

# Opinion Page

OCTOBER 9, 1998

THE RECORDER, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1998

## Time to say no — again

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Once, our founding fathers fought a war and wrote a Constitution aiming to end tyranny by establishing a "rule of law" that ended, once and for all, "imposing taxes on us without our consent."

**Guest  
View**



To an experienced, old-time con-artist a bill of goods is a bill of goods with a purpose ... that of separating the unsuspecting target from his money. No victim ever willingly submits to being fleeced, but sometimes one is tricked into assenting.

In government this tactic usually involves deceptive and abstruse legal language designed to fool the public into giving up to government their most precious liberty. This time, again, the goal is "taxation without representation." Patrick Henry called that tyranny. Jefferson referred to it in his Declaration as one reason "for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another."

The common sense that shaped our nation more than 200 years ago seems lost on the Virginia House of Delegates who voted, unanimously, to place on the Nov. 3 ballot, Constitutional questions No. 3 and No. 4. If voters approve, the work of the founding fathers will largely be un-done.

Question 3: Shall the Constitution of Virginia be amended to authorize agreements among localities for sharing the revenues

and costs of a specific land area and establishing a special governing body for the area, and to provide that fiscal commitments related to the land area will not be deemed local debt?

Translation: Allows towns and cities to jointly create "special governing bodies" that are not elected by the people and who are not responsible to the people for the projects in which they are involved.

Question 4: Shall the Constitution of Virginia be amended to allow a combination of localities to contract debt as part of an agreement to share the revenues, tax base, or the benefits of economic growth and exempt this class of debt from the ceiling on local debt for cities and towns and from the requirement of a local referendum?

Translation: Citizens will have no say about the debt or amount of debt that they will be saddled with and the bureaucrats have police and taxing power leaving them free to act with coercion and without restrictions. Approval of this provision eliminates any vote by the people on any issue under control of the group.

Why would anyone vote for an amendment that would take away their right to vote? What possessed the General Assembly to act so irrational? Proponents say it's just a trade-off ... you give something (your right to vote) in exchange for getting something else ... like a football stadium (that you, having no vote, will have to pay for). Is that really a trade-off or a flim-flam to steal your liberty?

We already have too much bureaucratic coercion by govern-

ment agencies. Bureaucrats exceed their charters when they force unreasonable unfunded mandates on communities and avoid the full cost of their actions by stealing the resources of the communities they are empowered to serve. They make up their own rules, sit in judgement of those rules and possess the police power to enforce those rules. All powers that are not permitted in a single governing body in a nation where the people are sovereign — except and unless the people consent to loopholes in the Constitution.

In a March 1997 letter to me, Virginia Del. R. Creigh Deeds pointed to two remedies for turning back an abusive bureaucracy or one that becomes a clear and present danger to our democracy. First he states, "The General Assembly could, by statute, change the authority of the Regulatory Committee" (pass a law restricting power or to create close oversight); and second, "affected communities could seek judicial review" (go to court). Deeds also noted that due to the part-time limited legislative system of the General Assembly, "there is simply not time to micromanage every governmental function."

Fair enough, but, the first has received no action and the second has always been an option. Instead of seeking a remedy the General Assembly promotes further mischief by offering to us deceptions that do nothing to correct or end injustice, but simply turns us back to pre-revolutionary war days.

On Sept. 19, 1998 the Sixth District Republican Committee voted unanimously to encourage defeat of these two proposed amendments, expressing their belief that this form of "mini-tyranny" must not be expanded in Virginia.

Our eternal vigilance means we will not be denied the gifts endowed by our Creator nor are we just sheep to be shepherded. Vote no on Questions No. 3 and No. 4 on Nov. 3.