

1-1-2012

Letter from the Editor

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Recommended Citation

Alison B. Linas, *Letter from the Editor*, 16 RICH. J.L. & PUB. INT. xi (2012).

Available at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/pilr/vol16/iss1/2>

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers:

I am proud to present you all with the 2012 edition of the *General Assembly in Review*. This issue has been several months in the making and is the product of the very hard work and dedication of the Editors and Staff of the *Richmond Journal of Law and the Public Interest* (JOLPI). In particular, I would like to thank Rachel Logan, who went above and beyond her regular Editor-in-Chief duties to make this edition come to fruition. I would also like to thank Amy Weiss and Mary Garber, the editors of last year's General Assembly issue for their hard work in selecting articles and their guidance in preparing me to take the reigns as the General Assembly editor.

The articles in this year's edition of the *General Assembly in Review* focus on topics of legislative debate during the 2012 sessions of the Virginia General Assembly. We hope that this edition will give you, our readers, insight into some of the important topics of the 2012 General Assembly and we hope that you will find this issue to be a valuable source in running a legal practice, evaluating the Virginia political system, and helping create a healthy dialogue in our beloved Commonwealth.

In *The Virginia Rules of Evidence*, University of Richmond professor Ronald Bacigal provides a brief insight into the history and application of the new Virginia Rules of Evidence.

In *Virginia's Expanded Nutrient Trading Law: Will It Help Restore the Chesapeake Bay While Allowing for Growth?*, Margaret (Peggy) Sanner of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation discusses the impact of the newly expanded nutrient trading program signed into law in the 2012 legislative session. This article contemplates how the law, in conjunction with new EPA regulations, will help Virginia reach its pollution reduction goals by the 2025 target date without closing off needed economic growth.

In *Giving Voices to the Underserved: A Review of How Lower-Income Virginians Fared in the 2012 Virginia General Assembly*, Christie Marra of the Virginia Poverty Law Center and H. Timothy Perry, a law student at the University of Richmond discuss the impact of new and proposed legislation on Virginia's poor. They break down "the good, the bad, and the ugly" of the legislations' impact on legal immigrant children and pregnant

women, kinship care families, and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) families.

In *Reproductive Freedom and Virginia's 2012 General Assembly Session*, Katherine Greenier from the American Civil Liberties Union of Virginia discusses the wide range of reproductive health bills that were passed and proposed in the General Assembly in the 2012 session. This article looks at the bills' impact on Virginia women and analyzes the partisan nature behind the bills.

In *Virginia's "War on Women:" How Forcing Women to Have An Ultrasound Before Abortion is Unconstitutional*, I specifically analyze the constitutionality of Virginia's new ultrasound law from two angles. First, the article concludes that the law is unconstitutional under *Planned Parenthood v. Casey's* undue burden standard. Second, it violates a citizen's recognized right to refuse medical care.

In *Dispatch From the Culture War: Virginia's Failed HPV Vaccination Mandate*, law student and former editor-in-chief Rachel Reynolds discusses Virginia legislators' attempts to repeal the HPV vaccination mandate in Virginia. She also analyzes how Virginia and other states' mandates have actually affected the vaccination's coverage.

As in past issues, this edition of the *General Assembly in Review* concludes with a list of summaries of the major legislation considered and passed in the 2012 Virginia General Assembly. We thank the students who wrote these summaries for their work, and hope they will serve as a valuable resource to all those interested in Virginia lawmaking.

We sincerely hope that our articles, comments, summaries, and index will provide you with a valuable tool to help in your practice areas. We encourage you to use this issue as a starting point for discussion as well as a catalyst to encourage you to become involved in the political process in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Sincerely,

Alison B. Linas

General Assembly Editor 2012-2013