



# BIZVOTES QUESTIONNAIRE



INFORMING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND ENCOURAGING  
POLITICAL AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT.

## 2011 Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce Virginia General Assembly Candidate Questionnaire 87th District

1. What is the biggest issue/challenge you believe Virginia faces in the upcoming term?

**David Ramadan (R)**  
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The economy remains our greatest challenge despite the fact that Virginia's economy is stronger compared to that of other states.

**Mike Kondratick (D)**  
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With Virginia facing another large projected budget deficit over the next biennium, managing our finances while making the necessary additional investments in transportation that we so desperately need is our biggest challenge.

2. How do you propose to address this challenge?

**David Ramadan (R)**

The economic growth/job creation and transportation plans that I unveiled include, among other key elements: lower taxes and incentives for business; investment in new transportation improvements and solutions for our area; making the Dulles Airport area a catalyst for economic growth focusing on tourism, international trade, manufacturing, high technology, and other key industry sectors; and investment in our higher education system and STEM-related education.

**Mike Kondratick (D)**

I would approach this challenge in three ways: investing in public sector innovation and driving citizen engagement through technology; reviewing and eliminating some of the \$2.5 billion in existing tax credits; and developing additional sources of dedicated revenue.



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3. Northern Virginia's economic drivers differ from much of the rest of the state. In light of that, what specific state economic development incentives would you propose/support in order to stimulate and enhance the economy of Northern Virginia?

**David Ramadan (R)**

In July, I proposed a plan to promote increased economic development and job creation for the 87th District and Virginia. My proposal included the following key elements: Promote high-tech manufacturing; recruit domestic and global companies in STEM-related industries; eliminate harmful regulations, barriers to investment and job creation; stimulate commercial and industrial development including long-term incubators; as well as foster state and local government and private-sector cooperation on economic development and small business assistance.

**Mike Kondratick (D)**

First, we need to invest in transportation projects that encourage the growth of commerce through Dulles Airport. Second, we need to establish a renewable energy standard that will allow us to recruit high-tech, green jobs that will fit well with our existing tech corridor. Finally, the state must provide tax incentives to assist with the more rapid deployment of our broadband infrastructure.

4. Loudoun County is rich in heritage and destination resources that could be natural catalysts to promote expanded tourism. What programs or initiatives would you support to enhance and/or create economic opportunities for County businesses in the tourism/business travel industries to ensure we are fully leveraging our tourism resources?

**David Ramadan (R)**

I support tax incentives to attract new businesses to our area, which, in turn, will spur demand for the services of travel and tourism businesses such as conference/meeting centers surrounding Dulles Airport. In addition, I support the establishment of a George Mason University campus (along with a football team) based in Loudoun County. Events and conferences at this facility will also increase demand for such services.

**Mike Kondratick (D)**

We need to prioritize speed and convenience for the business traveler. So, for me, this would again start with the expansion of our transportation infrastructure in and around Dulles Airport. Second comes the continued expansion of broadband networks and wi-fi network connectivity to make conducting business easy and convenient.



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5. What specific opportunities would you initiate/support to positively benefit Loudoun's business community in the upcoming term?

**David Ramadan (R)**

Let me highlight one key idea. I support pooling the resources of state, local gov., & private sector, to establish a one-stop center that provides and coordinates assistance and technical advice to entrepreneurs, small business owners, and companies, including foreign corps. interested in locating here, as well as economic development assistance. The center would be located in the Dulles area; & establishes long-term incubators to foster increased entrepreneurship and business formation. The Center should focus on marketing our area for economic development. In cooperation with the Chamber.

**Mike Kondratick (D)**

Most important is finding dedicated revenue sources for transportation. Beyond that, I would like to promote business development through allowing broad and easy access to state-generated data (that is not privileged). I would also like to promote programs that allow for entrepreneurs to use public space and other resources to help prove their concepts and start their businesses. I would like to expand funding for small business incubators. Finally, I would like to investigate a limited BPOL tax holiday for businesses operating in the red.

