

MVUC WELCOMES STATE DELEGATE KRIS AMUNDSON (D)

On November 18, 2007 state delegate Kris Amundson (D) was a guest speaker in the “Ask Your Elected Representative” Speakers Series. This is a brief summary of her priorities for the next state legislative session, and her views on various social justice issues.



1. **Expand upward bound pre-school program for at risk kids:** Studies show that pre-school kids do better when they start the twelve year education program than those who do not. By “investing” in preschool education, we enhance the possibility that fewer students will be at risk during their twelve year education program.
2. **Expand mental health care services:** The Virginia Tech tragedy highlighted the inadequacy of the current health care system to help people who may not even know they need help. Leaving individuals to take care of themselves will cost more in the long run than creating a state-funded functional system for (mental) health care. There is no simple solution, given the privacy issues involved but much more attention is needed in this area.
3. **Energy conservation:** All state properties should aspire to acquire a sustainable Green code of energy conservation. This is a major challenge, the state conversation should highlight all the aspects to inform future decisions.



On Affordable Housing: There is not a state-wide policy to set aside land for Single Occupancy Rooms (SROs), and there should not be one. There is a state wide policy to deal with homelessness, and Fairfax Ct. is doing a good job through the Penny Fund. An expansion of that fund is currently under consideration. Fairfax Ct. has also approved a plan to end homelessness, rather than simply manage it. That plan should be supported.

On state taxes: Northern Virginia pays more taxes than it gets back in services. Northern Virginia receives a smaller share of state tax money for education, but a larger share for transportation. However, the transportation needs are so severe in Northern Virginia that the state allocation is insufficient. Various financing formulas are being considered.

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