



STATEMENT BY SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER NORMENT

Richmond, Va, 15 April 2011: Senate of Virginia Minority Leader Thomas K. Norment, Jr. (R-James City) today issued the following statement regarding Senate Majority Leader Richard L. Saslaw's (D-Fairfax) assertions that Senate Republicans were accommodated in the Howell Plan:

"Assertions made to members of the media today by Senator Saslaw implying that alterations to the Howell Plan were made for the convenience of or to accommodate the Senate Republican Caucus are inaccurate.

"The situation involving the City of Williamsburg, which under the Howell Plan would not be whole and not united with James City County in a single Senate District for the first time in 124 years, is a good illustration of the underlying flaws in the Plan and the Senate Democrats' redistricting efforts.

"After I publicly expressed my dissatisfaction about splitting James City County and Williamsburg, Senator Saslaw asked me what could be done to rectify the problem. I informed him that Williamsburg – all of Williamsburg – should be placed in the same senate district with James City County, as it has always been.

"Apparently unwilling to make that sensible change, the Senate Democrats instead chose to split Williamsburg – making the final version of their plan the worst so far.

"The situation involving Williamsburg is typical of the Senate Democrats efforts to 'accommodate' their Republican colleagues. There are examples of similar problems throughout Virginia with the Howell Plan. It splits Prince William County and the City of Virginia Beach multiple ways, limiting representation of these localities by their own residents. Ignoring communities of interest, it splits the City of Lynchburg two ways and Culpeper County three ways. It creates Richmond area districts that stretch all the way to metro Lynchburg. And, it takes a Peninsula-based district and turns it into one that begins in Suffolk on the North Carolina border and goes all the way to King and Queen County on the Middle Peninsula.

"The problem is that the Howell Plan is bad for the people of Virginia and irreparably flawed. Making minor modifications to it in attempts to make it less odious to Republican senators won't improve the Plan or prevent its negative effects on Virginians.

"Today, Governor McDonnell has given Senate Democrats a chance for a fresh start. Instead of digging in their heels in support of a plan that has been pilloried by local governments, civic groups, the media, and concerned citizens across Virginia, they need to listen to the criticisms and work toward crafting a plan that puts the people of Virginia first."

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