6. Both public and private advocates for transportation worked to secure a \$4 billion funding package that by definition will provide revenues over the next three years. But after that we face a severe drop off of revenue to address the road, transit, rail, port and airport improvements needed to support our quality of life and growing economy. Do you believe that a top priority should be assigned to securing new, long term, sustainable regional and statewide transportation funding in the 2012 General Assembly session? If so, how? If not, why?

**David Ramadan (R)**

Yes, I support securing a dedicated, long-term transportation fund to meet our urgent transportation priorities. I would oppose new taxes to establish this fund; however, I believe we can impose an across-the-board cut in the state's budget that would generate the needed funding resources. I would add one caveat; law enforcement and other critical services would be exempt from this across-the-board reduction.

**Mike Kondratick (D)**

Yes, this should be the state's first priority. We need to take a balanced approach to this problem by: focusing on public sector innovation in an effort to reduce costs, sun-setting outmoded tax credits, and exploring other changes to the tax code that will allow Loudoun to experience new, sustained transportation investment.



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7. For the past decade, northern Virginia's economic growth and job creation has generated significant tax revenues for the Commonwealth. Meanwhile, northern Virginia's local governments have become increasingly dependent on local property taxes to fund the increased needs of a growing population, such as schools, public safety, human services and transportation. How would you propose to help high growth jurisdictions, like Loudoun County, to balance their tax base, diversify their revenue sources and/or gain access to additional broad-based revenue sources to support the increased costs of a growing population?

**David Ramadan (R)**

Northern Virginia continues to contribute more in revenue to the state than it receives back in funding support. As a matter of fairness and demonstrated need, this imbalance must be addressed. Loudoun and Northern Virginia are the engines of economic growth for the state, and the Commonwealth must acknowledge this reality by ensuring that Loudoun County and its neighboring jurisdictions receive a more equitable share of funding resources. These funds would be dedicated to roads, schools, and other priority government services and goods. Correcting the imbalance between revenue contribution and funding allocation will go a long way to providing Loudoun and Northern Virginia jurisdictions with the additional resources they need. If elected, I would be a forceful voice for ensuring that Loudoun and Northern Virginia receive the funding that they deserve and need. I can't conceive of any other way at this time to broaden the tax base without shifting the tax burden or imposing new taxes. As a pro-business candidate, I oppose raising new taxes.

**Mike Kondratik (D)**

Loudoun should be able to recoup more of the revenue it sends to Richmond. We can establish a system to rebate taxes (like the income tax) back to the locality that generated it. Transportation money should be prioritized based on congestion as well as 'corridors of statewide significance. Finally, the composite index for education should be adjusted to take into better account the quality of the education provided, the number of students in the county, and cost of living.



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8. Please briefly describe what specific policies/initiatives would support to promote improvements to the education of Loudoun's children and how you would fund these policies/initiatives.

**David Ramadan (R)**

As a first step, we need to re-examine the state's Education Funding Composite Index to ensure Loudoun schools are receiving a fair share of available funding. We already have strong business partnership with local schools; however, I envision encouraging private-sector investment in specialized areas such as technology and sciences to meet the demand for skilled labor. I support charter schools. And we need to move forward with the establishment of a Loudoun campus for George Mason University. This campus will serve local students and reduce the time and costs that day students currently incur in commuting to the main campus in Fairfax.

**Mike Kondratick (D)**

All options need to be on the table to fund education. As noted above in #7, we need to make changes to the composite index to generate more state funding. This additional funding needs to be focused first on recruiting and training the best teachers. Public-private partnerships should be developed and expanded--particularly in the vo-tech area. Companies that engage in these programs to help educate our kids should be eligible for tax incentives. The state should continue to support efforts to add distance learning options for students. Flexibility should be provided to local county boards and school boards to raise additional revenue, if necessary.



