



Virginia Influencers



The once reliably red state of Virginia has developed the hint of a purplish hue and become something of a swing state. The GOP has come back with a vengeance over the last two years, yet in the preceding two decades, Ol' Virginny became the first state to select an African American as governor, elected two Democratic chief executives, and helped send Barack Obama to the White House. Indeed, the 2008 election marked the first time in forty-four years that the state awarded its electoral votes to a Democratic presidential candidate.

While that contest ended one trend, the next year's election continued another one. Since 1977, Virginia has elected its one-term governor from the party opposite that of the sitting president. And, due to its unique election cycle—Virginia holds its gubernatorial contests in off-off years—voters can express their shifting sentiments at the polls every year.

Here is our list of the most influential political players in Virginia—with no elected officials allowed.

Top 10 Democrats

Timothy M. Kaine

The former governor helped Democrats take control of the state Senate in 2007 and elect Barack Obama president the following year. Kaine, an attorney and former Richmond mayor, served as chairman of the national Democratic Party until early April, when he stepped down to run for U.S. Senate.

Terry McAuliffe

There's no question the "Macker" is a player in state politics. The former national party chairman stumbled in his first bid for office during the Democratic primary for governor in 2009. But he appears focused on a repeat gubernatorial run in 2013 and has worked to raise his profile in Virginia.

Brian Moran

The chairman of the state Democratic Party since last December, Moran is charting a path back to prominence after losing in the '09 gubernatorial primary. He previously represented Alexandria in the state House of Delegates and is seen by some as the heir apparent to his older brother Jim's seat in Congress.

David Mills

The executive director of the Virginia Democratic Party has worked in the Kaine administration and on several gubernatorial campaigns. Mills is married to Jennifer McClellan, a rising young member of the state House.

C. Richard "Dickie" Cranwell

The chairman of the state Democratic Party until his retirement last December still has considerable sway. That comes with the territory for Cranwell, who spent three decades in the legislature and helped Democrats score several key victories during his five years atop the party.

Ben Tribbett

Tribbett has been called the Perez Hilton of Virginia's political blogosphere. The left-leaning keyboard cowboy can ignite a firestorm with a large type headline and exclamation points on his blog. Although he has a sensational streak, the influence of his writing is undeniable.

Mo Elleithee

A founding partner of Hilltop Public Solutions in Washington, D.C., Elleithee has been a key consultant to Virginia Democrats such as Kaine and U.S. Sen. Mark Warner and is a veteran of several national campaigns.

David H. Hallock, Jr.

A former lobbyist, Hallock left the private sector last fall to become state director for Sen. Warner. Hallock previously served as deputy director of policy and deputy counsel for Warner when he was governor.

Paul Reagan

The chief of staff to U.S. Sen. Jim Webb, Reagan has previously worked for Warner when he was governor and served under several Virginia congressmen.

Peter Brodnitz

A principal at the Benenson Strategy Group, Brodnitz is a well-known Democratic pollster who has worked for Kaine, Webb, and former U.S. Rep Tom Perriello, among other clients.



Top 10 Republicans

Phil Cox

Cox deserves as much credit as anyone for the 2009 election of Gov. Bob McDonnell. The political strategist and consultant is sought after as an advisor by campaigns outside Virginia and remains the governor's top political man. He is now executive director of the Republican Governors Association.

Chris LaCivita

In Virginia, he's known simply as LaCivita. And, while he may be anonymous to much of the public, his work isn't. LaCivita is a campaign consultant and was a key media advisor involved in the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth ads attacking 2004 Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry.

Frank B. Atkinson

The chairman of McGuireWoods Consulting in Richmond, Atkinson is a powerful voice within the Virginia GOP. He's also its resident historian, having penned two tomes about state politics. Atkinson is a veteran of the Reagan administration and worked for then-Gov. George Allen in the mid-90s.

Ed Gillespie

A prominent Republican strategist, Gillespie chaired McDonnell's successful gubernatorial campaign. He previously served as chairman of the national GOP and as counselor to former President George W. Bush. He is the founder of Ed Gillespie Strategies, a consulting firm, and helped launch the outside advocacy groups American Crossroads and Crossroads GPS.

Pat Mullins

The chairman of the state GOP can trace his roots in Republican politics to the early 1970s. Mullins has never held public office, but he's helped elect plenty of candidates over the years and helped restore stability to the party.



