

One Republican
20 November 2002

Happy Early Thanksgiving

Happy Thanksgiving next week. My thanks givings to the Lord are daily no matter what. Yet, this election was a special joy – locally and nationally. Our votes are the triumph of hope. No gloating and no false assumptions.

Our turnout in York and Poquoson was 20% higher than I predicted. Our vote was a resounding ‘NO’ to the wrong tax and plan. Now, the General Assembly and the Governor can ‘do it right in Richmond’.

Nationally, over 4 million Americans voted Republican. Republicans got votes 52% over Democrats 46% nationally and 56 to 41 per cent in the South. The GOP has 51 seats in the Senate and is trying for one more in Louisiana. The GOP margin in the House increased by 4 seats. 26 governorships are Republican. Republicans control 21 state legislatures – picking up 4 states – and Democrats have 17, while 11 states are divided. The non-ideological moderates gave the Republicans the edge for this election. That’s enough to create hope.

Republicans have a two year window to produce results. We need to move forward on key aspects of our conservative agenda. Let’s roll.

My thanks to fellow citizens in York and Poquoson are huge. I’ve never seen the voters better informed on the issues. So, I ask you to stay informed on other issues as time unfolds.

Like a bill appropriate for this Thanksgiving season. We are reminded of the stories of the Indians and the English settlers in the first Thanksgiving in Virginia and that other one somewhere up North. Now, almost four hundred years later there is a bill about Indians in Virginia in the U.S. Congress. It’s a well intentioned, Republican-sponsored bill and it’s really a bad bill.

H.R. 2345, Extend Federal Recognition to Virginia Indian Tribes (<http://thomas.loc.gov>) is meant to right a ‘wrong’ by providing Federal recognition to six Indian tribes – assimilated as Virginians for almost 300 years.

The bill precludes Indian gambling casinos – for today only. In the future the Indian tribes could petition for a new Indian compact to allow gambling. Nothing prevents any Indian from opening a tax-free store for alcohol, tobacco, whatever immediately in any of the areas – whole counties of Virginia – designated as Indian lands. It gets worse.

The bill provides educational and welfare ‘benefits’ based on race. It allows federally-funded Indian schools. Since when do conservative Republicans want to expand welfare, especially handouts – including scholarships, based on race? Look at the terrible havoc Federal socialism wrecks on Indian reservations out West.

Six new Indian governments introduce a new level of government in Virginia for local and state authorities to deal with on every issue of transportation, zoning, environment, education, etc. We just voted against regional governments.

The General Assembly passed a resolution to support this bill. Oops, just like they passed the Sales Tax Referendum.

18 months after the bill passes, if it does, the Indians have to submit a list of members. If you are 1/8th Indian, you qualify. How disgusting to go back to the old

racial blood codes – the octagoon - for racial identification! Do you know which of your neighbors are 1/8th Indian? Are they different from you as Virginians? C'mon, it's been almost 300 years. Do they deserve special privileges, welfare, and their own government based on race?

The tribes can make any constitution and bylaws they want. They're a sovereign government. The tribes can transfer land to a reservation status (like the Chickahominy Tribe can transfer land in Charles City, James City and Henrico).

If Indians need recognition to celebrate their unique history, then have a celebration of some sort. Don't poison our politics and government in 2002 with old racial identity politics.

Please ask our Congressional delegation, especially Cong. Jo Ann Davis and Sen. George Allen, to kill this bill now. Celebrate Virginia's Indians at Thanksgiving, but don't play racial politics.

James Atticus Bowden