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**Contributing Writer**

October 2014 – Current

RVA Mag

Cover local events and arts, interview a wide variety of subjects, review albums and films, write previews for upcoming artistic events including gallery shows, plays, and musical performances.

**Contributing Writer**

October 2014 - Current

GayRVA.com

Cover local events and issues that relate to the LGBTQ community. Interview and spotlight queer artists and performers, cover legislation proposed in the general assembly. Learned how to best highlight the issue that matter most to the community and how to best cover and convey the message.

**Contributing Writer**

August 2016 - Current

The Commonwealth Times

Cover local music and events with an angle best-suited for student consumption. Helped cover the Trump protests as well as interviewing the Richmond Reproductive Freedom Project

**Contributing Writer**

August 2016 - December 2016

CBS6.com

Helped to cover the local mayoral election during the 2016 cycle. Talked to all the candidates, covered debates, and profiled candidate Jon Baliles. Had work seen by a larger percentage of the Richmond area than ever before.

**Reporter**

January 2017 - Current

Capital News Service

Followed and reported on a wide range of legislation over the course of the General Assembly's 2017 session. Had worked published throughout the Commonwealth and Maryland in such publications as InsideNova, Charlottesville Daily Progress, and the Washington Post.

**Sales Specialist**

May 2015 - Current

Lowe's Home Improvement

Worked 20+ hours a week selling plants, flooring materials, and paint to customers. Assessed needs to best help them with their home improvement tasks.

## **Education**

Virginia Commonwealth University 2014-Current

Majoring in Mass Communications with a focus in Print Journalism and a minor in Political Science. Currently have 92 credit hours completed and am set to graduate in December 2017.

# Dems call for vote on redistricting reforms

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 [m.suffolknewsherald.com/2017/02/01/dems-call-for-vote-on-redistricting-reforms/](http://m.suffolknewsherald.com/2017/02/01/dems-call-for-vote-on-redistricting-reforms/)

By Staff Reports email

Published 9:37 pm Wednesday, February 1, 2017

**By Tyler Hammel**

**Capital News Service**

Democratic delegates on Tuesday called on Republican House Speaker William Howell to revive legislation that supporters say would help take politics out of redistricting.

The Democrats tried to put pressure on Howell a day after a Republican-dominated subcommittee voted to kill five redistricting proposals in one swoop with little discussion.

At its meeting Monday morning, the Constitutional Subcommittee of the House Privileges and Elections Committee ignored a request from a Democratic member to vote on the proposed constitutional amendments individually. The panel then tabled the redistricting measures on a single 4-3 vote.

Republican delegates Randy Minchew of Leesburg, Mark Cole of Fredericksburg, Tim Hugo of Centreville and Jackson Miller of Manassas all voted to table the resolutions. Opposing the motion were Republican Delegate Jason Miyares of Virginia Beach and Democratic delegates Joseph Lindsey of Norfolk and Marcia Price of Newport News.

Democrats in the House of Delegates on Tuesday blasted the subcommittee's action.

"In 2015, every single one of the General Assembly's 122 incumbents who sought re-election won," House Minority Leader David Toscano said in a news release.

"House Republicans have now killed every single redistricting amendment this session, including their own. We call upon the speaker to revive these amendments for a full floor vote, as Virginians deserve to know where their leaders stand on this issue."

Delegate Charniele Herring of Alexandria, who chairs the House Democratic Caucus, said, "Gerrymandering has distorted election results and diluted the power of individual voters. A system in which incumbents can choose their voters and draw political opponents out of districts is undemocratic. We need a full floor vote on a redistricting amendment now."

Brian Cannon, executive director of One Virginia 2021, an advocacy group, condemned the subcommittee's decision to kill HJ 763, which was proposed by Delegate Steve Landes, R-Augusta County.

It sought to prohibit any electoral district from being drawn "for the purpose of favoring or disfavoring any political party, incumbent legislator, member of Congress, or other individual or entity."

"This amendment represents the core component of redistricting reform," Cannon said. "It is simple: If you think politicians should be able to carve out their political opponents, then you are for gerrymandering and the elimination of competition in our elections."