George Allen

A former Virginia governor and U.S. senator, Allen's star lost some luster during his failed 2006 Senate re-election bid. But he's been rebuilding his brand and is running in 2012 with the hope of reclaiming the Senate seat he lost to Webb.

Morton C. Blackwell

Blackwell's political activism goes back decades and continues today. He is founder of the Leadership Institute, an Arlington-based operation that trains conservatives to influence policy through activism. He also serves as national committeeman for the state GOP.

Ray Allen, Jr.

One half of Marcus & Allen, LLC, a Richmond-based political consulting firm that has worked on campaigns for U.S. House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, former Gov. Jim Gilmore, and former

state Atty. Gen. Jerry Kilgore. Allen has worked in former Gov. Allen's administration (no relation) and for several GOP groups over the years.

M. Boyd Marcus, Jr.

The other half of the Marcus & Allen, LLC political consulting firm. Marcus served as chief of staff to former Gov. Gilmore and former Congressman Tom Bliley. His son Randy is Lt. Gov. Bill Bolling's chief of staff.

J. Kenneth Klinge

The northern Virginia lobbyist has been active in Republican politics for decades and remains an important voice in the party as a former executive director of the state GOP.

Other Democrats

Tom Perriello

Even though the one-term congressman from the Charlottesville area lost his seat in the 2010 midterms, many observers believe he will have a second act in state politics. His name is already in circulation for any number of races in the next few years, including governor and U.S. senator.

L. Douglas Wilder

Wilder is a trailblazer as the first African American to have been elected governor of a state. The always-quotable Wilder more recently served as Richmond's mayor and is never at a loss for words, sometimes to the chagrin of those in his own party.

Levar Stoney

Stoney is a former executive director of the state party and the first African American to hold that post. He is a veteran of multiple campaigns and now advises Terry McAuliffe as he contemplates another run for office in Virginia.

Mary Sue Terry

The former attorney general became the first woman elected to statewide office in Virginia in 1985. She's still engaged in politics through The Farm Team PAC she helped form to aid Democratic women seeking office.

Paul Goldman

The Democratic consultant and former Wilder aide is a quirky, talented, and outspoken political strategist. The former chairman of the state Democratic Party, Goldman also ran for Richmond mayor in 2008.

Mary "Mame" Reiley

The Democratic consultant has worked with many of the big names in Virginia, is close to Sen. Mark Warner and state party Chairman Moran, and is active in national party politics.

Jody Wagner

A former state treasurer and finance

secretary, Wagner has lost a congressional bid, and more recently, a run for lieutenant governor. But many informed Democrats say she remains viable as a future candidate.

Kevin Hall

Hall is one of the more skilled Democratic operatives around Virginia. He currently works for Sen. Warner on Capitol Hill and previously served in the Warner and Kaine gubernatorial administrations.

Gaylene Kanoyton

The first vice chair of the state Democratic party is a prominent grassroots activist involved with a number of Virginia interest and advocacy groups. She is currently working for the Virginia Legislative Black Caucus.

Jon Bowerbank

An energy services entrepreneur, Bowerbank is a county supervisor in southwest Virginia and serves as a vice chair in the state party. Although he ended his 2009 lieutenant governor campaign less than a month before the primary, many Democrats think Bowerbank has his eyes on another statewide run.

Doris Crouse-Mays

The first female president of the Virginia AFL-CIO has worked to elect Democrats in Virginia and serves on the state Democratic Party's steering committee.

Lowell Feld

Want more evidence that blogs have real sway in Virginia? Look no further than Feld, a blogger who helped draft Webb to run for Senate and worked for his successful campaign as an online coordinator.

Dave "Mudcat" Saunders

A political strategist given to colorful language, Saunders has worked to help connect Democratic candidates with rural voters to the benefit of former Gov. Warner, among others.

Kevin Mack

Mack is a respected direct mail consultant who has worked on campaigns and for a host of progressive groups. He previously served as executive director of the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee and now leads the Mack Crouse Group.

Vivian Paige

An accountant by trade, Paige is probably best known as a onetime Norfolk treasurer candidate who became a noteworthy political blogger. She is plugged in to the inner workings of state party politics.

Alan Moore

A senior vice president with the Mack Crouse group, Moore has worked on mail campaigns for a host of Virginia Democrats running statewide or for Congress.

Susan Swecker

Swecker is a veteran of state and national Democratic Party politics. She recently served as a commissioner with the Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control and has worked to get women involved in politics.

Steve Pazmino

As executive director of the Senate Democratic Caucus, Pazmino is a key political advisor to Senate Majority Leader Richard Saslaw.

