

**Senator Houck Reports to the 17<sup>th</sup> District**  
**April 25, 2008**

On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Virginia General Assembly met for its annual veto session in Richmond. Some key topics discussed were:

**Access to Mental Health Drugs**

As an early critic, I was able to garner opposition to the Governor's amendment restricting access to mental health drugs for those in need. This amendment was defeated overwhelmingly by the legislature.

**Capital Projects**

The General Assembly passed legislation to borrow approximately 1.5 billion dollars to finance construction and renovation projects for state colleges, state parks and mental health facilities. Financed projects include construction at the University of Mary Washington and Germanna Community College.

**Substance Abuse Funding**

I led efforts to reject a Governor's budget amendment withdrawing \$5 million from substance abuse services. It was defeated in the Senate.

**Judicial Nominations**

Working with the local bar associations, my colleagues and I elected the following individuals to fill four judicial vacancies:

- Mr. Jack Berry: 16<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court
- Judge Joe Ellis: 15<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court
- Judge J. Overton Harris: 15<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court
- Ms. Patricia Kelly: 15<sup>th</sup> Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court

**State Energy Plan**

The General Assembly rejected the Governor's amendment to the State Energy Plan. After hearing from many constituents, I feared it would limit the evidence the State Corporation Commission uses when determining whether to grant utilities applications for new transmission facilities, such as the proposed Dominion line in Northern Culpeper.

**Keep in Contact**

The 2008 Session has adjourned, however I remain available to help the people of the 17<sup>th</sup> Senate District. If you need assistance, please feel free to contact my office via telephone at (540) 786-2782, via e-mail at senatorhouck@comcast.net, or via fax at (540) 891-8805. I look forward to hearing from you.

