Whereas scientists say we must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by four percent a year to avoid the most severe risks to people and the environment,

Whereas the U. S. is four percent of the world's population but uses 26 percent of the world's energy,

Whereas emissions of carbon dioxide, a major greenhouse gas, in Virginia rose by 35 percent between 1990 and 2004, a rate nearly twice the national average and Virginia's carbon dioxide emissions exceed those of some other countries,

Whereas Virginia, because of its latitude and coastline, is particularly vulnerable to a rise in sea level,

Whereas Virginia is 38th among states in energy efficiency and efficiency is the most cost-effective way to reduce emissions,

Whereas polls show that 76 percent of Virginians believe global warming is happening, 72 percent say it requires immediate government action and nearly 80 percent would pay more for more energy efficiency,

Whereas all levels of government, private industry and individuals have a responsibility to be stewards of the environment on which human life depends;

Whereas the path to reducing emissions is to use less energy, use energy more efficiently, limit greenhouse gas emissions and use cleaner sources of energy,

Whereas reducing dependence on imported fuels can lead to energy security and reduce U. S. involvement in international conflicts,

Whereas failing to act is costly because of the costs incurred with more severe weather events, higher energy prices, more erosion and more vector-borne diseases,

Whereas President Barack Obama has proposed a global warming reduction plan,

Whereas the Virginia Commission on Climate Change asked Congress to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent,

Be it resolved that the 8th District Democratic Convention urges Virginia's Congressional delegation to support legislation to --

- reduce total U.S. global warming pollution significantly by cutting emissions from carbon-based fuels,
- develop and implement specific measures to reduce the carbon footprint of energy and development activities,
- transition to a clean energy economy by creating incentives for renewable fuels,
- establish renewable electricity portfolio standards,
- enhance energy efficiency in every sector and make new investments in infrastructure, rail and public transit, and
- create new clean energy jobs.