

# *SUSAN S. GASTON*

**Founder, President & Chief Executive Officer  
THE GASTON GROUP, LLC**

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***Highly organized, highly respected, highly effective Virginia-based government relations and public affairs consultant offering over two decades of experience in public policy, legislative affairs, grassroots and grassroots organizing, media relations, business development and analytics serving clients throughout Hampton Roads, Virginia, the United States and the globe.***

## **EDUCATION**

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*The George Washington University  
Williamsburg, VA*  
May 1992

M.A. Ed.: Human Resources Development

*The College of William and Mary  
Williamsburg, VA*  
May 1988

B.A.: Government/English

## **CREDENTIALS**

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*The Commonwealth of Virginia*  
Registered Lobbyist      Current

## EXPERIENCE

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2000 – Present      *Founder, President and Chief Executive Officer  
The Gaston Group, LLC*

- ❖ *Represents professional trade associations, corporations (including Fortune 50, Fortune 250 and Fortune 500 corporations), and non-profit organizations covering a variety of issues in the areas of housing, real estate and development, land use and zoning, commercial and residential landlord-tenant and leasing, manufacturing, technology development and deployment, renewable and alternative energy, telecommunications and telecommunications technology, the arts, seafood production and processing, finance and economic development, before the United States Congress, federal regulatory agencies, the General Assembly of Virginia, state regulatory agencies, local government bodies and local government agencies*
- ❖ *Develops and executes comprehensive public affairs strategies that include direct lobbying of local, state and federal elected and appointed officials; grassroots and grasstops/stakeholder involvement and influential contact development and engagement; press and media management, including social media; event organizing, implementation and engagement; and regulatory contact outreach and engagement.*
- ❖ *Develops and maintains exceptional, trustworthy relationships with local, state and federal elected and appointed officials, as well as with professional public policy staff at all levels of government*
- ❖ *Develops and maintains relationships and partnerships with community organizations, area businesses and key non-profit entities*
- ❖ *Frames policy issues and crafts clear, substantive messages that resonate with policy makers. Constructs position statements and talking points, drafts and delivers public testimony, and provides other vital communications to decision makers and stakeholders*
- ❖ *Identifies and recruits significant allies to enhance the client's opportunities for success by focusing in-depth knowledge of key individuals and organizations, both public and private, and an extensive network of contacts, to assist in building critical coalitions centered around specific issues*
- ❖ *Achieves comprehensive solutions that are predicated upon honesty and integrity, client communication, detailed research and proven strategies*

1991-2000

Governmental Affairs Director

Virginia Peninsula Association of REALTORS®, Newport News, VA

- ❖ *Developed and built from the ground up a strong, highly credible and highly effective in-house Government Affairs Program for the Virginia Peninsula Association of REALTORS® (VPAR), a professional trade association with approximately 1,000 real estate professionals and real estate affiliate members on the Virginia Peninsula, covering the municipalities of the City of Hampton, the City of Newport News, the City of Poquoson, the Town of Smithfield, the County of Isle of Wight and the County of York*
- ❖ *Represented VPAR throughout the Peninsula Region and advocated for the Association's public policy positions*
- ❖ *Monitored political, legislative, and regulatory issues affecting the residential and commercial real estate industries, advised the general membership and volunteer leadership of VPAR concerning these matters, advocated for the REALTOR® position to local, state, and federal government officials, and managed all operations of the REALTORS® Political Action Committee (RPAC)*
- ❖ *Maintained a broad understanding of local, state and federal legislative, regulatory and political issues affecting the real estate industry*
- ❖ *Researched and tracked proposed legislation impacting housing and shelter, land use policy and the real estate industry on the Virginia Peninsula*
- ❖ *Guided the Association in determining viable, effective positions on public policy and promoted these positions to various governmental bodies*
- ❖ *Drafted and delivered testimony for City Council, Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission and other local and state committee meetings and public hearings regarding real estate-related ordinances, legislation and regulations*
- ❖ *Broadened members' awareness of legislative, public policy and political matters through newsletters, calls-to-action, and presentations at membership meetings, real estate broker sales meetings and other speaking opportunities*
- ❖ *Promoted grassroots political involvement by REALTORS® through face-to-face advocacy and personal engagement with decision makers*
- ❖ *Actively monitored local initiatives and effectively utilized national, state and local resources to achieve the Association's goal of becoming THE VOICE FOR REAL ESTATE on the VIRGINIA PENINSULA*
- ❖ *Created and executed annual fundraising plans for RPAC, including managing all communications and special events*

