



LGBT DEMOCRATS OF VIRGINIA

Virginia Partisans: The PAC of LGBT Democrats of Virginia

Endorsement Questionnaire

Instructions: Please return questionnaire via email to president@vapartisans.org. At the Board's discretion, interviews may be scheduled with candidates prior to making endorsement and contribution decisions.

Note: Your answers are "on the record," will be circulated to all members of the Board, and may be shared outside the organization and published to the LGBT Democrats of Virginia website.

Candidate and Campaign Information

Name: Senator Janet Howell

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Phone: 703-709-8283

Email: SenHowell@gmail.com

Campaign Website: JanetHowell.com

Campaign Manager: Nicholas Kowalski

Campaign Manager Phone/Email: Nick.Kowalski@gmail.com

Race and Election Information

Office Sought: State Senate 32nd District

Indicate whether office is partisan or non-partisan: Partisan

City, County or District of office:

Select One: Challenger Incumbent Open Seat

Select One: Caucus Primary General

Election Date(s):

Biographical Information

1. Previous elected offices held: I was first elected to the Senate twenty years ago. Prior to that I served on numerous volunteer boards, including the State Board of Social Services.

2. Candidate bio (include issues relevant to LGBT Community): My complete bio is on my website: JanetHowell.com. As you know, I have a 100% pro-LGBT voting record. Also, I was chief patron of the bill that permitted medical insurers to cover domestic partners and was also chief patron of the bill that permitted life insurers to cover domestic partners. In addition, I have been chief patron of numerous budget amendments to provide funding for HIV/AIDS testing and services.
3. Are you a member of the LGBT Democrats of Virginia (formerly the Virginia Partisans)? If so, when did you join? I am not certain but probably joined about eight years ago.
4. Have you been endorsed by any LGBT organizations now or in the past? If so, please list years and names. Virginia Partisans has always endorsed me and I have always publicized their endorsement. Equality Virginia also always endorses me.

Activities

1. Have you attended events for, joined, or otherwise expressed support for LGBT organizations or groups? I have attended many events, sent contributions, and been asked to speak at some events. My voting record speaks for itself.
2. Have you attended events for, joined, or otherwise expressed support for the Whitman Walker Health, the Tidewater Aids Task Force, GLSEN, SMYAL, or other LGBT and LGBT-related causes or organizations? I have attended events. I have introduced budget amendments to provide funding for Whitman Walker and Food and Friends (which provides hot meals for persons with HIV/AIDS. I have also been chief patron of most budget amendments for state funding of HIV/AIDS testing, medicine, and treatment.
3. Have you ever volunteered for or attended LGBT Pride, an LGBT Youth Prom, or other LGBT or LGBT-related events? I attended and spoke at a Gay Straight Alliance meeting at South Lakes High School when the organization was under attack. I wanted the kids to know they had strong political support.

Positions – Please articulate your views on all the issues below regardless of whether they are Federal, State, or Local in nature and whether you have or, if elected, would have the ability to vote on the issues.

➤ **Discrimination Protection**

1. If elected, would you establish a written non-discrimination policy that includes sexual orientation **and** gender identity for your employees? Do you have such a policy in place for your campaign? Yes, I would.
2. Have you in the past, do you now, and, if elected, will you support efforts to ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation **and** gender identity in employment and

housing? Please address Federal and State versions of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) and any relevant local laws. Please note whether you have introduced and/or co-sponsored or co-patroned legislation in the past (if not, please explain why). Yes. I have consistently co-patroned anti-discrimination bills that add sexual orientation to employment law.. I have also co-patroned adding sexual orientation to hate crimes legislation. Needless to say, I have also voted for them.

3. Have you in the past and do you still now support the repeal of the military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT) law? Do you oppose any efforts to implement exclusionary policies based on sexual orientation for the Virginia National Guard? Please note whether you have introduced and/or co-sponsored or co-patroned legislation in the past (if not, please explain why). I did and still do support the repeal of DADT law. I opposed its passage in the first place. I have not been able to sponsor legislation since it is a federal law. I do oppose implementing exclusionary policies based on sexual orientation in the Virginia National Guard. Since I chair the Finance subcommittee on Public Safety that oversees the Guard, I will have a major say on that issue.

➤ **Marriage and Partnership**

4. Have you in the past, do you now, and, if elected, will you support efforts to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)? Please note whether you have introduced and/or co-sponsored or co-patroned legislation in the past (if not, please explain why). Yes, I support efforts to repeal DOMA. However, as a state legislator and not a federal one I do not have a vote on that.
5. Have you in the past, do you now, and, if elected, will you support efforts to repeal the Marshall-Newman Amendment to the Virginia Constitution? Please note whether you have introduced and/or co-sponsored or co-patroned legislation in the past (if not, please explain why). I consistently voted against the Marshall-Newman Amendment in P & E and on the Senate floor. I spoke out publicly against it and was proud when my district voted against it (hopefully my active opposition helped). I do support repeal and will follow the direction of Equality Virginia and your group on how best to handle it. As chair of P & E any such bill will come before my committee.
6. Do you believe that same-sex couples should enjoy the same rights, benefits and responsibilities as their straight counterparts? Have you in the past, do you now, and, if elected, will you support efforts to legally recognize same-sex marriage by both the Federal and Virginia government? Please note whether you have introduced and/or co-sponsored or co-patroned legislation in the past (if not, please explain why).
Yes, everyone should have the same rights, benefits and responsibilities. Obviously, same sex marriage is not constitutional in Virginia because of the Marshall-Newman amendment. I am not aware of any bills to permit same sex marriage even to come before the Senate. The effort was to stop the prohibition and now it is to repeal the amendment.

