
Virginia Democratic Primary

Nancy Spannaus says to fight crime, keep Ollie North out of the Senate

Nancy Spannaus, a leader of Lyndon LaRouche's political/philosophical movement, who has worked closely with him for 25 years, is running for the Democratic Party nomination for U.S. Senate from Virginia in the June 14 primary election. "I am leading the fight to defeat the Bush Leaguers who are now going after the presidency, including against that spiritual 'son of a Bush,' Ollie North," the likely Republican nominee for Senate from Virginia, she told *EIR*'s editors in a June 1 interview.

Spannaus's third run for office (she ran for U.S. Senate as an independent Democrat in 1990, and for governor of Virginia in 1993), intersects what promises to be one of the hottest battles in next fall's U.S. elections, halfway through Clinton's first term in office. Charles Robb, the incumbent senator, son-in-law of former President Lyndon Johnson and a member with William Clinton of the Democratic Leadership Council, is fighting to keep his seat in the face of a media scandal campaign centering around alleged sexual peccadilloes. Besides Spannaus, Robb faces two other primary opponents, State Sen. Virgil Goode and Richmond lawyer Sylvia Clute.

Whatever happens on June 14, Spannaus promises: "I will put my efforts heavily into defeating North, if he is the Republican nominee, as well as continuing to fight to support the presidency. We Democrats are going to have a lot to do. It's expected that if Doug Wilder enters the race, so will Marshall Coleman, with the backing of anti-North Republican Senator John Warner." (Wilder, a bitter Robb rival, was the first elected African-American state governor, and is said to be planning an independent campaign for Senate; Coleman was the Republican gubernatorial nominee whom Wilder beat in 1988.) "The worst thing about this free-for-all is that most of it will not be based on anything to do with policy, only personalities and dirt. The policy load will still fall on us."

Spannaus sees her campaign in strategic terms: "I am helping lead a national slate put together by Lyndon LaRouche, in order to deal with the ongoing financial meltdown of the speculative markets. The major thrust of my campaign has been to expose the fact that the collapse of the speculative bubble is inevitable, and what has to be done to reorganize the banking system, and to restart the physical economy on the right track. I am presenting the record of the

LaRouche movement on the economy, and our program, as well as the principles which Alexander Hamilton worked out to deal with such crises," she asserts. Principles with which she has special familiarity: For 20 years she has been editor-in-chief of the movement's national newspaper, and she co-authored a book on the work of Hamilton, *The Political Economy of the American Revolution*.

Attitudes turned around

In 1990 Mrs. Spannaus's campaign, despite almost nil media coverage and a tiny budget, won a double-digit vote in the Senate race against John Warner. In 1993, her campaign was key to defeating Attorney General Mary Sue Terry's gubernatorial bid. Now, she says, "with the political demise of Mary Sue Terry and George Bush, and the release of Lyndon LaRouche from prison, the political environment has opened up enormously. I have spent a good deal of my effort in this current campaign addressing Democratic Party gatherings on the financial crisis, and the Whitewater assault on the President. I was persona non grata at these meetings last year, when I was running against Terry, but now people are willing to listen to, if not like, what I have to say."

One major factor is that LaRouche's enemies have less power, as their machine has fractured. Plus, "I am the only candidate among the four running for Senate who is addressing the issues on the national and international level which face our country—from the economy, to the threat of a United Nations dictatorship, to the threat against the presidency. Politics in general is such a soap opera—people find ideas something of a relief, even if they complain that it's over their head.

"There have been major turnarounds in recognition of my campaign, since I am in the Democratic primary. The press association which blackballed me last year, included me in their debate; the Christian fundamentalist group which refused to interview me, did so this time; the AFL-CIO interviewed me as well, although they had spurned me last time. In some of these cases, these turnarounds are the direct result of Mary Sue Terry being out of political sight." Terry had tried to make her years-long persecution of the LaRouche movement into a feather in her political cap, but it turned into a minus.

"Not that I am getting equal treatment, by a long shot. The major state newspaper, run by old Virginia families,

the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, just excised me from their candidates' questionnaire—no explanation warranted. And Associated Press and other media, like the *Washington Post*, routinely give me only a one-line reference—'supporter of political extremist Lyndon LaRouche'—without any reference to anything I have to say."

