



# 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](mailto: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: Janet Oleszek

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Email: [janet@janetforbraddock.com](mailto:janet@janetforbraddock.com)

Campaign Website: <http://www.janetforbraddock.com> (Currently in Development)

Campaign Manager: Kyle Blankenship

Campaign Manager Phone/Email: 7574494360, [kyle@janetforbraddock.com](mailto:kyle@janetforbraddock.com)

### Race and Election Information

Office Sought: Fairfax Board of Supervisors

Indicate whether office is partisan or non-partisan: Partisan

City, County or District of office: Braddock

Select One:       Challenger                       Incumbent                        
Open Seat

Select One:       Caucus                       Primary                       General

Election Date(s): Primary: August 23, General: November 8

### Biographical Information

1. Previous elected offices held:

Fairfax County School Board (2003-2007)

2. Candidate bio (include issues relevant to LGBT Community):

My husband Walter and I have been married for forty years. We moved to the Bonnie Brae neighborhood in 1973. I have spent much of my adult life raising our two sons, Mark and Eric, and being active in the civic life of the Bonnie Brae community, especially the schools our sons attended: Oak View Elementary, Bonnie Brae Elementary, and Robinson Secondary. As an active PTA member, I not only worked at each of the schools, but also as legislation chair for the Fairfax County Council of PTAs and the Virginia PTA. I often traveled to Richmond to meet with lawmakers and to testify before committees on the needs of students and schools in Fairfax County.

In 2003, I ran for the At-Large seat on the Fairfax County School Board. My campaign took me all over Fairfax County and when the final votes were counted, I received over 88,000 votes - an all-time record for any Democratic candidate for the school board at that time. In 2007, I ran for the State Senate. In that campaign against Ken Cuccinelli, the race was decided by just 101 votes out of 37,185 cast. – less than one quarter of one percent.

But, as I have learned through my civic involvement, schools do not stand alone as an issue of concern to the public. The problems that the schools face have the same root causes as our problems with transportation and the region's low environmental rating: poor choices involving public expenditures. I pledge to support initiatives that preserve our environment, our communities and open space, and I promise to spend out tax dollars wisely.

3. Are you a member of the LGBT Democrats of Virginia (formerly the Virginia Partisans)? If so, when did you join?

I am not currently a member of the LGBT Democrats of Virginia.

4. Have you been endorsed by any LGBT organizations now or in the past? If so, please list years and races.

Virginia Partisans – 2007, Virginia State Senate, District 37

**Activities**

1. Have you attended events for, joined, or otherwise expressed support for LGBT organizations or groups?

Yes, I have attended numerous LGBT events and have consistently expressed my support for LGBT organizations at the local, state, and national level.

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 been strongly supportive of the Whitman Walker Health clinic in Washington, D.C. And many other LGBT organizations. My support will continue after I am elected.

3. Have you ever volunteered for or attended LGBT Pride, an LGBT Youth Prom, or other LGBT or LGBT-related events?

No, I have not attended any LGBT Pride events..

**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?

When I was a member of the Fairfax County School Board, I proposed such a policy. It was defeated in a work session. Such a policy is in place on my campaign.

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).

I have consistently supported efforts to eliminate discrimination in employment and housing for members of the LGBT community. I will continue to support these efforts once in office. I have not, to this point, served in an office which allowed me to address these issues through legislation.

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).

Don't Ask, Don't Tell was repealed in the lame duck session in December 2010. I opposed DADT while it was law.

➤ **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 have and will continue to support the efforts of so many LGBT organizations to repeal DOMA. I have not, to this point, served in an office which allowed to address these issues through legislation.

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).

Yes, I have, and will continue, to support efforts to repeal the Marshall-Newman Amendment. I have not, to this point, served in an office which allowed me to address these issues through legislation.

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).

I am a strong supporter of equal rights for straight and LGBT couples. I strongly support legalizing same-sex marriage at all levels of government. I have not, to this point, served in an office which allowed me to address these issues through legislation.

➤ **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).

As a member of the Fairfax County School Board, I supported policies to include FLE programs in our curriculum.

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?

I would strongly support legislation to reduce bullying any individual because of either their sexual orientation or gender identity. There is no place for this type of harassment in our schools.

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?

I have consistently supported forming GSA clubs in schools, and will continue to do so once elected.

10. Do you support the "It Gets Better Project"?

I support the "It Gets Better Project" and its uplifting message of hope for LGBT youths.

➤ **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?

I have in the past, and continue to, support public funding for HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment facilities and will continue to do so once elected.

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 support free access to HIV/AIDS testing for jail and prison facilities, and I would support programs designed to encourage inmates to be tested for HIV/AIDS

➤ **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?

Yes, I have always supported a woman's right to choose abortion and access to birth control. I would not, in any way, support an attempt to restrict a woman's right to choose abortion or access to birth control. My Senate race was the single state campaign in the country that Planned Parenthood participated in. They used it as their "boot camp" for the presidential campaign, staffing my campaign with 72 volunteers from around the country for the last two weeks of the race. I could not have been prouder of their participation.

➤ **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, I fully support making real equality an important factor in filling leadership positions at all levels.

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 am not sure I believe all LGBT individuals should come out if there are inadequate protections in place to protect them from danger or harm. Public officials have an obligation to ensure against these dangers.

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.)?

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?

“Some of my best friends are gay” is trite, of course, but true. My step-sister is gay, and I am proud of her.

18. Please use the space below to provide any additional information you would like us to know about your candidacy.

I believe the time has come in Fairfax to adopt an equal rights/civil rights requirement for our employees and the county at large.

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please contact [president@vapartisans.org](mailto:president@vapartisans.org) with any questions.**