Frank Leone

An attorney and longtime party activist, Leone is a DNC member who has worked on behalf of multiple candidates and keeps folks abreast of party developments on his blog.

Sean Holihan

The former president of the Virginia Young Democrats, Holihan is active on GLBT issues. He recently joined the direct mail firm The Chadderdon Group.

Virginia "Pixie" Bell

After decades of involvement, she re-

mains a mover and shaker within the state party establishment and an important voice in heavily populated northern Virginia.

Leigh Anne Collier Weinstein

A former state party official, she now serves as development director at the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy.

Fred W. Hudson

A second vice chair with the state party, Hudson has worked for years on behalf of Democratic causes and candidates, particularly those from Charlottesville and the Shenandoah Valley.

Virginia Education Association

The powerful teachers lobby is a non-partisan group, but its policy goals tend to align with Democratic Party positions.

Rex Simmons

Simmons is chairman of the Fairfax County Democratic Committee, the largest local party affiliate in Virginia. He previously sought a seat in the state legislature.

Ben Greenberg

Greenberg is legislative director for Virginia Organizing, a statewide grassroots and advocacy group that supports progressive policies. He's spent more than thirty years in legislative advocacy and previously lobbied for Planned Parenthood Advocates of Virginia.

Glen Besa

Besa is director of the Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club, the nation's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization, which is actively involved in a wide range of environmental policy debates.

Mike Henry

A veteran of state political campaigns, Henry has run campaigns for Warner and Kaine and worked for other high-profile Virginia Democrats. He has been credited with improving the party's election strategy by targeting suburban voters and improving GOTV operations. Henry now works for ONE, an anti-poverty and disease advocacy group.

Joe Abbey

In the last decade, he's risen from field organizer to campaign manager on legislative races to a player in statewide contests. In 2009, he helped steer state Sen. Creigh Deeds to a surprise win in a three-way Democratic gubernatorial primary.

Claire Guthrie Gastañaga

A onetime state deputy attorney general who frequently lobbies for immigrant and gay rights, she is viewed as one of the sharper intellects in Richmond.

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Other Republicans

Richard Cullen

The chairman of McGuireWoods, Cullen is a former Virginia attorney general and U.S. attorney appointed by President George H. W. Bush. He also served on the legal team of former President George W. Bush during the 2000 Florida recount.

Michael E. Thomas

The first vice chairman of the state GOP, Thomas previously worked in George Allen's gubernatorial administration and later as his chief of staff when Allen was a senator. Will serve as campaign manager for Allen's 2012 Senate run. Thomas is a veteran of Virginia Republican politics and is currently a senior vice president at McGuireWoods.

Tom Davis

The longtime congressman from northern Virginia has remained busy since leaving public life in 2008, working as director of federal government affairs for Deloitte & Touche LLP and as a chairman of Gov. McDonnell's military commission. Davis's wife, Jeannemarie Devolites Davis, is a former state senator who works in the McDonnell administration.

Tucker Martin

Few in Virginia are more on-message than Martin, McDonnell's longtime spokesman. Previously, Martin worked in communications for McDonnell when he was attorney general and held a similar job when Jerry Kilgore was the state's top prosecutor.

Dave Rexrode

Rexrode put his college GOP activism into practice after graduating and hasn't stopped since. He worked on McDonnell's gubernatorial campaign and now serves as executive director of the state Republican Party.

John Hager

A former Virginia lieutenant governor and past chairman of the state GOP,



Hager is a fixture at Republican events and still holds sway in the party. It doesn't hurt to have Jenna Bush as a daughter-in-law, either.

Ben Marchi

The former state director for Americans for Prosperity is plugged in with key donors and important grassroots activists across the state. He's also known to be a close advisor to former Gov. Allen.

Richard A. Viguerie

Viguerie has long been active in conservative causes and is a pioneer of political direct mail. He currently runs ConservativeHQ.com, a website that champions conservative candidates and ideals.

Gary C. Byler

Virginia's 2nd congressional district chairman is a powerful voice in Republican politics. A Virginia Beach-based attorney, Byler has worked for former U.S. Sen. John Warner and in the Reagan White House.

Victoria Cobb

Cobb is president of the Family Foundation, a social conservative group that has pushed to strip Planned Parenthood of state funding and successfully fought to add an amendment defining marriage as between one man and one woman

to Virginia's constitution. Her husband, Matt, works in the McDonnell administration.

