
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

When I was appointed Editor-in-Chief of the *Richmond Journal of Law and the Public Interest* (JOLPI) this spring, I was both thrilled and terrified. The Journal has been increasingly successful in recent years: recruiting large classes of staff members, organizing well-attended symposia, and publishing a record number of issues. The goals the new Editorial Board inherited were lofty ones, including maintaining our recent successes, while adding a new issue in a new medium. The issue that you are reading—the inaugural edition of *The General Assembly in Review*—is the happy result of those two goals. With this issue, JOLPI takes its place as one of the few Journals at the University of Richmond Law School to publish in print. The costs and efforts associated with this achievement are great and are a testament to both the school’s faith in the Journal and the Journal’s faith in itself.

The issue before you today is the result of more than a year of hard work. Its success is attributable to two staff classes, two Editorial Boards, and more than a little cooperation. The goal in creating *The General Assembly in Review* was to provide the community with a timely—yet thorough—analysis of the Virginia General Assembly session. This was no small task. To publish the issue soon after the conclusion of the session, JOLPI members had to identify major legislative themes, solicit independent articles, and write bill summaries in anticipation of this date. Even with such advance planning, the issue required a final push at the most dreaded time in a law student’s semester: exam period. So it is with much gratitude that I thank all those JOLPI members who volunteered their precious time to make this issue a reality: Matt Dahl, Mary Hunt, Bethany Ingle, Chris Johnson, Alison Kenny, Anne Roddy, Jonathan Sumrell, and Bridget Welborn. Additionally, I owe a great debt of gratitude to the heroic efforts of Alysha Fulkerson and Erin Murphy, the outgoing General Assembly Editors; Chelsea Dunn, the current General Assembly Editor; Theresa Young, the current Executive Editor; and Emilee Hasbrouck, the current Publications Editor. This issue would still be just a lofty goal without their tenacity and perseverance.

This issue is divided into two parts. The first section features a collection of articles and editorials reflecting on specific issues addressed by the General Assembly. The section opens by examining the evolution of the Commonwealth’s mental health laws. In *A New Era Begins: Mental Health Law Reform in the Commonwealth*, Jane D. Hickey, Allyson K. Tysinger, and William C. Mims of the Office of the Virginia Attorney General detail the specific changes made to the mental health commitment process in Virginia. In his editorial, *Mental Health in Virginia*, Delegate Phillip Hamilton forecasts improved methods of addressing the commitment process for individuals with mental illnesses, while Colleen

Miller advocates for more comprehensive mental health laws in her editorial, *Promised Reforms Fall Short of the Mark*.

Providing an analysis of the changes to environmental laws, Nicole M. Rovner's *The Role of Citizens in Environmental Decision-Making* traces the legislation restructuring the three review boards of the Department of Environmental Quality through the General Assembly.

Engaging in an analysis of immigration laws, Delegate David Albo's editorial, *Illegal Immigration Legislation in the General Assembly – From the Perspective of an Advocate of Passing Laws to Stop Illegal Immigration* proposes methods of lawmaking to eliminate illegal immigration while Leah A. Seller's editorial, *Two Thumbs Down*, suggests that the legislature traded quality for immediacy in immigration reform.

On the issue of health, an editorial by Rickie Fulcher, *Secondhand Smoke Deserves First-Rate Attention*, examines the healthcare effects of tobacco and secondhand smoke.

Next, juvenile justice and child welfare also proved prominent issues in the legislature, and the editorial, *Who You Gonna Call?* by Melissa Goemann examines the Commonwealth's efforts to create a children's ombudsman office.

In an examination of family law, the comment *The Price of Privilege*, by Mary Wilkins Hunt analyzes the role of mental health professionals in child custody decision-making. Lastly, Theresa M. Young's comment, *DUI GILT PL8*, evaluates the license plate sanction proposed in the House of Delegates for multiple DUI offenders.

The issue's second part contains summaries of major legislation passed by the General Assembly in the most recent session. Although listed in ascending order, these bills can be searched by legislator, committee, keyword, and Code sections affected for convenience. These summaries were tracked throughout the session and later indexed by editors in the hope that they will provide an easy tool for searching recent legislation.

So it is with a sigh of relief and no small measure of pride that I present to you the inaugural issue of *The General Assembly in Review*.

Katherine Wallmeyer Payne
Editor-in-Chief