

## **The 2012 Democratic Party of Virginia State Convention Fights For Women's Interests**

### **Background**

Democrats fight for women's interests on fundamental issues including jobs, fairness in pay, and healthcare.

Virginia has historically made national headlines because it was the best state in the country to raise children . . . the best-managed state . . . or the best state for doing business. But in 2012, Gov. McDonnell and a General Assembly dominated by the most conservative members of the Republican Party began a systematic assault on every aspect of women's lives.

The General Assembly passed—and the Governor signed—legislation that makes it harder for women to obtain needed women's health services by requiring unnecessary and costly medical procedures that limit access, and adding additional regulations aimed at closing down women's health clinics.

The Republican-controlled House of Delegates passed HB1, the so-called personhood bill. Even more conservative than the personhood legislation rejected by Mississippi voters, HB1 would have outlawed many forms of contraception. In addition, the Governor signed legislation that will mandate medically unnecessary ultrasound procedures before women can terminate a pregnancy. Passage of this legislation marks only the second time Virginia has ever mandated a medical procedure (the first being the forced sterilization of the mentally ill).

Governor McDonnell's 1989 Regent University grad school thesis asserted that working women are "detrimental" to the "traditional" family. In 2012, a variety of Republican policies continue to make it harder for working women to achieve parity with their male coworkers. Virginia women make just 79 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterpart.

On the federal level, Republicans in Congress are stalling any action on the Paycheck Fairness Act, introduced in the U.S. Senate by five women senators. Republican George Allen continues to duck the issue. Furthermore, the House of Representatives voted to water down the Violence Against Women Act which would protect battered women and their families.

Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney wants to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and eliminate Planned Parenthood funding, and he supports legislation that would allow employers and insurance companies to deny women coverage for contraception, prenatal and other health care they need. In stark contrast, President Obama and Democratic officials support pay equity, women's reproductive rights, and healthcare programs that serve women and children.

### **Action**

The 2012 Democratic Party of Virginia State Convention:

1. Joins President Obama, Tim Kaine, and our Democratic congressmen in supporting the legislation before Congress to provide pay equity for women; and
2. Recognizes and thanks the Democratic members of the General Assembly who fought valiantly to protect women's most basic freedoms.