- ❖ *Ensured that all local RPAC accounting processes remained in compliance with state and federal PAC laws and regulations*
- ❖ *Served as liaison to VPAR's Governmental Affairs Committee and related subcommittees and work groups, and to the RPAC Fundraising Committee by providing staff support, including preparation of agendas, minutes, reports and other materials*
- ❖ *Attended general business, public policy and select RPAC-related local, Virginia and national REALTOR® Association meetings*
- ❖ *Served as Chairman of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS DIRECTOR (GAD) COMMITTEE, 1996-1998*

1988-1990

*Director of Government Relations  
Citizens National Bank, Evansville, IN*

- ❖ *Served as the local and state government relations director for this tri-state bank covering portions of Kentucky, Illinois and Indiana*
- ❖ *Monitored political, legislative, and regulatory issues affecting the banking, lending and financial industries, and advised the President and Board of Directors regarding these matters*
- ❖ *Maintained relationships and partnerships with the state Banking Associations of Kentucky, Illinois and Indiana as well as with the American Banking Association*
- ❖ *Maintained a broad understanding of local, state and federal legislative, regulatory and political issues affecting the banking and financial industries, with a focus on commercial lending, mortgage lending and real estate development financing*
- ❖ *Researched and tracked proposed legislation impacting the banking, financial and lending industries*
- ❖ *Guided the Bank and its leadership in determining viable, effective positions on public policy and promoted these positions to various governmental bodies*
- ❖ *Drafted testimony for City Council, County Commissions and other local and state committee hearings regarding lending and real estate financing related ordinances, legislation and regulation*
- ❖ *Attended shareholder business meetings*
- ❖ *Provided support to the Bank's efforts in meeting its annual fundraising goals for the various state and national Bankers PACs in which the Bank was affiliated*
- ❖ *Represented the Bank at key customer events and functions*

1988-1989

*Intern and Legislative Correspondent  
Office of United States Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY)  
Washington, D. C.*

- ❖ *Served as an intern and as the Legislative Correspondent for the Judicial and Legal Sections of the Office for Sen. McConnell*
- ❖ *Reported directly to the Chief of Staff*
- ❖ *Represented the Senator at various events and fundraisers in Washington, D. C.*
- ❖ *Conducted meetings with constituent groups and outlined subsequent meeting reports for the Chief of Staff and the Senator*
- ❖ *Prepared briefing papers and reports for the Senator as a member of the Judiciary Committee, and attended all Judiciary Committee meetings as well as Judiciary Committee Subcommittee meetings*
- ❖ *Conducted research on relevant judicial and legal issues, using the Library of Congress, the United States Supreme Court and the National Archives as sources of information*
- ❖ *Prepared responses, letters and other communications to constituents on behalf of the Senator*
- ❖ *Conducted all other tasks as deemed necessary by the Chief of Staff and the Senator to ensure responsiveness and effectiveness of the Office*

## **AFFILIATIONS and ACTIVITIES**

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- ❖ *The Sorenson Institute at the University of Virginia* 2016
  - *Nominated for Appointment to the 2017 Board of Directors*
    - *NOTE: Confirmation of this nomination pending*
- ❖ *Fauquier County Broadband Advisory Group* 2016-Present
- ❖ *James City County*
  - *Strategic Plan Advisory Group (SPAG)* 2016-Present
  - *Comprehensive Plan Citizens Participation Committee* 2014-2015
  - *Green Building Advisory Committee* 2008-2009
- ❖ *City of Newport News*
  - *Regulations Committee* 2009-Present
  - *Comprehensive Plan Citizens Advisory Committee* 2013-Present
- ❖ *Fort Eustis Civic League Association* 2014-Present
  - *Board of Directors* 2015-Present

