

[Staunton News Leader, Oct. 31, 2009:

<http://www.newsleader.com/article/20091031/OPINION01/910310303>]

Bolling, Shannon our choices

October 31, 2009

Two of the top three jobs in Virginia's government are hardly breathtaking. The lieutenant governor's primary responsibility is to preside over the Senate, and the attorney general makes opinions that, in the larger scheme of things, don't make much difference.

As in all races, we do our best to determine which candidate we trust with our government.

For lieutenant gover-nor, incumbent Bill Bolling is our choice, and for attorney general, we chose Steve Shannon.

Simply put, Bolling has had four years in the job, and despite Democratic challenger Jody Wagner's claims that he hasn't attended important committee meetings, he's handled the work. He works well with the Senate and with the work that must be done in the next four years, consistency isn't a bad thing. Wagner didn't show us how she could do the job (primarily a stepping stone to the governor's mansion) any better.

In the race for attorney general, both candidates are attorneys and legislators from Fairfax. Both seem qualified for the job, but Shannon impresses us as genuinely interested in looking out for Virginians' welfare.

Cuccinelli's ultra-conservative stances on a number of issues, namely abortion and gay rights, frighten us. Laws are created by the legislature, and must be upheld by all officers of the court, including the state's prosecutor, one of the attorney general's roles.

Shannon's motivations to combat gang violence and protect youngsters from online predators are sincere. He has a record of working to protect constituents. But Shannon also offers a balanced approach to state government, eager to represent state agencies across an array of legal issues.

We endorsed Bolling for lieutenant governor four years ago, and we do so again, confident he will carry out the duties for another four years.

We endorse Shannon and believe he would be our best representative as attorney general.

Opinions expressed in this feature represent the majority opinion of the newspaper's editorial board, consisting of: Roger Watson, president and publisher; David Fritz, executive editor; Cindy Corell, community conversations editor; and Jim McCloskey, editorial cartoonist.