



# THE LEGION



## The Case For Independent Candidates

Colter Adams

Boys State purports to "cultivate leadership skills

and develop pride in American citizenship," and in many cases this claim rings true. The American Legion brings in influential speakers from across the political spectrum that exemplify ethical leadership and civic service. It also provides comprehensive training in legislative and judicial proceedings, as well as opportunities for students to learn the roles of government officials first-hand. However, one fundamental flaw is ruining the governing experience: the two-party system.

Yes, the two-party system exists in the actual Virginia government. However, both real parties are strong institutions deeply rooted in Virginian history. They inspire loyalty and activism because they have carefully crafted and ideologically consistent platforms that appeal to specific demographics. The Federalist and Nationalist parties at Boys State have nothing of the sort. They are empty shells, structured like actual political factions, but with no distinguishing characteristics. As a result, the governing experience within the parties is inauthentic. Representatives in the legislature are more concerned about local interests than they are about implementing their platforms. In both chambers, there was no correlation between party and voting record. Additionally, in the conventions, candidates sacrificed legitimate planks for a few laughs, resulting in platforms that would be ridiculed in any real political organization. Naked trial by combat was approved by the Nationalist party. The winning Federalist candidate, frustrated with the lack of seriousness at the convention, threw out his

prepared speech and promised to ignore narrow party interests. Probably because there were none.

I see two foreseeable solutions to this problem. The first, is Boys State organizers creating platforms for the parties before the week starts, based on the historical viewpoints of the Federalist and Nationalist movements. Delegates could either chose their parties based on their own viewpoints, or the selection could be randomized and delegates would be required to adopt the fundamental positions of their assigned party. In the former case, students would be invested in their party because it reflects their values. In the latter case, delegates would be exposed to new and uncomfortable ideologies that would broaden their perspectives- similar to the structure of competitive debate. In both cases, the parties would better reflect actual governance in Virginia.

However, it is unlikely to reform a central tradition that goes back to the founding of Boys State. Therefore, another solution is providing opportunities for independents and third party candidates to actually stand a chance at winning elections. Currently, the rules bar independents from speaking at most campaign events, and create difficult and arbitrary hoops for these candidates to jump through. The Flagbook even advises candidates not to run outside the major parties. By supporting Bill 31, the Governor could level the playing field, encouraging candidates with something to say to seek election. In the process, Boys State wouldn't just teach the process of running for office, but the purpose.

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## Mess in Madison: Inside the Elevator

Jacob Tisdale

Upon returning from another aggressively mediocre dinner Wednesday night, the last thing I expected was a great congregation around the Madison dorm's elevator. As I arrived upon the scene, members of the city of Henry had amassed, yelling words of support through our elevator door. The excited chatter revealed that citizens Bryson Overton, Carter Stone, and Cooper Thomas had been trapped in the elevator shaft "like some Chilean miners," as Nate Spiers remarked. As the flag tribute neared, Taps was played and salutes were given to our trapped heroes. The city progressed out, but I decided to stick around and see the resolution of what turned out to be an epic saga.

As the electrician checked the elevator switches, I heard a cry from within the walls. "It's like.... 200 degrees in here, man." I asked the remaining congregation for their thoughts on the troubles faced. Henry city counselor Matthew Hartman made an interesting connection between this instance, and an eerily similar occurrence at 1977's Washington Boys State. He too was trapped in an elevator and featured in the paper. Both events occurred on the 19th of June. Hartman notes that "only the best of Boys State have been stuck in elevators" on this specific date and he predicts we will have 3 excellent candidates for counselors in approximately 42 years. A notable Boys State coordinator decided that between Radford getting our citizens stuck and Boys State breaking Radford's window, perhaps the two parties could just call it even. The law enforcement let out an entirely resigned sigh and said "Don't let anyone use the elevator." Conveniently, the fire department was working on a boiler issue right next door (in which elevator use was prohibited). They were called in as the trouble continued for all involved. Overton, one of the captives when asked for his thoughts, said they were simply "chub out of luck" and that he thinks "it might be broken."

The fire department had a tough time as well, traversing multiple floors and employing far too many tools. Those confined wished to express that the elevator was not pleasant smelling, but I suspect that aspect was self imposed. Nearly an hour, multiple police, firefighters, and Radford personnel later, Overton, Stone, and Thomas emerged unharmed. When asked for final thoughts, they expressed their simple intentions. "We just wanted to use the bathroom." The conditions were described as "toasty and small." I decided that I had ridden this story to its conclusion, and as I walked away, I heard a final declaration. "I thought I was gonna die. Thank god we had pringle snacks." Citizens of Boys State, don't take the elevator.

