



## 2017 ELECTION UPDATE

November 13, 2017

The results of the 2017 state elections represent the most dramatic change in Virginia's political climate in the last 100 years. The continuation of Democratic leadership in all three statewide offices is assured by the victories of Ralph Northam, Justin Fairfax, and Mark Herring. While some contests will enter a recount, the Republican majority in the House of Delegates - 66-34 prior to the election - has been nearly eliminated. (The Senate of Virginia is narrowly in Republican hands by a 21-19 margin and members are not up for election until 2019.) KVCF Solutions has developed an excellent relationship with Governor-elect Northam, Lieutenant Governor-elect Fairfax, and Attorney General Herring.

After nearly 40 years serving VDOT and DMV, and after 4 years serving HCCA on my own, earlier this year I joined KVCF Solutions to lead the firm's transportation practice. KVCF Solutions is the state government relations subsidiary of the law firm of Kaplan Voekler Cunningham & Frank based in Richmond's Shockoe Slip District. Alongside my colleagues Steve Baril and James Hoffman, it is our goal to continue and enhance the Association's relationship with the new governor and to use the transition as an opportunity for HCCA to become a major contributor in the areas of infrastructure, workforce development, and transportation financing. Our firm is in current contact with campaign leadership to offer HCCA's assistance and support during the transition period and beyond. In addition to the election of statewide officers, major changes in both House membership and committee structure are certain.

Ron Villanueva, Chairman of the House Transportation Committee and a friend of HCCA, was defeated as were many prominent members of the Northern Virginia delegation with whom the Association has grown accustomed to working. Key changes include the loss of Delegates Jim LeMunyon, Jackson Miller, Randy Minchew, and Rich Anderson. At this hour recounts are likely in four districts (to include that of Delegate Tim Hugo). Delegate Hugo has been very supportive of most HCCA and transportation-related issues in the past. The other races that may feature recounts include those of Delegate David Yancey (R-Newport News), Delegate Rocky Holcomb (R-Virginia Beach), and the race to fill the Fredericksburg seat currently occupied by

retiring Republican Speaker of the House Bill Howell. Three out of four of these races' vote differentials stand at less than 120 votes.

It should also be noted that the Joint Commission on Transportation Accountability is chaired by Delegate Hugo and that Delegates LeMunyon, Anderson, and Minchew had been prominent members. The election results will significantly alter the dynamic of the JCTA and will have a similar effect on House Transportation Committee makeup.

As of today, House GOP leadership claims a 51-49 majority, though some believe that post-recount the House could split or be taken by Democrats. A 50-50 split in the House of Delegates would impact the leadership role of Speaker-Designee Kirk Cox, already designated to fill the position in January 2018 based on a pre-election Republican majority in the chamber. A split's impact on the House Transportation Committee would be the installation of a mutually agreed upon power-sharing arrangement, something that has only occurred once during my time in Virginia politics. This shared leadership structure would offer both challenges and opportunities for HCCA.

Though it will take considerable time and effort, our firm sees political change as opportunity. HCCA will have the chance to engage and educate new members about the Association and its policy positions, and to advance those positions in a more pro-active manner.

Sincerely,

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### **Areas of Opportunity**

- **Enhanced Infrastructure in NOVA** - It was interesting to hear, during a national interview broadcast with newly-elected Delegate Roem (who will replace Delegate Bob Marshall), her indication that the most important constituent issue is improvement of Route 28 and enhanced transportation infrastructure. This theme was replicated by other newly-elected representatives and Governor-elect Northam in his candidate forum appearance with HCCA and NVT. These positions, whether from Republicans or Democrats, suggest that transportation can be a bi-partisan issue area and that HCCA can be an integral part of these policy discussions.
- **Workforce Development** - On behalf of HCCA, KVCF Solutions has discussed this critical issue with Governor-elect Northam. We have also had discussions with Lt. Governor-elect Fairfax on the need for educating, training, and hiring employees to fill jobs supporting economic development and quality of life for the citizens of Northern Virginia and the Commonwealth.

- **Transition of Administration** - HCCA will continue to offer support and participate in the selection of the Northam-Fairfax Administration's leadership, cabinet, and policy positions. Our firm's interaction on this front has already begun.
- **Continued Communication** - KVCF Solutions will continually solicit HCCA's Executive Director and Board to provide guidance as strategic government relations planning evolves into the new year.