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9. As Virginia continues on the road to economic recovery, Virginians are faced with a new reality with regard to the types of jobs that are available and the skills needed to compete and succeed in the global workplace. What role do you believe Virginia's higher education institutions should play in addressing these challenges and what programs/initiatives are you willing to propose to help them fulfill that role? Please address both community college and four-year institutions, and consider the role of both public and private institutions.

**David Ramadan (R)**

Our community colleges can play an enhanced role in workforce training and retraining programs. We need to focus on teaching English to many in our growing Spanish-speaking population and providing needed skills. At our public universities, we need to provide a high-quality educational experience with an emphasis on STEM-related subjects that meets the needs of area employers and ensures meaningful employment and career opportunities. We need to ensure that our universities are meeting workforce needs. Our public universities also need to increase their partnership with the private sector in research and development. The establishment of a GMU campus in Loudoun County would help many local students and reduce their time and costs in traveling to the main campus in Fairfax.

**Mike Kondratik (D)**

Virginia's institutions of higher education are just as critical to the futures of our children and that of our economy as our primary and secondary schools. The nearly decade-long pattern of reducing investment in our universities needs to be reversed. The state also needs to consider a tuition forgiveness program to help retain people with an education in specific areas, like healthcare, where it faces shortages. Developing a dedicated funding stream to both promote more research in our universities and ensure that it can be commercialized effectively is also critical. The tax credit program for contributions to 529 plans should also be continued.



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POLITICAL AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT.

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10. Access to affordable health care for all businesses, including small businesses and sole proprietors, continues to be a top priority of the Loudoun County Chamber. Please describe what specific policies/initiatives you would support to help address the significant changes facing businesses from implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

**David Ramadan (R)**

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is a federal law that imposes onerous regulatory burdens and significant new healthcare costs on consumers, families, employers, businesses, and healthcare providers. In my view, repeal of this act is the most effective solution for avoiding the inevitable harm that its full implementation will cause to consumers and businesses and our healthcare system. To offset the costs of this measure and to mitigate its negative effects for sole proprietors and small business employers (should efforts to repeal the measure or strike it down in part or whole in the courts fail), I would support allowing Virginia's small firms to join together and enter the marketplace to secure health coverage using their combined purchasing power. This will result in more affordable coverage with favorable terms. I am open to other ideas and strategies that will improve access to affordable coverage for all small businesses.

**Mike Kondratik (D)**

First, the health insurance exchange established by the state needs to include a robust business presence. If multiple exchanges are set-up, I will work to make sure that each has the same coverage options and that the small business exchange includes companies of 100 employees and fewer as soon as possible. I will also work to make sure the state is prepared to accept its additional Medicaid participants. Though this expansion will cost the state between \$1-\$2B, we'll receive an additional \$10 billion in federal benefits. Good exchanges and additional Medicaid coverage will drastically reduce the uninsured, which will save taxpayer dollars.



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POLITICAL AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT.

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11. What types of energy development should Virginia promote to ensure that businesses have reliable, affordable and environmentally sound, sustainable energy supplies in the future?

**David Ramadan (R)**

Energy costs—both direct and indirect as reflected in the price of goods and services—have a huge bottom-line impact on businesses. Loudoun and Virginia businesses need a reliable, plentiful, and affordable energy supply to provide for price stability and guarantee energy security. This requires a diversified energy strategy and portfolio. Fossil energy will continue to be the dominant energy source to meet today's needs and supply future demand. For this reason, Virginia should continue to push for the development of its offshore oil and gas resources. Virginia is a coal-producing state, and the use of clean-coal technologies help make this an important energy. Nuclear power generates nearly one-third of Virginia's electricity supply, and it will continue to be a critical energy resource. Likewise, we must invest in and deploy alternative renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, biomass, and others where and when they make sense. Lastly, we must vigorously pursue energy conservation and efficiency.