Jim Gilmore

The former governor may not have as high a profile as some other recent chief executives, but he remains active in Virginia political discourse. He also serves as president of the Free Congress Foundation, a conservative research and advocacy group.

Jamie Radtke

A conservative activist and campaign advisor, Radtke's power has increased considerably of late due to her leadership of the Richmond Tea Party. She is running for U.S. Senate in 2012.

Jerry Kilgore

Kilgore came up short in his '05 gubernatorial bid, but the former state attorney general is respected in political circles and remains connected in Richmond through his government affairs work for McGuireWoods.

M.G. "Pat" Robertson

The Christian Coalition founder has been a force in Republican politics for years and remains a prominent voice through his television broadcasts, advocacy, and other platforms.

Michael P. Farris

A former candidate for lieutenant governor, Farris is a leader in the home school movement and founder of both the Home School Legal Defense Association and Patrick Henry College, a Christian institution.

Jerry Falwell, Jr.

Falwell is chancellor of Liberty University in Lynchburg, the school his father founded, and is also engaged in Republican politics and policy debates. His university is challenging the healthcare reform law in federal court.

Brian Kirwin

A political consultant with Rourke Public Relations in Virginia Beach, Kirwin has worked on multiple campaigns and airs his views on Bearing Drift, one of the most widely read Republican blogs in the state.

The Obenshains

Considered by some the first family of Virginia conservatives. Patriarch Richard D. Obenshain was a rising conservative star when he died in an airplane crash in 1978; the state GOP headquarters bears his name. His son Mark is a state senator, and his daughter Kate is a former head of the state Republican Party, the first woman to hold that position.

Sean Connaughton

Virginia's Transportation Secretary is highly thought of and seen as having a future in elective office. A past chairman of the Prince William County Board of Supervisors, Connaughton campaigned unsuccessfully for lieutenant governor in 2005.

Robert Baratta

A lobbyist with Capital Results, Baratta represents a variety of clients for the firm, which has offices in Richmond and Raleigh, North Carolina. He is a veteran of former Gov. George Allen's administration.

Trixie Averill

The Salem resident is a fixture at important Virginia Republican functions and serves as GOP chair in the 6th

congressional district. She has worked on scores of campaigns over the years and recently took over as Americans for Prosperity state director.

Fred Malek

A financier, business executive, and GOP powerbroker, Malek is chairman of McDonnell's government reform commission and has worked on behalf of several Republican presidents, including Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, and George H.W. Bush.

Glen Bolger

Bolger is a sought-after Republican consultant and pollster with Public Opinion Strategies, a firm he co-founded. His firm gets the call when McDonnell and other Republicans want to gauge public sentiment.

Richard Baxter Gilliam

The founder of Cumberland Resources, a coal company in southwest Virginia, Gilliam and his wife, Leslie, are high-dollar donors to Republicans and conservative organizations.

G. Paul Nardo

The chief of staff to state House Speaker William J. Howell, Nardo also has worked as a speechwriter for former Gov. Allen and as legislative director for former U.S. Rep. Herbert Bateman.

Michael W. Thompson

The president of the Thomas Jefferson Institute for Public Policy has been active in state Republican causes and was involved with the McDonnell campaign in 2009.

Patrick M. McSweeney

McSweeney is an attorney and past state party chairman who remains involved in politics, often backing conservative candidates. Although some have tried to marginalize him, McSweeney still has a following.

Shaun Kenney

A former communications director for the state GOP, Kenney runs one of the oldest political blogs in Virginia on his

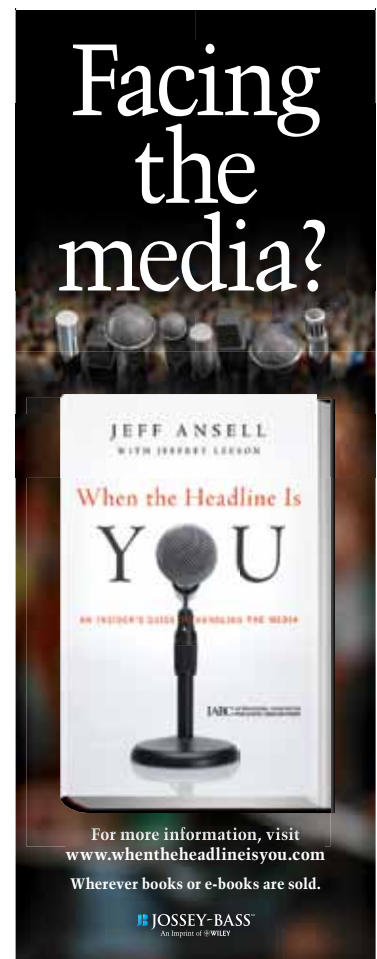
website, serves on the Fluvanna County Board of Supervisors, has worked on a number of political campaigns, and is seen as a comer in Republican circles.

