

STATEMENT FROM LIEUTENANT  
GOVERNOR WILLIAM T. BOLLING

I am writing to commend the Virginia Coalition for Open Government for all you do to make certain that the activities of state government in Virginia are carried out in full public view. This is an important and necessary part of protecting our democratic form of government, which recognizes that the citizens are the true owners of government.

During my service in the Senate of Virginia I enjoyed working with the Virginia Coalition for Open Government on FOIA-related issues. As you know, I served as a member of the FOIA Subcommittee of the Senate's General Laws Committee, and I was chief patron of legislation to rewrite Virginia's FOIA laws and create the FOIA Advisory Council. In recognition of these efforts, I was honored to receive the Coalition's Freedom of Information Award.

We share a common belief that information held by government agencies should be readily accessible to the people of Virginia, and meetings of public bodies should be open to citizens. I applaud you on the outstanding job you do each year in protecting these important principles.



VIRGINIA COALITION FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT  
10TH ANNIVERSARY GALA DINNER  
NOVEMBER 17, 2006

STATEMENT FROM ATTORNEY GENERAL  
BOB McDONNELL

In the republican form of government, such as exists in this Commonwealth, there are two prerequisites for success. The first is the citizenry must be educated and engaged. The second is that government must be transparent and open to that citizenry. Each depends upon the other. That is why I am honored to support the Virginia Coalition for Open Government.

Young Virginians learn about “checks and balances” in government class as it relates to the three branches of government. But the ultimate “check and balance” is provided by a population that wants to be aware of what is occurring in government, and has the access to ensure such awareness is meaningful.

It is the solemn duty of all who serve in elected positions, placed there by the public trust, to see that meaningful access to information increases in the years ahead. In the Internet age it has never been easier to get information, and it has never been more important to ensure that government works in the daylight for all citizens to see. I salute the Virginia Coalition for Open Government for your tireless work to keep the “daylight shining in.” I look forward to continuing our positive relationship in the years ahead.

STATEMENT FROM HOUSE SPEAKER  
WILLIAM J. HOWELL

For years now, Virginia has been a leader in open government and disclosure thanks to the outstanding leadership and steadfast commitment of many organizations, including the Virginia Coalition for Open Government. Throughout my nearly 20 years in the House of Delegates, I have consistently supported rapid and full disclosure by candidates and legislators of political donations. Individuals seeking the trust of the public for an elected government office should be open and candid in their disclosure.

The developments and initiatives we have championed in the General Assembly to increase openness and transparency in elections and government are good, common-sense public policies. In today's rapidly changing world, we just simply cannot do – or afford to do – the people's business the same old way as in the past. Honest government reforms to encourage additional accountability and strengthen existing standards are integral and necessary to the continued preservation and good working of our great democracy. Providing information to the people of Virginia in a convenient and accessible manner is vital to that charge. I am firmly committed to ensuring these policies are adopted and enforced with the public's best interest always at the forefront. Advocates for these policies, like this Coalition, protect Virginians and, in doing so, enhance the entire democratic process.