



## CANDIDATE SPOTLIGHT

**RAM VENKATACHALAM**

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, LITTLE RIVER DISTRICT

CANDIDATE: **RAM VENKATACHALAM**

OFFICE: **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, LITTLE RIVER DISTRICT**

WEBSITE: **RAM4LOUDOUN.com**

### **What would you like voters to know about you?**

More than anything else I want voters to know that, if elected, I will always vote for what is in their best interests -- not in pursuit of a personal, partisan, or national social agenda. That's not what a member of the Board of Supervisors should do, and my approach to local government and community service is in sharp contrast to my opponent's.

As a resident of Brambleton since 2008, I have witnessed the stresses of change. Many are positive, but others like traffic and safety inside our schools have not contributed to a better quality of life and we must do better.

My perspective on how to improve Loudoun's quality of life comes from being a husband and father, a business professional, a community leader, and an appointed public servant. What all of these have taught me is the importance of listening with an open mind, educating myself on the facts and options, and seeking thoughtful, collaborative solutions.

### **Why are you running for office? Why are you interested in public service?**

I am running for Supervisor because I understand the challenges facing Loudoun County, have the experience, determination, skill, and temperament to be an effective leader, and am committed to making a positive difference in the lives of all our citizens.

Among the many things that have prepared me for this campaign is my service on the Loudoun County Transit Advisory Board for the past five years and as its Chair for the past three. I have worked collaboratively with Republicans and Democrats in support of commonsense approaches to our transportation network. That includes transit commuter bus

service to D.C, the Pentagon, and other federal agencies, and ensuring that we have adequate local bus service to help those who commute to jobs in Sterling and Leesburg. Metro is here, but it is not a solution that works for everyone, nor is higher tolls on the Greenway and Dulles Toll Road, and I want to be sure our citizens have cost-effective alternatives. That's how our Board of Supervisors should work too.

### **How long have you lived in Loudoun County?**

I moved to the United States from southern India 20 years ago, to attend college and with gratitude for the freedom and opportunities this nation provides. I earned both bachelor's degree and master's degree in computer sciences and moved to Loudoun County in 2008. My wife and I both work and we are raising two children, ages 10 and 8, who are enrolled in Loudoun's public schools.

### **What are the key issues in your campaign?**

My key issues are as follows:

- Improve the Board of Supervisors' relationship with LCPS and the School Board, to ensure that critical issues like student safety, budget priorities, and communication with parents are addressed before problems arise.
- Things are not getting better, and the School Board's recent vote in favor an \$11 million pilot program to replace current separate bathrooms with unisex bathrooms with individual, walled-off stalls for all, is further evidence that the Board of Supervisors must do a better job with its guidance before transferring hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to LCPS each year.
- The same can be said for the shameful attacks by certain members of the School Board and Board of Supervisors on the invaluable service performed by our School Resource Officers (SROs) in keeping our children and teachers safe. If those members have their way, our public schools will become dangerously unsafe, and I will never let that happen.
- Public safety generally is another key issue. I have an excellent relationship with LCSO, and value our Sheriff's approach to community engagement and professionalism. We have by far the safety county in Northern Virginia and the metro region, and I will always vote to ensure that we have the necessary resources and personnel to keep Loudoun safe.
- Spending is a third priority, and a Board that is more transparent, disciplined, and strategic about it. The Board's annual budget process is an exercise in "how much more can we spend without raising taxes too much". I want that mentality to be replaced by

a budget model that regularly assesses the value of every program and focuses on critical spending to tangibly improve the quality of our lives, not simply build a larger government bureaucracy. Last year's equalized real property tax rate was 89 cents, and the one just adopted by the Board is 87.5 cents, which is not a tax cut. Instead, dramatically higher property values have turned this into a tax hike for almost every Loudoun homeowner.

- Zoning and land use is another priority, specifically where we put new homes and data centers. Yes, we want the data center tax revenue, but they should not be built where they preclude any future opportunity for mixed use and walkable communities, retail and office space, parks, and workforce housing – especially around Metro stations.
- Roads and transit must continue to be a high priority, and my experience as Chair of the county's Transit Advisory Board has given me the perspective needed to ensure that the Board continues to support such roads connections such as North Star Blvd., a robust local and commuter bus system, and Metro as one of many transportation options for citizens.
- Dulles Airport flight path noise has been a malingering issue in the eastern part of Little River District, but finally steps appear to be underway to manage and mitigate it. I have sided with residents throughout this process, and it is far from resolved, so the first Supervisor from Little River District should be someone who can both respect the value of Dulles Airport while always protecting the interests of current and future residents.

### **What is the one word people who know you best would use to describe you?**

I choose two words – principled and pragmatic.

I believe that principles matter and will never let mine be compromised for personal or partisan advantage. I am also pragmatic in my approach to local government. I am a good listener, will want to hear all points of view before deciding and will always vote in the best interests of all stakeholders on any matter that comes before the Board.