

# Letters to the Voters of Great Falls

From the VA-10<sup>th</sup> District Congressional Candidates:

- LuAnn Bennett – Democratic Party
- Barbara Comstock – Republican Party
- J. D. Thorpe – Libertarian Party (write-in)

The Great Falls Citizens Association asked the candidates to submit a personal message to Great Falls residents. There were no requirements other than it be less than 600 words. We suggested the candidates touch on:

- Why the candidate wants to serve Great Falls in Congress as our Representative
- The issues important to the candidate
- Key platform elements
- Examples of specific action or legislation they will pursue / advocate
- What could make Congress more effective during times when it is controlled by a different party than the White House (i.e. to avoid gridlock)



LuAnn Bennett



Barbara Comstock



J. D. Thorpe

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## LuAnn Bennett

Great Falls Community –

Thirty-five years ago, my husband Rick and I moved here to Great Falls. Like so many families, we were drawn to its natural beauty and welcoming community. We raised our three young boys on Walker Woods Drive and built a life like so many young couples are doing today. Northern Virginia has been my home ever since.

Rick and I started a small real estate business and grew it together for sixteen years. Then, in 1994, we lost Rick after a year-long battle with leukemia. I was left a single mom of three boys in charge of our business in the middle of a recession. We got through those difficult times with the help and support of friends, our family, and our community.

It was in those challenging times that I learned that when you get knocked down, you have to get back up. Today, my boys are grown and have businesses of their own. And I'm a proud grandmother to my 2-year-old grandson, Sam. Our business survived and our projects have helped create job opportunities for more than a thousand workers and generated millions of dollars in economic development for our region.

In business, I've learned that compromise is necessary to move things forward. Our Congress seems to have forgotten that. There is too much partisanship and are too many special interests. I am running to represent you because like so many of our neighbors and friends, I am frustrated by a Congress unable or unwilling to solve the problems facing our country.

Solving problems means bringing people together. I promise to work across party lines to help build an economy that works for everyone. That means making strategic investments in our crumbling infrastructure, making college more affordable, and reducing the red tape that strangles our small businesses. I'll fight for equal pay for equal work, to protect women's access to affordable healthcare, to address the threat of climate change, end the scourge of gun violence, and work to finally pass comprehensive immigration reform.

Working together to tackle big issues is not new for me. Then-Governor Tim Kaine appointed me to serve on the Virginia Climate Change Commission to work with leaders from both parties to help secure Virginia's energy future. And I served on the Virginia Health Care Foundation, founded by Sen. Mark Warner, to help provide basic healthcare services to low-income Virginians.

Finally, I promise to stand up against the voices of bigotry and division that have come to dominate our politics. This is a time when we need to come together as a country, when our leaders must renounce hateful language and harmful policies and have the courage to do so even when it resides within one's own party.

Washington needs more common sense problem solvers. And Great Falls needs a Congresswoman who shares the values and priorities of this great community. My experience in business and in public service has taught me how to bring people together and build things up. That's the approach I'll take to Congress. I ask for your vote on Tuesday November 8<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you,

LuAnn Bennett  
Democratic Congressional Candidate for Congress  
Virginia's 10th Congressional District

## Barbara Comstock

Dear Great Falls Friends,

For over 30 years, I have lived, worked, started a business and raised my family in the 10th District. In the public and private sector, and as a legislator for the past 7 years (5 in the General Assembly and 2 in Congress), I have worked with you, our community and my legislative colleagues to produce bipartisan results on creating a healthy economy, advancing 21st Century jobs, expanding and promoting our technology community, providing long term transportation solutions without raising taxes, promoting 21st Century healthcare solutions, fighting Lyme disease, cracking down on drugs, crime, and human trafficking, and reducing the tax burden on families and businesses.

In Congress, I continued the bipartisan success I had in the Virginia General Assembly on jobs and technology, education, and health care and hit the ground running focusing on:

- Stopping dangerous national security and defense sequester cuts, restoring national security and defense funding and defending us from terrorist threats here and abroad;
- Fighting for \$600 billion in tax relief for our families and our small businesses;
- Passing a landmark 5-year transportation bill for the first time in a decade;
- Advancing Northern Virginia's innovative technology sector and research & development (promoted growth of local Data Centers). Chair of the Research & Technology subcommittee, worked to pass a permanent R & D tax credit (something I also passed in the state legislature);
- Helped to pass bipartisan human trafficking legislation (again continuing my work in the state legislature);
- Helped to pass bipartisan Education Reform legislation for the first time in 15 years;
- Passing landmark heroin legislation and working with federal, state, and local law enforcement to fight the heroin epidemic;
- Passing legislation to help hire more veterans and prevent veteran suicide;
- Working on cyber security issues and chairing 5 hearings on this subject in my subcommittee; and
- Protecting our federal employees and fighting for their earned benefits.

