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OF VIRGINIA

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**2008 Session of the General Assembly  
Women's Roundtable Report**

*Legislative Forum*

*meets every Wednesday during session 8:30- 9:30 a.m.*

*3<sup>rd</sup> floor conference room West*

*Moderated by Lynn Gordon, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President*

*Report by Virginia Cowles, 2nd Vice-President, LWV-Richmond Metro Area*

February 13, 2008

At this morning's session of the Women's Roundtable, Delegate Vivian Watts (D-Fairfax) was the first legislator to arrive. She spoke about her efforts on behalf of nursing home residents and young people who have been victims of abuse. She also described the serious budget situation which would necessitate using the rainy day fund.

**Delegate Joseph Bouchard** (D-Virginia Beach) spoke next. He deplored party politics that derailed good legislation. He also talked about the budget crunch, particularly in regard to transportation. He said that the Commonwealth of Virginia might be unable to draw down about \$400 million in federal funding for transportation because of the budget shortfall.

**Delegate Albert Eisenberg** (D-Arlington), the next speaker, also mentioned the budget situation. His concerns were about protecting the rights of apprehended juveniles and about providing affordable housing for low income families in his district. He specifically mentioned HB310, which allows the disabled to vote with an absentee ballot.

**Senator Mary Margaret Whipple's** (D-Arlington) legislative assistant reported that all the house bills against smoking had been killed and that the four remaining anti-smoking senate bills would be before a house committee the next day [all were defeated, according to the Richmond *Times-Dispatch* report on Friday, 15 February 2008].

**Ben Greenberg, lobbyist** for the Virginia Organizing Project, gave an update on the status of payday lending legislation: SB588 does nothing, he said, but the House bill is good. Thus, the issue seems destined for a conference committee.

**Senator Mamie Locke** (D-Hampton) appeared in the last minutes of the session. She said that she had led the floor battle in the Senate against pay day lending. The most recent group known to be targeted by pay day lenders, she remarked, is senior citizens living solely on social security income.

The Roundtable was attended by a small but appreciative group. During the session some girl scouts dropped in to observe.

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