

Staunton, Augusta, Waynesboro Democratic Committees
SAW Joint Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2021
Meeting by Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM. There were approximately 24 in attendance. Four statewide candidates expressed their views and took questions.

Candidate for Lt. Governor Paul Goldman – Former chair of DPVA and longtime Dem operative having started with Henry Howe and worked to get Doug Wilder elected. Laser focused on improving public education in Virginia with emphasis on Equal Education Opportunity. Has been trying to bring this issue to the forefront for decades. Pointed out that the VA constitution does not guarantee equal education opportunity. Mr. Goldman angry at both Democrats as Republicans in that Democrats have done nothing to adequately fund public education either. Resources have been redirected by both parties to other areas. Notes that this should not be a partisan issue as it effects both inner city (traditionally Democratic areas) and rural (traditionally Republican areas). Quoted Martin Luther King: “Education is the great equalizer”.

Candidate for Attorney General Mark Herring – Current Attorney General. Prior to this served on the Loudon County Board of Supervisors, town attorney for Lovettsville, VA., and Virginia State Senator. Personal background includes being raised by a single Mom, first job was as a construction laborer, worked his way through college using Pell grants. Ran for this job eight years ago because he felt the powers of this office had previously been misused and promised instead that these powers would always be on the side of the people. Fought for marriage equality, established the first Civil Rights Office as part of the Attorney General’s organization, and initiated the first investigation of systematic racism in a Virginia school system. Mr. Herring pointed out that under his direction the backlog of rape kits has been eliminated. Emphasized that the last four years has been spent defending Democracy from the Trump administration. Pointing out that he was the first state AG to challenge the Muslim ban and went before the Supreme Court twice in defense of the Affordable Care Act. He has worked towards criminal justice reform and supports holding police departments with a history of racism accountable. Two questions from the audience:

- **Question** – Please comment on Title IX and sexual assault on college campuses. **Answer** – Started making progress on these issues when the Trump administration started taking us backwards. Filed suit against DeVos when she tried to scale back protections.
- **Question** – Have you investigated these 2nd Amendment sanctuary counties/cities and some sheriff offices disregarding the gun safety laws? **Answer** – These resolutions passed by local governments have no legal effect. Mr. Herring said he is confident that any sheriff would enforce these laws under court order and does not know of any instance of laws not being enforced under these circumstances. The bigger issue are these militias that masquerade as law enforcement and act as vigilantes.

Candidate for Lt. Governor Mark Levine – Constitutional lawyer currently representing HOD District 45 (Parts of Alexandria/Arlington/Fairfax Counties). Emphasized his work to secure LGBTQ rights and his signature issue – gun safety and militias. Bills banning guns at polling places and vote counting locations. Also gun ban at all State of Virginia offices statewide. Stating there is no right to threaten gun violence. Pointed out there are only three statewide elected offices in VA and one of those, Lt. Governor, is considered part time. This is a 19th Century model when what VA needs is a 21st Century Lt. Governor in the same vein as Vice President Harris’s stated approach to her position. Mr. Levine

promised to be a full time Lt. Governor visiting every county and city in VA multiple times during his tenure. His approach will be what he uses today in his District and that is to sit and talk with people anytime on any subject. He presents his ideas as not big socialist programs but meeting individual needs one on one. He is proud of his record and proud to be the 2nd most progressive member of the HOD. One question from the audience:

- **Question** – Do you intend to increase the power of the Lt. Governor? **Answer** – Can't do that unilaterally but certainly can use the "bully pulpit" to advance legislation and programs he believes in. And doesn't need to agree with the Governor all the time. Can have his own legislative agenda. The people he wants to talk with are the individual citizens of VA (particularly the disadvantaged) not the lobbyists in Richmond.

Candidate for Lt. Governor Andrea McClellan – Currently serving on Norfolk City Council. Business background in sales and marketing. Prior experience as small business owner. Personal background has taught her importance of the Community College System (raised by single Mom who succeeded through Community College education) and small business owner experience (owned two small businesses). Feels that experience in local Government is a vital prerequisite to statewide office. It is only at the local Government level that you can relate to the needs of the average citizen. Noted that Tim Kaine also started political life at the local level on a City Council. Ms. McClellan is the only candidate for Lt. Governor with this local Government experience. Committed to treating Lt. Governor as full time job with focus on equal opportunity access, broadband for every Virginian, a clean environment and of course open access to elected officials.

Meeting concluded at approximately 8:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted
John Kowal, Treasurer ACDC