# NEWS AND UPDATES

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## Blurred Lines

### Tyler Schwartz

Today concluded the last day of the political party conventions. What had started as orderly proceedings soon descended into chaos. Many shared stories from both sides about the various oddities and strange occurrences. These tales spanned from a political candidates' platforms focused on male anatomy to plots of gerbil world domination. Very little got done in the time allotted leaving some citizens rather disgruntled, there has even been talk of possible disciplinary action taken to check some of the more absurd and disrespectful candidates.

So where is the line between fun and seriousness drawn? The Nimitz city Federalist party chairman, Joey Silverthorn said this: "Obviously, the people who were just trying to have fun kind of ruined it for everyone else who is here for the learning experience." Joey's sentiment was shared by the majority of Federalist party members as the elected candidate for Governor only campaigned to express his grievances against the immaturity of his party mates. He gave a speech that began by denouncing the actions of the particularly crude candidates

that came before him and by using strong phrases such as "...you should all be ashamed..." and "...you turned boys state into a joke..."

While the majority of citizens agree that the proceedings could be more professional and that we have a responsibility to conduct ourselves in a more respectful manner, it seems that some are not responding in anger, but rather in interest; Marcus Targonski, candidate for governor said, "From my perspective, it was interesting to see how the boys fed off of one another. I would be hard pressed to find a single event that sparked the disorder. This demonstrates the power of groupthink. It also serves as a fascinating lesson on civil discourse... or lack thereof." others seem indifferent, one even stating "I don't care, I'm having fun."

### John Dellolio

On Wednesday morning, Lieutenant-Governor

of Virginia, Justin Fairfax, carved time out of his busy schedule to speak to Boys State. One of his common themes throughout his speech was the adversity that he faced while running for office. In 2017, Fairfax was just the second African-American man to be elected to statewide office in Virginia. Fairfax dove into how he personally was able to overcome adversity while running for office. During the speech, Fairfax went into the details of his childhood, specifically talking about his move to Washington D.C at a very young age. After his parents divorced, his mother moved them to D.C to live with their grandparents. Fairfax has three siblings, and he discussed how their mother was able to support them and get all four children through college.



Fairfax also discussed how his close circle of family and friends is what helped him overcome the adversity of an African-American man running for office. Without them, he might not have ever been elected as Lieutenant-Governor of Virginia. A very interesting detail that Mr. Fairfax brought up, was how he obtained the last name Fairfax. Justin's great-great-great-grandfather, Simon Fairfax, was freed from slavery by the ninth Lord Fairfax in 1798. Just minutes before Mr. Fairfax was set to take the oath of office, his father, Roger Fairfax Sr., handed him the piece of paper showing how the name Fairfax was obtained. As Fairfax took the oath, he kept the paper with him.

This document is a very important part of his history and Mr. Fairfax is very proud to have it. The family and friends of Justin Fairfax have had a great impact on his life and have helped him overcome much adversity. Establishing a close group of supporters is essential for anyone planning on running for office.

## The State Troopers' Instructional Session "Highway Safety in Virginia"

### Eric Annet

After exhausting and

turbulent Nationalist and Federalist party conventions came to a close, the citizens of Boys State were tired. Resigned to more speeches about political strategy, law, and maybe another rendition of the dreaded "Boys State Song," we got a little surprise instead. The State Troopers arrived onstage with lights, music and a motorcycle! The officers recounted many tragic and hilarious career moments, but the highlight of the show was the K-9 dog.

Citizens got a demonstration of what exactly the K-9 dog, Flex, is capable of. The hound can sniff out drugs a mile away and drag his human counterpart across the floor without a problem. But most importantly he's a good boy.

One thing police officers deal with a lot is texting while driving. Sargent Jason Stitt really emphasized the power of the cell phone in young peoples' hands. One of the hardest things they have to deal with is telling family members, of the deceased, that their loved one died due to a car crash. They went on to show us videos about

the dangers of texting while driving.

