

Legislative Report
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1. UTILITY COSTS. Good news on the way? Intense discussions are now going on in our General Assembly between our representatives and staffs from our State Monopolies (Dominion Energy and Appalachian Power) The issues are where our citizens overcharged for the past few years and how do you reasonably decide what constitutes reasonable profits for these monopolies in the future. One answer will determine are we going to get a refund for past overcharges and the other answer will be will be our current rates be reduced for the future billing periods. The negotiations are intense as there are different points of view on the answers to these question. A side "friction" point is there are some different points of view between our General Assembly and our State Corporate Commission on their relationships and decision-making powers of each of them in regulating the utility industry. Most are predicting the outcomes will be favorable for "we" the consumer.

2. Gerrymandering. Some state courts now are issuing their own voter district maps and there is still controversy as some state politicians insist only they have the constitutional authority to do so. As a result, some of these states have appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court for relief. Presently the U.S. Supreme Court has only ruled on one emergency appeal and their request from state politicians was denied by Justice Alito. There are presently six to seven cases in either the state or federal courts still pending on this issue. These matters will be taken up by the full U.S. Supreme Court in the fall.

3. Serious people and legislative problems in SW Virginia (economics, population loss, education, health (insurance and the opioid crisis) And let's remember these types of problems do not recognize artificial political boundaries. We can easily see how conditions in the coal industry have affected our neighbors in W. Virginia as well as here in Virginia. A recent story was told about a small family own newspaper in W. Virginia has filed for bankruptcy. The newspaper is The Charleston Gazette-Mail, started in 1873, managed for generations by family members and know by many as an aggressive consumer crusader in environment, strip-mining, safety, mountain top removal) The potential new owners have operations from New York to Hawaii and will probably not be able to replace that special touch of the Gazette. And lets make sure we express to our representatives not only our concerns about our local issues but our concerns for our friends and neighbors nearby!!