

Utter Absurdity
By Delegate Albert C. Pollard, Jr.
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I did something today that I don't think has been done before in the history of the Commonwealth.

I walked onto the floor of the House of Delegates – that same place where presidents, governors, Winston Churchill and Queen Elizabeth have stood – and had in my hand, a post-hole digger.

The reason I had a post-hole digger was to visualize a solution to a bureaucratic problem I was trying to solve through HB1032. In that measure, I was trying to streamline the bureaucratic process which requires an engineering study before any flagpole can be placed on any state property. The supposed need for an engineering study is because flagpoles need building permits, building permits require state approval and approval requires “a qualified individual” to pass judgment on the safety of a structure. While this line of logic is sound for an office building, it is utter absurdity when it comes to information kiosks, pole barns and flagpoles.

HB1032 was defeated in House Committee because my fellow delegates wanted the Governor's Commission on Governmental Reform to further study the measure. While I'm sure the measure will get a fair hearing there, this Commonwealth needs reform now.

The budget we are getting ready to pass will cut in-home health care aides for the elderly poor who can still maintain some semblance of independence. It will slash hundreds of millions of dollars from funding to K-12 education. State parks might end up closing.

However, through it all flagpoles – with all the related expense and bureaucratic overhead - will still require an engineering study before they can be placed on state property. Indeed, on the House floor, I tweaked the bureaucracy by referring to a post-hole digger as an “unauthorized hand-operated mechanism for the vertical removal of organic substrate for purpose of installing a large, single man-made object whose sole purpose is to hold emblems of state and national pride.”

While holding the post-hole digger and delivering my floor speech, my remarks focused on Northern Neckers (the people I represent) who don't need engineering studies to build good sturdy and long lasting fences and flagpoles. We just need a post-hole digger – and a little common sense.

Delegate Albert Pollard, Jr., represents the 99th District, which consists of the counties of Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, Westmoreland, King George and a portion of Caroline, in Virginia's House of Delegates. Delegate Pollard is in Richmond for the 2010 General Assembly, scheduled to end March 13, 2010. You may contact his office at (804) 698-1099 or (804) 462-5940. You may also visit his website at www.albertpollard.com for additional contact information.

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