For a good portion of the show, citizens got to go up on the stage and try on drunk goggles. With the goggles on citizens had to walk on a line and throw a football, which most citizens failed to do. The Legion gives a special shout out to citizen, Michael Jordan, who passed the test with flying colors. We love you Michael. Citizens had many questions for the state troopers. These ranged from the very specific, to the serious and silly. Peter Fox went into detail into his personal life and his friend's drug addiction problem, asking the officers how to fix this. The last question was probably the best question, at least based on the volume of the cheer. The citizen asked, "what's your favorite color?" On a more serious note, several officers told stories that were utterly heartbreaking. Thank you so much: Sargent Jason Stitt, Steve Flowers, Rodney Kenley, Michael Atkins and Logan Hodges. You do more than any one can ever ask of you! Thank you for your service.

# OPINION

## You Mad, Bro?

David Donnan

Burke City what's good? Or maybe more accurately, what's good? Well, not Burke City. I'm just

playing with you guys here but seriously, are you guys that mad? Hey, maybe getting stuck in the elevator will take your place in public conversation. Probably not. It's not like Henry City slammed into the side of the elevator and that's why it stopped. Honestly, though, I'm flattered. You guys gave me that shout out at the flags. I feel like a celebrity. The individuals from Burke City I've met are pretty cool, but Burke City as a whole? Yikes. Maybe I shouldn't kick the hornet's nest but it really is fun to watch you guys get mad. I can't decide if I've started a beef or if Burke City just needs to lighten up. To take care of some business, I am ~very sorry~ I have neglected my duty as a journalist to only report the facts. It seems that Burke City was able to escape "The Incident" with no demerits. There were a few stitches for the guy that hit the door though, but for everyone worrying the door is okay. While Burke City did not receive any demerits, it still seems hard for them to make any claim against "Burke City, More Like Broke City." I hope Burke City enjoys this. I know I will.

Sincerely,

Your biggest fan

## Veggie Tales

David Donnan

I love carbs and the excellent Radford cafeteria staff is really coming through. Pasta, potatoes, rice, and bread in one meal? That's something I can get behind. I am a little confused why only one dining room gets the good cups. And why the decaf coffee is labelled coffee and the actual coffee is labelled regular coffee. Broc and Cheese? Whack, but hilarious. Also, sometimes the ranch doesn't come out of the unmarked bottle. Funny story about that last one. As I was going through the salad bar the other day, I was disappointed that the bottle of ranch had just been emptied by the guy in front of me. One of those excellent Radford cafeteria staff members delighted me with a new, full bottle. That was before I tried to use it. I huffed and I puffed and the lid blasted off, spilling ranch dressing everywhere. It was a little messy but nothing some napkins couldn't handle. I hope the week has more funny food stories and the same amount of carbs.

## Gun-Control: a Hot Button Topic in Virginia and the Nation as Governor Northam Calls a Special Session of Virginia Assembly

Patrick Scolese Beginning on July 9th the Virginia House of Assembly will hold a special session discussing the issue of gun violence. The Governor asked for the special session in the wake of the mass shooting at Virginia Beach on May 31st, which took the lives of 12 innocent local government workers and has left 4 others in critical condition, saying "I'll be asking for votes and laws, not thoughts and prayers." Two of our main speakers thus far, Attorney-General Mark Herring and Lieutenant-Governor Justin Fairfax have called attention to the issue and are hopeful that the Governor's proposed legislation can be passed and delegates and senators will be able to discuss the important topic and propose legislation of their own. The Governor has specifically proposed the following measures which he believes will help prevent another mass shooting in the Commonwealth: a ban on assault weapons including suppressors and bump stocks, to expand the ability of local governments to prohibit guns in city

buildings, mandatory universal background checks, a limit to the purchase of one handgun per month, and perhaps most importantly a "red flag" law. A "red flag" law is a proposal being put up in various states that would allow authorities, on

the advice of family, friends, or coworkers, to seize weapons from people deemed as a threat to

themselves or others. The laws have come under heavy fire in recent days with the Supreme Court refusing to rule on a Trump Administration proposal to ban bump stocks which increase the firing capacity of the weapon, and many are criticizing the Governor's plans as ineffective and unnecessary. Indeed, House of Delegates Speaker, Kirk Cox has announced his own set of policy proposals including harsher penalties for those who intend to commit

violence with a firearm and instituting mandatory sentencing requirements for those convicted of assault or murder with a firearm.

Governor Northam has said that the laws will help prevent further tragedies.

Republicans have argued that a ban on assault weapons in local government areas will not stop people intending to do harm from bringing firearms and committing acts of violence. They also argue that the one gun a month will not stop people from amassing guns over a period of months or years and that it will not prevent people from buying guns illegally. In fact, its estimated by the Washington Post in an independent data analysis of mass shootings in the United States that around  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the weapons are purchased illegally.