"This was particularly disappointing, given that Delegate Minchew has previously supported redistricting reform and today he cast the deciding vote in his subcommittee to kill even the most modest efforts to stop gerrymandering," Cannon added.

Minchew opened Monday's subcommittee meeting by saying there would be no testimony on the 28 items on the agenda, unless there was a question from a committee member. He noted that the subcommittee had held a three-hour meeting the previous week.

When the redistricting proposals came up, Price asked to have them voted on separately. She was denied.

Then, with one vote, the subcommittee killed:

- Landes' resolution and a similar proposal (HJ 581) sponsored by Del. Rip Sullivan, D-Arlington.
- Three resolutions to create an independent redistricting commission. Those measures were HJ 628, sponsored by Delegate Ken Plum, D-Fairfax County; HJ 651, sponsored by Delegate Betsy Carr, D-Richmond; and HJ 749, sponsored by Delegate John Bell, D-Loudoun County.

[Print Article](#)

# Unconstitutional and Unlawful: Virginia Takes Legal Action Against Trump's Immigration Order

 [altdaily.com/unconstitutional-and-unlawful-virginia-takes-legal-action-against-trumps-immigration-order/](https://altdaily.com/unconstitutional-and-unlawful-virginia-takes-legal-action-against-trumps-immigration-order/)

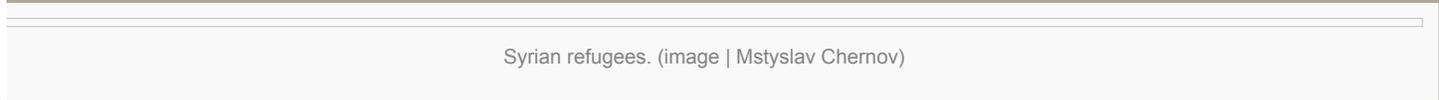
**Attorney General Mark Herring, flanked by Gov. Terry McAuliffe, announced Tuesday that Virginia is taking legal action against President Donald Trump's executive order banning immigrants from seven predominantly Muslim countries.**

*By Mary Lee Clark and Tyler Hammel for Capital News Service*

Herring called the order “unconstitutional and unlawful.”

He said Virginia is already being hurt by the immigration ban. Herring said it affects the state's businesses, schools and communities. He said the executive order prevents students who have visas to study at American universities from continuing their education.

“The commonwealth is compelled to intervene in the case pending in the Eastern District of Virginia challenging that executive order,” Herring said.



Syrian refugees. (image | Mstyslav Chernov)

The case, *Aziz v. Trump*, was filed Saturday by Tareq Aqel Mohammed Aziz, Ammar Aqel Mohammed Aziz, Aqel Mohammed Aziz and John Does 1-60 as a civil action after the individuals were detained at Dulles International Airport.

The plaintiffs believe they were targeted because they are Muslim. They are alleging denial of due process and violation of constitutional rights regarding religion as well as a breach of the Immigration and Nationality Act and other laws.

“We have been working around the clock since Friday to examine this executive order before reaching this conclusion,” Herring said. “This is not an action I take lightly, but it is one I take with confidence in our legal analysis, and in the necessity of intervening to both protect the commonwealth's own sovereign interests and vindicate its residents' civil rights.”

McAuliffe said many companies have told him they are worried about their employees not being able to return to the U.S. He said he supports Herring's legal action because of the commonwealth's belief in religious freedom.

On Friday, Trump signed the executive order barring immigration from Syria, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen. The president said he took the action to protect the nation from potential terrorists. Trump's order prevents citizens from the seven countries from entering the U.S. for three months.

In addition, Trump said the U.S. would not admit any refugees for four months. He suspended the entrance of refugees from Syria indefinitely.

After signing the order, Trump said it was not “a Muslim ban.”

“You see it in the airports, you see it in security. It's working out very nicely,” Trump said. “We're going to have a strict ban, and we're going to have extreme vetting, which we should have had in this country for many years.”

The action has sparked protests across the United States.

On Saturday, U.S. District Judge Leonie Brinkema issued a temporary restraining order blocking the enforcement of portions of the executive order. The restraining order allowed permanent residents of the U.S. being detained at Dulles access to lawyers and prevented them from being deported.