Jason Kenney

Kenney makes this list for what he represents: grassroots activism in the Virginia GOP. A consultant by profession, he blogs from the conservative perspective on several websites and is executive director of RedStorm PAC, an online fundraising operation for Republican candidates.

Richard Crouse

Crouse is a veteran of local, state, and federal campaigns, including the statewide Republican electoral sweep in 2009 and the party's pickup of congressional seats last year. He is past political director for the state GOP and currently has the same role on Allen's Senate campaign.



MISCELLANEOUS

C. Douglas Smith

The ordained minister is executive director of the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy. The advocacy group works with both parties, but its stance on issues is often closer to Democratic Party ideals. He is chairman of the Virginia Redistricting Coalition, a non-partisan group working to reform redistricting in the state.

Bill Leighty

A government and policy consultant, Leighty served as chief of staff in the Warner and Kaine administrations, and is a member of the government reform commission McDonnell established.

Bob Gibson

Gibson is executive director of the Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership at the University of Virginia, a training program for aspiring office holders and political activists that has produced numerous elected officials. He spent thirty years as a journalist in the state before joining Sorensen in 2008.

Whittington W. Clement

A former state delegate who once served as Virginia's transportation secretary, Clement is a partner with Hunton & Williams LLP, a state government relations shop representing a range of clients from localities to large corporations. In January, he was elected chairman of the board of the state chamber of commerce.

Barry DuVal

As the recently installed president and CEO of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, DuVal leads the state's most prominent business group. He is a former state secretary of commerce and trade and a past mayor of Newport News.

Northrop Grumman

The defense giant last year decided to move its corporate headquarters to northern Virginia. But even before that,

the company had a significant presence in Virginia, with a major shipbuilding yard in Newport News and numerous other operations based in the state.

AFSCME/SEIU

These two large labor unions represent government workers and service employees, respectively, and are active in state and federal policy debates.

Reginald N. Jones

A lobbyist with the Williams Mullen law firm, Jones has represented a variety of clients, including big tobacco, before the state General Assembly for more than thirty years.

Philip Van Cleave

The National Rifle Association is headquartered in northern Virginia and is a leading advocate for gun rights in the state and beyond. But its influence shouldn't overshadow Van Cleave and his Virginia Citizens Defense League, ardent defenders of the 2nd Amendment at the legislature in Richmond.

Steven W. Pearson

A Richmond-based attorney, Pearson represents big tobacco (Reynolds American) and the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association at the General Assembly.

Altria Group

The parent company of Philip Morris USA is a powerful voice for big tobacco based in Richmond.

Kevin S. Crutchfield

Crutchfield is chief executive officer of Alpha Natural Resources, the nation's leading metallurgical coal supplier, whose corporate offices are in Abingdon. He has a strong voice on policy debates that affect the industry.

John Taylor

Taylor serves as president of Tertium Quids, a fiscal conservative, free market advocacy group, as well as the Virginia Institute for Public Policy.

PETA

The Norfolk-based People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals is the world's largest animal-rights organization. Its influence is felt in Virginia and beyond.

Thomas F. Farrell II

Farrell is chairman, president, and chief executive officer of Dominion Virginia Power, the largest electric utility in the state. He also serves on the board of directors of public and private organizations and chairs Gov. McDonnell's higher education commission.

Larry J. Sabato

The prolific pundit has written two dozen books and is among of the nation's best-known political analysts. Sabato is director of the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia.

Randal J. Kirk

A venture capitalist from Radford, Kirk considers himself a political independent and has doled out millions in campaign cash to Democrats and Republicans alike over the years.

Bob Holsworth

The former political science professor has long been a prominent observer and analyst in Virginia. His profile was given another boost this year when Gov. McDonnell picked him to lead his bipartisan redistricting advisory commission.

The Virginia Public Access Project

A nonpartisan tracker of campaign cash, the online resource is a virtual clearinghouse for information about political donations and spending, lobbyists' work, and much more about those who influence state government.

Kay Kemper

The president and founder of Hampton Roads-based Kemper Consulting is a regular in Richmond and one of the more influential lobbyists in the state.