In addition, I brought my successful Young Women Leadership program that I developed as a Delegate in the Virginia General Assembly, to Capitol Hill. To date over 800 young women have been part of the program preparing to be our future leaders by meeting and hearing from women leaders in a variety of professions.

Nothing is more important than our national security. Great Falls suffered tragic losses on 9/11 that we remember every year in a moving local ceremony. We live in a very unpredictable world where ISIS and other terrorist groups continue to be on the march against the freedoms America stands for. That is why we need leaders who recognize the threat and understand what it will take to defeat the enemy. I have consistently voted for our men and women in uniform and have supported the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and a budget that would increase defense spending by \$40 billion and ease the devastating defense sequester cuts. I also cosponsored a resolution passed in the House that declares what ISIS has done to religious minorities (Christians, Hindus, Yazidis and the Jewish faith) in the areas it currently occupies as "genocide".

My record working for our community has earned me a broad and diverse group of endorsements and support from every major business organization including the U.S. Chamber, the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) plus the Fairfax Firefighters Union, the Virginia Police Benevolent Association, the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), the National Association of Realtors, and the National Home Builders Association.

On November 8, I ask for your vote to continue to work with and for you in Congress.

Sincerely,

Barbara Comstock  
Republican Party candidate for Congress  
Virginia's 10<sup>th</sup> Congressional District

J. D. Thorpe

Dear Residents of Great Falls,

My name is J.D. Thorpe, and I'm the Libertarian Party's congressional candidate in the 10<sup>th</sup> District. I'd like to share my political views, and solutions to our nation's most critical problems. In so doing, I hope to earn your vote on November 8<sup>th</sup>.

As a 31-year-old politico, I've worked on Capitol Hill and in politics for more than a decade. Witnessing firsthand the corruption and cronyism of both major parties transformed me from a wide-eyed idealist into a jaded cynic.

"Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely," wrote Lord Acton. But most forget about his equally important trailing line: "Great men are almost always bad men."

My purpose in running for Congress isn't to seek power, but to dismantle the current corrupting power structure, enabling for the maximization of liberty.

If you're like roughly 80 percent of Americans, you identify as either a Republican or a Democrat. But when you reflect upon it, can you honestly say you're proud of your party?

If the answer is "no" or if you're an independent, I ask you to consider choosing an alternative option by voting for me this November.

We must face hard truths. Our nation is in crises. And there are two problems that warrant the most attention – our fiscal and monetary policy.

With a \$19.5 trillion national debt, we owe more money than our economy produces annually. This doesn't include \$69 trillion in unfunded liabilities from Medicare, and Social Security. Yet both Trump and Clinton want to expand entitlement programs!

Meanwhile, the Federal Reserve under Greenspan, Bernanke, and now Janet Yellen has caused a rapid cycle bubble economy with their reckless, never-ending loose monetary policies.

How would I solve these issues? As a starting point, here are two proposals:

- 1) Cut the defense budget in half. Too draconian? Consider this: with a budget of \$596 billion, the U.S., with only 4.3 percent of the population, accounts for 35.6% of global military expenditures. Putting it into further perspective, our defense budget is greater than the next seven closest countries combined. A 50 percent reduction would cut almost \$300 billion, and the U.S. would still have the world's largest military.
- 2) Pursue legislation that diminishes the power of, and eventually eliminates altogether the Fed. The Fed's policy of artificially setting the federal funds rate at zero continues to devalue our currency, and promote the mal-investment that creates bubbles. The most prosperity-generating solution is to foster a free market in currency. But we're stuck with the Fed in the short-term. Therefore, the Audit the Fed bill is a solid start in at least providing transparency.

Though unpopular, these types of big-picture ideas are necessary in order to pass down a free and prosperous country to our children and grandchildren.

Let me conclude by addressing gridlock in Congress - a hot topic that's discouraging for many Americans. The federal government has already vastly exceeded its limited constitutional authority. I view the prevention of any further encroachments on our freedoms as positive.

But "major-party tribalism" does exist and is problematic. For example, many politicians vote on both sides of budgets that raise the debt ceiling depending on who controls the White House.

In Congress, I'll vote my conscience on every bill. And, I'll happily join forces with anyone attempting to reduce government power whether it's criminal justice reform with liberal Democrats, or debt reduction with conservative Republicans. Congress is in desperate need of critical thinkers who don't merely "fall in line" with their party.

In liberty,

J.D. Thorpe  
Libertarian Party candidate for Congress  
Virginia's 10<sup>th</sup> Congressional District