PETITION DRIVE STARTED for Change in Virginia Law
to ALLOW WRITE IN VOTES in the March 6, 2012,
Republican Presidential Primary in Virginia

Contact: Jon Moseley
(703) 656-1230

FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA (January 17, 2012) -- A petition drive is demanding that Governor Bob McDonnell and Virginia’s General Assembly change Virginia election law to allow WRITE-IN VOTES for the candidate of the voter’s choice in Virginia’s March 6, 2012, Republican Presidential primary for the Republican nomination.

Virginia Senator Frank M. Wagner (R-Virginia Beach) introduced SB 510 on January 11, which would change Virginia law to strike from Va. Code 24.2-644 the phrase "except primary elections" and striking from Va. Code 24.2-529 the sentence "No write-in shall be permitted on ballots in primary elections."

This petition drive has been launched to push for passage of Sen. Wagner's SB 510. This requires passage on an "emergency" basis to take effect in time for the March 6, 2012, primary.

A coalition of tea party leaders and activists are concerned that Virginia voters are disenfranchised by being forced to vote between only two candidates, Mitt Romney and Ron Paul. With only two choices on the ballot, tea party activists fear, most people simply won’t vote on March 6, 2012. Many tea party leaders do not support either Mitt Romney or Ron Paul for President.


PETITION TO THE GOVERNOR FOR REDRESS OF DISENFRANCHISED VIRGINIA VOTERS

We petition the Governor and General Assembly of Virginia for redress, as registered voters of the Commonwealth of Virginia, to quickly spearhead legislation through Virginia’s General Assembly TO ALLOW WRITE-IN VOTES IN THE MARCH 6, 2012, PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES.

We ask you to vigorously support SB510 filed by State Senator Frank W. Wagner (Virginia Beach) to ensure that write-in votes will be allowed and will be counted in Virginia’s March 6, 2012, Republican Presidential primary, by striking from Va. Code 24.2-644 the phrase "except primary elections" and striking from Va. Code 24.2-529 the sentence "No write-in shall be permitted on ballots in primary elections."
The General Assembly should immediately change the first sentence in Va. Code 24.2-644 which currently reads: "C. At all elections EXCEPT PRIMARY ELECTIONS it shall be lawful for any voter to vote for any person other than the listed candidates for the office by writing or hand printing the person’s name on the official ballot."

We note that apparently for legislation to take effect by March 6, 2012, the public will need to demand that 4/5ths of the General Assembly vote for the rights of Virginia voters.

We note that although primary elections are treated differently, Va. Code 24.2-644 does already allow write-in votes for the final, general election voting: "Write-in votes for President and Vice President shall be counted only for candidates who have filed a joint declaration of intent to be write-in candidates for the offices with the Secretary of the State Board not less than ten days before the date of the presidential election. The declaration of intent shall be on a form prescribed by the State Board and shall include a list of presidential electors pledged to those candidates which equals the whole number of senators and representatives to which the Commonwealth at that time is entitled in the Congress of the United States. A write-in vote cast for candidates for President and Vice President, or for a candidate for President only, shall be counted for the individual electors listed on the declaration of intent as pledged to those candidates."

Background (Preamble):

We call on the General Assembly and Governor to pass Virginia Senator Frank M. Wagner’s bill SB510 on an emergency basis. We believe that the most important interest, which should not be forgotten by our political leaders in Virginia, is THE RIGHT OF THE INDIVIDUAL VOTER to cast a ballot vote for the candidate of his or her choice.

It is THE INDIVIDUAL VIRGINIA VOTER whose rights are in danger of being forgotten entirely while much has been discussed about procedures, "inside baseball" details, and the diligence of candidates in securing a spot on the Republican Presidential primary ballot.

Whether for the 2012 presidential campaign, or in general, the prohibition on write-in votes is objectively wrong. No matter who benefits or who is running in any particular year, it is wrong to censor and silence a voter who wants to vote for the candidate of his or her choice, not be forced to vote for someone he or she does not actually support.

We believe that even Mitt Romney's campaign team, for example, while seeking the votes of Virginia's voters, would create a very good impression by honoring those voters' right to vote for whomever they want. Even if Mitt Romney is confident of winning the primary, he should tell the voters of Virginia that he cares about their political rights and freedoms.
Any one who wants to be President of our nation and our people should demonstrate that he or she cares more about us, We The People, than about himself or herself.

You can track the progress of SB510 by using this site:

http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?121+sum+SB510