To get her message out, she has been airing one-minute radio ads since March in the major population centers, "with varying degrees of intensity. Most of them hit the financial crisis and Whitewater—although I have tried to use humor as well against the usual 'spectator sport' attitude of most citizens toward elections."

Just before the primary, Spannaus's half-hour spot, "Yes, Virginia, There Can Be an Economic Recovery," was to be shown six times in all the major media markets in the state. LaRouche and his record are featured in the show, with clips of his previous television shows and several live appearances," she said—including one endorsing Nancy Spannaus for Senate. The show, in which she denounces North for bringing massive amounts of cocaine into the United States in special operations steered by George Bush, will air in Washington, D.C. on June 6. "We hope that this will bring a reality into the capital, that will last beyond the election period."

What kind of economic issues face the state? "Virginia is being wiped out by the same disastrous policies of financial speculation which are destroying the nation and the world—with some added twists. The military cutbacks are hitting very hard, and threatening to turn the Tidewater, once a proud port center, into a gigantic gambling and video-tourist Monte Carlo. The mentality of selling the state to businesses such as Disney is very dominant here, because the ideology of plantation labor (or cheap labor) is so widespread."

Moreover, "Virginia has had a special bias against the government role in building infrastructure for many decades. During the New Deal, the Byrd political machine basically funneled everything into roads, and didn't want to see other infrastructure built. Virginia was the last state to join the New Deal programs.

"I have stressed throughout this campaign, that a senator takes an oath to the Constitution, and is not just an advocate for a particular state. There's much too much of this competition between states, rather than looking at the needed economic recovery as a national effort," she argued. "What Virginia needs is what most of the country needs—infrastructure. Particularly in the realm of energy and transportation and water. But to be able to fund the creation of the jobs building these projects, we are going to need a financial overhaul—breaking with the Federal Reserve System, and using a revived national banking system to direct credit to the necessary projects."

Confederate legacy hurts state

"Virginia suffers enormously from the legacy of its role as capitol of the Confederacy," observed Spannaus, who has

lived in the state ten years, but was born in Maine, grew up in Ohio, and resided in New York for nearly two decades. "While African-Americans have reached some prominence in state affairs, the state is still dominated by a plantation mentality. This becomes particularly obvious when you work with working people. Virginia is so anti-union, and consequently anti-worker, that you find working people that long for a day in New Jersey, where they would get respect. In fact, it's true in some of the southern parts of the state that it's more deleterious to be called a union activist, than to be associated with Lyndon LaRouche."

Of course, Virginia is not homogeneous: "The Washington, D.C. area is relatively well-to-do, and full of government bureaucrats. There are also vast sections with estates owned by the wealthy powerful families, the Harrimans, Bronfmans, Mellons, Firestones, and du Ponts. Southwest Virginia is almost a different state, dominated by farming and coal mining, and much poorer. The area around Hampton Roads is dominated by the military and the port, and is more cosmopolitan than the rest of the state.

"Because of the heavy percentage of military spending in the state and the proximity to the federal government, Virginia usually shows up as one of the more prosperous states on the official charts—in terms of employment, incomes, and so forth. But when you travel the state as extensively as I have, you see that most working people are suffering, and much more so now than five years ago. The coal mines are closing, the military-related factories are closing, DuPont is shipping jobs out of the country, and agriculture is very hard hit—and not only in tobacco. What's left is gambling, fast food shops, and tourist-related retail, not a formula for prosperity or a future for our children."

A key piece of Spannaus campaign literature is a booklet presenting the evidence on the official court record, that Lyndon LaRouche and his co-defendants were innocent of all the charges of which they were convicted. (One of her spokesmen is her husband Ed Spannaus, who served time in federal prison as a co-defendant with LaRouche.) "The most palpable impact of the circulation of tens of thousands of these pamphlets, is that it has shut a lot of people up. Those who would be blabbing about Lyndon LaRouche being a criminal, have not said anything, because they have been confronted with the fact that the evidence is on the court record that the government always knew that LaRouche was innocent.

"The idea of the circulation was also to embolden our supporters, who have otherwise been intimidated by slanders about LaRouche. It's going to take more time and more saturation. We are dealing with a process of poisoning people's minds against the LaRouche movement, which went on for close to 10 years. This pamphlet is the antidote, and we will have hit a little less than 2% of the Virginian population by the end of the campaign. That's good, but not good enough."