



Memo

To: Pat Mullins, RPV Chairman
From: Dave Rexrode, RPV Executive Director
Date: August 24, 2011
Subj: 2011 General Assembly Races

Now that the August 23rd Primary has passed I wanted to update you on the state of the 2011 General Assembly races and lay out our path to increasing our majority in the House of Delegates and gaining a majority in the State Senate. Having spent months reviewing the districts, meeting with our candidates, developing detailed campaign plans and launching our statewide Victory 2011 program, I feel confident that we have a great opportunity to achieve our goals this fall.

House of Delegates

As you know, in the House of Delegates today we have 59 seats held by Republicans and there are two seats held by Independents who caucus with our party, giving us a governing majority of 61 seats. 52 of our Republican Delegates are seeking re-election, two Republican Delegates are running for the State Senate and five are retiring. Of the two Independents who caucus with us, one is running for re-election and the other is retiring.

The Democrats have 39 members currently serving in the House of Delegates. As a result of population growth reflected in the 2010 U.S. Census, three seats currently held by incumbent Democratic Delegates were eliminated and moved to northern Virginia during redistricting. Two of the three Democrats who had their districts move to northern Virginia retired, while one moved to challenge a Republican incumbent. The Democrats also had two members retire and one run for the State Senate. 33 of the Democratic Delegates are seeking re-election.

This fall there are 14 open seats in the House of Delegates. Three are the new seats created by redistricting, three are created by Democrats leaving the House, seven are created by Republicans leaving the House, and one is created by the retirement of an Independent Delegate. Governor McDonnell won 13 of these districts in 2009 and we have Republican candidates running in all 13 of those districts and have a great opportunity to win all of those races. The Democrats are running candidates in 10 of the 14 open seat races. When looking at the current state of these Open Seat races, we could be looking at a net gain of several new seats for our majority in the House of Delegates, plus a switch from an Independent caucus member to a Republican caucus member.

Of the 52 Republican Delegates running for re-election, only nine of them will face a Democratic challenger this fall, or roughly 17%.

Of the 33 Democratic Delegates running for re-election, seven of them will face a Republican challenger this fall, or roughly 21%.

All told, Republicans have candidates running in 73 of the 100 House of Delegate districts. The Democrats have candidates running in just 53 of the 100 House of Delegate districts. There is also one Independent running for re-election who is a member of the Republican caucus.

With so few of our incumbent Republican Delegates facing opposition, we are in a very strong position to re-elect all of them this fall. The vast majority of those Republicans who do have opposition face token Democratic challengers. All nine Republican Delegates who have Democratic challengers are in districts that Governor McDonnell won in 2009 with at least 57% of the vote.

While our Republican incumbents face token opposition, many of our Republican challengers are in a great position to defeat incumbent Democrats. Three of our Republican challengers are in districts that Governor McDonnell won in 2009, two of them in districts where he won more than 55% of the vote. All of our Republican challengers are running aggressive grassroots focused campaigns, have well thought out campaign plans that they are executing, and have the ability to win these challenger races.

After looking at the number of Republican incumbents running for re-election with little to no Democratic opposition, our likely success in the open seat races, and the large number of challenger candidates who have the opportunity to defeat incumbent Democrats, I strongly believe that we can increase our majority in the House of Delegates and build a stronger governing majority for years to come.

State Senate

In the State Senate today we have 18 seats held by Republicans. As a result of population growth reflected in the 2010 U.S. Census, two seats currently held by incumbent Republican Senators were eliminated and moved to northern Virginia and central Virginia during the redistricting process. Instead of facing a Republican incumbent vs. Republican incumbent nomination contest, Senator Fred Quayle retired and Senator Bill Stanley moved — along with most of his old district — into the 20th Senate District to run against an incumbent Democratic Senator which allowed us to avoid any incumbent vs. incumbent nomination contests. We also had one additional Republican Senator retire. We currently have 15 Republican Senators seeking re-election, along with Senator Bill Stanley who is running against an incumbent Democratic Senator.

The Democrats have 22 members currently serving in the State Senate. Two incumbent Democratic Senators retired. 20 of the Democratic Senators are seeking re-election.

This fall there are 5 open seats in the State Senate. Two are the new seats created by redistricting, two are created by Democrats retiring from the Senate, and one is a result of the retirement of Republican Senator William Wampler. Both Republicans and Democrats have candidates running in all five of the open seat races. Governor McDonnell won three of these open seat districts in 2009 with at least 64% of the vote. All five of our candidates have strong ties to their communities, are executing well thought out campaign plans, are working hard to reach out to voters, and have the ability to win these races. We have an excellent chance of winning a majority of these races.

Of the 15 Republican Senators running for re-election, only three of them will face Democratic opposition this fall, or roughly 20%. Additionally, Senator Bill Stanley is running against an incumbent Democratic Senator.

Of the 20 Democratic Senators running for re-election, 16 of them will face a Republican challenger this fall, or roughly 80%. Governor McDonnell won 11 of these 16 Democratically held districts in 2009, including winning three of them with more than 60% of the vote. In all of these districts, we have strong candidates running, individuals who have excellent opportunities to defeat these incumbent Democrats.

All told, Republicans have candidates running in 36 of the 40 Senate districts. The Democrats have candidates running in just 28 of the 40 Senate districts.

While our Republican incumbents face virtually no Democratic opposition this fall, many of our Republican challengers are in a great position to defeat incumbent Democrats. With strong Republican challengers like Senator Bill Stanley, Delegate Dave Nutter, former Williamsburg City Councilman Mickey Chohany, former Congressional candidates Ben Loyola and Adam Light, former Delegate Jeff Frederick, and others, we have a great opportunity to defeat several incumbent Democratic Senators this fall.

The path to gaining a Republican majority in the State Senate is pretty clear. If we re-elect all 16 of our incumbent Republican Senators, win the open William Wampler Senate Seat (Governor McDonnell won SD-40 with 75% in 2009) and win the two new seats created by redistricting (Governor McDonnell won both SD-13 and SD-22 with more than 64% in 2009), all we will need to do is win at least one of the 16 challenger races to get to a 20-20 tie and then Republican Lt. Governor Bill Bolling becomes the tie-breaking vote. We win two of the 16 races, and we will have a Republican majority.

Overview

As of this morning, only 12 of our incumbent Republican Members of the General Assembly (House of Delegates and State Senate combined) will face a Democratic challenger this fall. Statewide, we have 109 Republican candidates running for the General Assembly compared to the Democrats who only have 81 candidates running. It is clear that we have the momentum going into the fall elections and that the Democrats are in a completely defensive position.

After looking at the number of Republican incumbents running for re-election with virtually no Democratic opposition, our likely success in the open seat races, and the large number of challenger candidates who have the opportunity to defeat incumbent Democrats, I strongly believe that we have the ability to gain a Republican Senate majority and build a stronger governing majority in the House of Delegates for years to come.

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