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[Home](#) / [news](#) / [opinion](#) / [mailbag](#) /

# Letters to the Editor

**By Times-Dispatch Staff**

**And the winner of the "Et tu, Brutus" award is . . .**

Editor, Times-Dispatch:

It is that time of year again — the Ides of March are upon us. It is time to reconsider who your closest friends are. It came as a fatal surprise to Julius Caesar that his best friend Brutus was among the band of his assassins.

Conservative Republicans and tea-party members alike can empathize with poor Caesar. After working diligently and providing financial support to elect Republican state legislators, they find themselves being similarly ambushed during the recent legislative session. Among these various legislative skirmishes, one name is clearly the winner of the "Et tu, Brutus?" award for the 2012 legislative session.

This GOP senator sponsored a "nutrient" cap-and-trade bill, SB77 (while the Republican National Committee issues an anti-Agenda 21 policy statement), a motor-fuel tax system indexed to the yearly producer price index without apparent limit (SB493) and a energy-efficiency bill that provides electrical utilities an enhanced pathway for satisfying the statutory definition of an "energy-efficiency program." Virginia State Corporation Commission hearings of March 6 increased electric rates to make up the shortfall in its revenue stream as customers start reducing energy usage.

The clincher for this award was his impassioned speech in the Senate on Feb. 13 opposing SJR3 — the eminent-domain protection constitutional amendment bill, second reading. A year earlier this senator voted for the bill. In the ensuing year, he had a conversion and presented his own biblical interpretation to deny the concept of the right of mankind to private personal property. Genesis 1:28 was relegated to the back seat, as were the principles of property rights of our Founding Fathers.

Republican Sen. John C. Watkins has done his best to earn this year's "Et tu, Brutus?" award.

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Charles Battig.

Albemarle.