- ❖ *Middleburg Bank*
  - *Williamsburg Regional Board of Advisors* 2013-Present
- ❖ *Greater Williamsburg Chamber and Tourism Alliance* Member Since 2013
  - *Chairman, Governmental Affairs Committee* 2014-Present
- ❖ *Virginia Peninsula Chamber of Commerce* Member Since 2010
  - *Executive Committee* 2013-Present
  - *Board of Directors* 2013-Present
  - *Chairman, Public Policy Committee* 2013-Present
- ❖ *College of William and Mary*
  - *President's Public Policy "Kitchen Cabinet"* 2009-Present
  - *Kappa Alpha Theta, Beta Lambda Chapter*
    - *Facilities and House Corporation Board President* 2012
    - *Board of Advisors* 2009-2012
  - *Athletic Educational Foundation/Tribe Club*
    - *Executive Committee Regional President* 1999-2000
- ❖ *Virginia Public Access Project*
  - *Fundraising Committee* 2010-present
- ❖ *Bruton Parish Church* Congregant Since 2007
  - *Altar Guild* 2013-Present
  - *Youth Group* 2008-Present
  - *Friends of Bruton* 2013-2015
- ❖ *Colonial Williamsburg Foundation*
  - *Volunteer, Coach and Livestock* 2012-2015
- ❖ *Virginia Symphony Orchestra*
  - *Board of Directors* 2007-2009
- ❖ *St. Andrew's Episcopal School*
  - *President, Board of Trustees* 2007
  - *Board of Trustees* 2006-2008
  - *Fundraising Chairman* 2005
- ❖ *Junior League of Hampton Roads* Member 1995-2006
  - *President* 2002
  - *Board of Directors* 1999-2002
  - *Political Action Committee Chairman* 1997-1999
- ❖ *Virginia Living Museum*
  - *Board of Directors* 2001-2002
  - *Fundraising Committee Chairman* 1999-2001
- ❖ *Peninsula Fine Arts Center*
  - *Fundraising Committee* 1999-2002

## AWARDS and HONORS

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- ❖ *Featured in the Williamsburg Region's "NEXT DOOR NEIGHBORS" Monthly Magazine with the title, "NAVIGATING THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS" June 2016*
- ❖ *Received the Virginia Peninsula Chamber of Commerce Chairman's Leadership Award for Outstanding Leadership and Volunteerism in Recognition of Developing and Executing the Chamber's Public Policy Committee and Legislative Agenda, 2013*
- ❖ *Received the GIRLS', INC. "STAR" Award in Recognition of Outstanding Leadership and Mentoring of Young Women on the Virginia Peninsula, 2001*

## PRESENTATIONS

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- ❖ *NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® (NAR)*
  - *National Housing Summit* *July 2016*
    - *Presented Housing Data and Best Practices of Applying Data and Analytics in Implementing Local and State Housing Policies*
    - *Co-Presented with Dr. Lawrence Yun, Chief Economist and Senior Vice President of Research for the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®*
- ❖ *NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®*
  - *Annual Legislative Conference* *May 2016*
    - *Presented Housing Data and Best Practices of Applying Data and Analytics in Implementing Local and State Housing Policies based upon appropriations from the MY REALTOR® PARTY HOUSING OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM grant program*
    - *Presented to the NAR Housing Opportunity Committee*
- ❖ *VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®*
  - *RPAC Fundraising Training for Local Associations* *2013*
  - *Presented Successful Fundraising Strategies and Tactics for Meeting Local, State and National RPAC Fundraising Goals*
- ❖ *WILLIAMSBURG AREA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®*
  - *Instructor for VREB-Approved Course in Legal and Legislative Updates as part of New Member Orientation and Continuing Education Requirements* *2008-Present*
- ❖ *College of William and Mary*
  - *School of Public Policy* *2008-Present*
    - *Annual Lecturer with Sen. Thomas K. Norment, Jr.*  
*Course Title: "SO, NOW YOU'RE A LEGISLATOR!"*

- ❖ *Virginia General Assembly Capitol Interns Program*
  - *Annual Presenter to the Student Interns from the various Colleges and Universities in the Commonwealth during the Capitol Interns Program for the General Assembly of Virginia* *2008-Present*
- ❖ *Multiple Presentations to Associations of REALTORS®' General Membership Meetings and Annual Meetings, REALTOR® Member Firm Sales Meetings and Award Banquets*
- ❖ *Multiple Presentations to corporate clients' Boards of Directors and shareholder meetings*
- ❖ *Multiple Presentations to City Councils, Boards of Supervisors, Planning Commissions, local government subcommittees and work groups, Subcommittees and Committees of the Virginia General Assembly of Virginia, Commissions and Boards of the Commonwealth of Virginia, federal regulatory Commissions and Congressional bodies*

***References Available Upon Request***

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