**Mike Kondratick (D)**

Ultimately, we need to take a balanced approach to energy development. In the short term, we'll need to rely on oil, coal, nuclear as well as our nascent renewable sources. That said, when it comes to investing taxpayer dollars, I want that investment targeted toward renewable energy sources. I support tax incentives for the more rapid development of VA's wind energy potential. This requires the state to develop a mandatory renewable energy standard. The state also needs to commit to meeting some its energy demand by investing in energy conservation.



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POLITICAL AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT.

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12. The Chamber believes that there is a state role in ensuring the availability of technology infrastructure in Virginia. That being said, what funding and/or policy initiatives would you support to expedite deployment and reduce the cost of broadband access in Virginia in under-served areas, such as western Loudoun County?

**David Ramadan (R)**

Broadband access is a major priority, and providers are increasingly extending its benefits to under-served areas. Limited broadband access today is less of a problem of economics than it was previously. Today, it is more likely that the lack of broadband access in under-served areas (rural areas) can be traced back to local governments (towns, cities, counties) that control broadband siting through their land-use approval authority. In too many cases, their review and approval process is onerous, lengthy, costly and uncertain. Furthermore, constituent concerns about the protection of view sheds, aesthetics, property values and other factors often figure prominently in local governments' denials or their conditions of approval make the sites economically infeasible. I propose working with the VA Association of Counties, the towns and cities associations, the broadband industry, the Chamber, and other stakeholders to develop legislation to provide for an expedited application review and consideration process that will help speed the deployment of broadband throughout Virginia.

**Mike Kondratick (D)**

I would look to work in partnership with both county/city governments and the private sector to further develop our broadband infrastructure. I would investigate the provision of funds to localities from the new infrastructure bank and expanding financial support for the Virginia Resources Authority. I would also investigate the provision of tax incentives to companies for the deployment of broadband infrastructure to rural areas.



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POLITICAL AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT.

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13. Please briefly describe what best qualifies you to hold the office for which you are running.

**David Ramadan (R)**

As a successful entrepreneur, I've contributed to the local economy's growth and created new jobs. Growing our economy and creating jobs are our top priorities at this time, and I offer a wealth of experience and expertise in these two areas. I know firsthand the harm that higher taxes, excessive regulation, runaway spending, and heavy-handed bureaucracy can cause to employers and businesses. And because of this, I can and will be a voice of common sense, warning, and restraint to those who would favor anti-business policies and programs at the expense of our entrepreneurs and job creators.

**Mike Kondratick (D)**

My first qualification is derived from my work as a non-profit advocacy director. Working with families that have been touched by diabetes has helped me to hone my communication and listening skills. It's also put me in a position to set priorities and make investments to serve the needs of these families. My second qualification is the volunteer work that I've done in Loudoun. I view running for office as a next step in serving my community. Finally, my degree in economics will be an asset given the importance of prioritizing spending and making smart investments in infrastructure.

14. What is the chief factor that differentiates you from your opponent(s) (if you have one)?

**David Ramadan (R)**

While I have a track record of successfully starting businesses and creating jobs, my opponent does not. As a matter of fact, his stated profession, like President Obama, is community/grassroots organization. While I certainly respect his choice of profession, I am confident that the 87th District needs a leader with a proven record of delivering economic results instead of community organizing.

**Mike Kondratick (D)**

The main point of difference between me and my opponent is my history of developing and serving communities-- both in my professional and volunteer pursuits. I believe that my ability to listen, engage, and collaborate with people of all political persuasions will lead to the development of the new ideas that will be required to solve Virginia's most critical problems.



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POLITICAL AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT.

## 2011 Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce Virginia General Assembly Candidate Questionnaire 87th District

15. Do you have a web site where more information about you is available? What is that web site address?

**David Ramadan (R)** Please visit [www.David4Delegate.com](http://www.David4Delegate.com) for information about our campaign and platform.

**Mike Kondratick (D)** My website is at <http://www.mikekforva.com>.

If you have any questions regarding this questionnaire, please contact Tony Howard at 571-209-9020. This questionnaire has been sent to the list of candidates provided by the Board of Elections. Thank you.