➤ **Education and Schools**

7. Have you in the past, do you now, and, if elected, will you support Family Life Education and guidance programs in public schools that offer age-appropriate, non-judgmental information on sexuality, tolerance, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexually transmitted diseases, and contraception? Please note whether you have introduced and/or co-sponsored or co-patroned legislation in the past (if not, please explain why) Yes. I strongly support comprehensive and accurate FLE and guidance programs in the schools. I have been a consistent defender of the program as shown by my votes in the Education and Health Committee. and on the Public Education subcommittee.

8. Do you consider harassment of LGBT students because of their real or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity to be a form of bullying? Would you support legislation that aims to lower the incidents of, and directs schools to put an end to, bullying in public schools and facilities? Yes, absolutely it is bullying and, yes, I support legislation to reduce bullying.

9. Do you support the formation of Gay/Straight Alliance clubs (GSAs) in schools? Have you in the past, do you now, and, if elected, will you support efforts to promote, encourage and provide support and resources for GSAs in schools?
Not only do I support the formation of GSAs but I have spoken at one at South Lakes High School. In Education and Health Committee I helped defeat bills to prohibit the clubs.

10. Do you support the "It Gets Better Project"? Yes. The high suicide rate of LGBT youth is tragic and this project is a ray of hope.

➤ **HIV/AIDS Prevention, Testing and Treatment**

11. Do you support public funding for HIV/AIDS prevention, testing and treatment facilities? Have you in the past, do you now, and, if elected, will you support efforts to increase funding for and access to these facilities throughout all regions of Virginia?
Yes. I have been the Senate chief patron of most budget amendments for these purposes for many years. As a Senate budget negotiator, I fight hard for them. As you know, there is little support among the House negotiators.

12. Do you support free access to HIV/AIDs testing at jail and prison facilities? If so, would you support programs that encourage inmates to get tested for HIV/AIDS? Yes. I am surprised they do not have free access to testing. I will look into it.

➤ **Choice and Contraception**

13. Have you in the past, do you now, and, if elected, will you support a woman's right to choose abortion and to access abortion, birth control and contraception? Would you vote to limit access to abortion, birth control and/or contraception in anyway? If so, how and under what circumstances?
NARAL has given me a 100% pro-choice voting record. I oppose all efforts to weaken abortion rights and access to contraception. As a budget negotiator, I fight for Planned Parenting funding.

➤ **Other**

14. Choosing political leadership is a key responsibility for every elected official. Will you commit to making support for full equality a major factor in your leadership selection decisions? Yes.
15. Do you believe it is important for both LGBT individuals **and** allies to “come out”—i.e. share their status as an LGBT individual or an ally to the LGBT community with the public? Do you believe it is important for public officials, in particular, to encourage and support LGBT individuals **and** allies in “coming out”? I think it is a personal choice for LGBT individuals to "come out" or not. I am proud to have come out as an ally and, indeed, have had political opponents attack me for being an ally.
16. If not otherwise described above, how have you advocated for the LGBT community in the community at-large in the past (i.e. have you spoken out publicly for policies at your place of business, testified before government bodies, adopted written policies for your employees, marched for equal rights, etc.)? I have been chief patron of successful bills to permit health and life insurance coverage for partners; I have been chief patron of most budget amendments to fund HIV/AIDs treatment and testing; I have voted and worked against the noxious Marshall/Newman Amendment; I frequently mention my positions in my Newsletter. I oppose, speak out against and vote against all legislation that demeans or denigrates anyone, or deprives anyone of their rights.
17. If not otherwise described above, in what ways have you worked to include LGBT and other minority individuals in your personal and/or professional life? In what ways have you worked to be a role model for inclusion, tolerance and acceptance of LGBT and other minority individuals? I have friends of all sexual orientations and care deeply about them. I have been a reliable ally in the State Senate for twenty years.
18. Please use the space below to provide any additional information you would like us to know about your candidacy.
- I was a civil rights worker in the 1960's and realized over twenty-five years ago that we had to protect the rights of ALL people. I have worked hard to do so in the State Senate. One of my deepest beliefs is in the innate value and dignity of every person. When I was first elected twenty years ago, that was a lonely belief. Since then, with the wise help of so many LGBT groups and individuals, it is not so lonely. However, in the Virginia General Assembly we have major obstacles. I frankly think the public is way ahead of most legislators on these issues and hope to stay in office at least long enough to repeal the Marshall-Newman Amendment.
- One of my proudest accomplishments -- and one that I spoke about in my announcement speech in May -- was getting the bills passed that permitted health and life insurance companies to cover domestic partners. Getting those bills passed was a multi-year effort but together we succeeded.
- I would be proud to have your endorsement.

Janet

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please contact president@vapartisans.org with any questions.