However, the restraining order was ignored by the Customs and Border Protection Agency and the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, according to advocates for the detainees. They said customs and airport authorities refused to give the detained individuals access to lawyers.

## Facebook Comments

comments

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### Capital News Service

Capital News Service is a flagship program of the VCU School of Mass Communications. Students participating in the program provide state government coverage for Virginia's community newspapers and other media outlets, under the supervision of Associate Professor Jeff South.



# Lt. Gov. Northam commemorates VA's same-sex marriage ruling flanked by those it helped

**G** [www.gayrva.com/news-views/lt-gov-northam-commemorates-vas-same-sex-marriage-ruling-flanked-by-those-it-helped/](http://www.gayrva.com/news-views/lt-gov-northam-commemorates-vas-same-sex-marriage-ruling-flanked-by-those-it-helped/)



Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam, who's running for governor, vowed to protect LGBTQ people during a news conference Tuesday that commemorated the anniversary of the *Bostic v. Rainey* decision legalizing same-sex marriage.

Three years ago, Virginia's statutory and constitutional bans on gay marriage were deemed unconstitutional by the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, and soon afterward same-sex marriage came to the commonwealth.

Standing alongside the plaintiffs from the case, Northam said he would not allow Virginia to persecute LGBT residents and suffer economic hardships the way North Carolina did after passing that state's controversial House Bill 2.

"Just before the holidays I completed a seven-city tour that ended in Salem, Virginia, where I was pleased to welcome the NCAA soccer tournament," Northam said.

"That championship was relocated from North Carolina after the state passed anti-LGBT legislation, as was the NBA All-Star game and major businesses," Northam said. "As long as I'm here, as long as Governor (Terry) McAuliffe and Attorney General (Mark) Herring are here, Virginia will be inclusive. We will not be like North Carolina."

Northam spoke not only of the financial impact of anti-LGBT legislation but of his own moral perspective on the issue, placing himself and his wife, Pam, in the shoes of LGBT residents.

"What really distresses me is if someone came to me and said, 'Ralph, you can't love Pam for whatever reason.' Or they came to me and said, 'You and Pam can't have children because of whatever reason.' Or they came to me and said, 'You're going to be discriminated against in the workplace'," Northam said. "That is not the America, that is not

the Virginia that we want.”



*Bostic v. Rainey plaintiffs leaving the Richmond Federal Court*

Carol Schall, one of the plaintiffs from the *Bostic v. Rainey* case, also spoke at the news conference, highlighting the effect the court’s decision three years ago has had on family. She also discussed Del. Mark D. Sickles’ HB 1395, [which would have repealed defunct language the Virginia code and constitution that declared marriage is between a man and a woman.](#)

The bill died in a House committee, leaving the ban [enshrined in the state constitution till at least 2021.](#)

“Names matter. Names like ‘mom’ and ‘wife’ make all the difference in the world,” said Schall.

Sickles, D-Fairfax County, spoke on HB 1395 and how it was struck down in a House committee as it has been in previous years.

He called for a full House vote on the issue and spoke on another piece of legislation he filed this session, HJ 538, which would allow voters to repeal a constitutional amendment passed in 2006 that defined marriage as being between ‘one man and one woman.’

“If this constitutional amendment were passed and it passed again next winter, by the time it got to the voters in November of ‘18, 1.2 million people in our state will have come of age,” Sickles said. “They want to speak to this. They do not want the people of the 2006 cultural and societal milieu to speak forever.”

Constitutional amendments require approval in two General Assembly sessions before they can be offered to voters on a November ballot.

Sickles’ HB 1395 and HJ 538 were not the only pro-LGBT legislation to die in House committees this session. Del. Mark Levine, D-Alexandria, who was present at the conference, also saw his legislation—HB 2129—die early on.

Levine’s bill would have protected employees from being fired based on their sexual orientation, and died in the same subcommittee meeting that approved a “religious freedom” bill from Del. Nicholas J. Freitas, R-Culpeper.

Freitas' HB 2025 says no one can be penalized for refusing to participate in a marriage ceremony, has passed a Senate committee and is awaiting action on the Senate floor in the coming weeks, though McAuliffe has promised to veto it like he did last year.