

THE PEOPLE'S PULSE

Keeping the Heartbeat of Our Community Strong

Empowerment and Shared Goals: A Vision for Virginia's 81st District

Empowerment begins with *us*—right here, right now. It's in how we learn, how we listen, and how we show up. Imagine us gathered around a kitchen table — elders sharing wisdom, kids asking big questions, neighbors of all backgrounds leaning in, crying, laughing, maybe even disagreeing - but still *showing up*. What does it look like:

- It's a teen getting help filling out a college app.
- A grandma organizing a food drive down the block.
- A dad learning how to speak up at a school board meeting.
- It's a neighbor translating a flyer so everyone understands.
- It's a hand on your back saying, "*You're not alone.*"
- A married couple writing a joint email about reducing pollution in the environment.
- It's businesses contributing money and resources to the community.

Empowerment is something we build together. With every voice lifted, every door opened, and every person reminded: *You matter. You belong. You have something to give.* When we rise together — across cultures, across generations — we change the system of injustice and develop a legacy rooted in dignity, justice, and shared hope.

As I remain actively engaged in our communities, I want to share what's been weighing on our hearts, the power of showing up, and the urgency of our moment.

What's been heavy on our hearts:

- **Our Children's Future:** Ensuring their safety, education, and wellness—both mental and physical. The weight of youth violence and the heartbreak of grieving families are signs that urgent, community-rooted change is needed.
- **Homelessness and Job Loss:** Too many individuals and families are one paycheck—or one emergency—away from instability. We must fight for accessible, quality jobs and wraparound services that restore hope.

- **Environmental Justice:** Clean air, water, and land are not luxuries—they are human rights. Our community deserves protection from pollution and a plan for sustainable living that doesn't compromise health or heritage.

How showing up informed makes a difference:

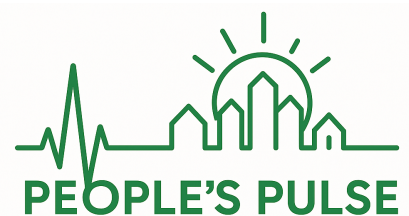
Empowering ourselves through civic engagement—voting, organizing, learning our rights, and holding leaders accountable—*is the way forward*. It connects us to the decision-making power that shapes every aspect of our lives. When we show up informed for various board meetings, attend community forums, or simply ask questions—we are exercising power that can change the trajectory of our neighborhoods and our children's lives. Hold me and other leaders accountable for representing you well by calling, sending emails, or discussing achievements and concerns in person.

Why time is short and legacy endures:

Time is limited, and the choices we make today can ripple through generations. That's why we must be *intentional*—not just reacting to the next election or crisis, but planting seeds for a legacy our children will be proud to inherit.

Our children aren't born thinking in party lines. They dream of being safe, loved, and free to become whoever they choose. That dream deserves leaders who act with integrity, lead with compassion, and show up when it counts—not just those loyal to a party, or showing up during campaign season.

Please pay attention. Let's ask more than who someone stands *with*—let's ask what they stand *for*. Learn about the individuals you entrust with leadership. Watch their actions. Share what you know. Be prepared to vote with clarity, not just habit. Remember, the future is watching—and they're learning from us.



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