Democrats, on the other hand have called the harsher sentencing to be ineffective given that over half of the perpetrators from mass shootings die, often from suicide. Both bills, ultimately face a strong uphill battle with similar bills from both sides of the aisle both being rejected by the House of Delegates and Assembly a number of times this session.



# SPORTS AND SUPERLATIVES

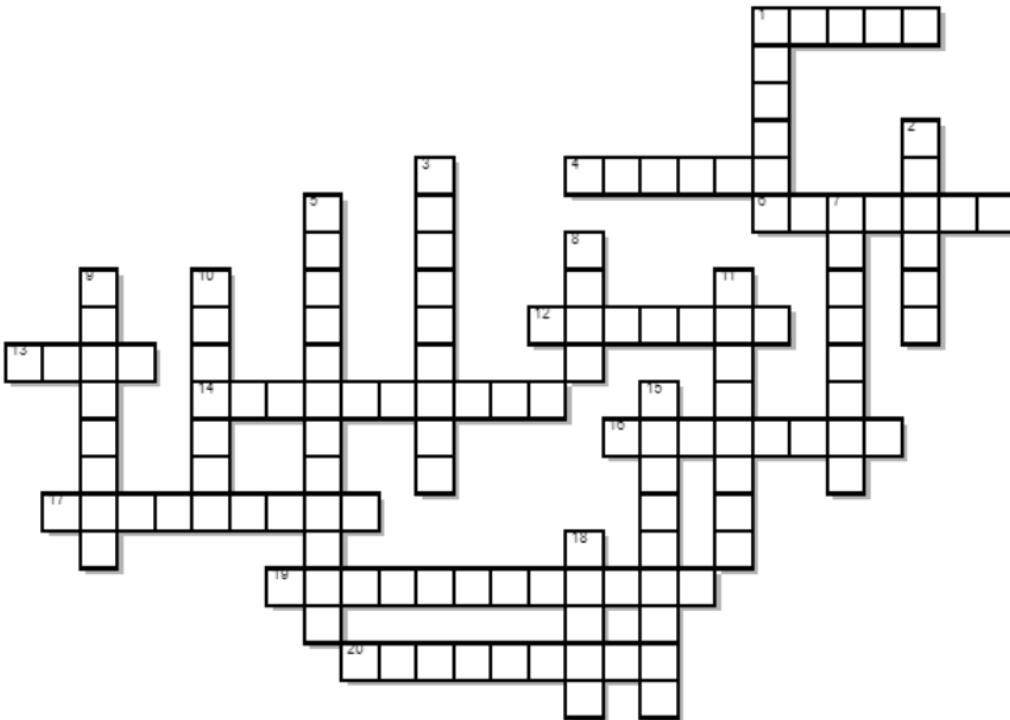
## Pershing City Powerhouse

While some shine in the governmental and political aspects of Boys State, others have capitalized on their athletic abilities to succeed in the sports competitions. One such example of this is the Pershing City football team, which has dominated the playing field thus far in the competition. These players, all of whom are talented in their own right, seem to have come together into almost a family after these few short days - a family who would be tough for anyone to be beat for anyone. The team is led by city mayor Revely Keesee, as well as Eric Sledge. In today's game, the Pershing Powerhouse steamrolled the competition, with a 30-0 win that posed little challenge. A win of this caliber should shock the competition. Watch out - this Pershing team can (and will) make their competitors look like boys.



Eric Sledge lines up on defense.

## Daily Crossword



### ACROSS

- 1 A formally constituted political group
- 4 To disapprove of or try to prevent
- 6 University located at 801 E Main St, Radford, VA 24141
- 12 Distinctive clothing worn by members of an association or school
- 13 A cloth attached to a pole used as the symbol for a country or organization
- 14 Part of a theater where an audience sits
- 16 To propose a candidate for an election or award
- 17 Having a range of different people
- 19 A country or community with a democratic republic
- 20 A person trained to give guidance on problems

### DOWN

- 1 A request for help addressed to God or an object of worship
- 2 An organized group of singers
- 3 A restaurant or dining room used by a school or business
- 5 A body of fundamental principles
- 7 A person sent or authorized to represent others
- 8 A group of people who play music with brass and woodwind instruments
- 9 A member of the clergy attached to a private chapel
- 10 A member of the senate
- 11 An administrative division
- 15 A large bedroom for a number of people in a school or institution
- 18 Bird that represents our country