

Election fraud? Former candidate Feda Morton arrested

By [Lisa Provence](#) | lisa@readthehook.com

Published online 5:55pm Wednesday Apr 18th, 2012

and in print [issue #1117](#) dated Thursday Apr 26th, 2012



Feda Morton as a candidate in 2010, and under arrest in 2012.
publicity, albemarle charlottesville regional jail

Feda Kidd Morton, who ran two years ago for the Republican nomination for the 5th District Congressional seat that was ultimately won by Robert Hurt, has been arrested, accused of election fraud. Morton, a former chair of the Republican party in Fluvanna County, is charged with the felony of falsely certifying a petition in a 2011 race.

These aren't Morton's first election-era problems. Running as a family-values candidate in 2010, Morton had to deal with the fact that, as the [Hook reported](#), she had earlier lost custody of her children during a bitter divorce because, according to court transcripts, the judge feared her anger issues were harmful to the children. During that same race, the *Daily Progress* reported allegations that [Morton had committed plagiarism](#) in an editorial she submitted to a newspaper called the *Rural Virginian*. Morton downplayed the custody loss and denied the plagiarism allegation.

Morton's March 22 arrest, first [reported by the Fluvanna Review](#), came at the request of a special prosecutor, Greene Commonwealth's Attorney Ron Morris, who declined to comment on the case other than saying, "An officer investigated and found probable cause for a warrant."

Morton, 59 and released on her own recognizance, has been involved with Republican party in Fluvanna for more than 20 years. But in seeking comment from local officials and ordinary citizens, a reporter hears a similar refrain from people unwilling to comment on the record.

People are fearful because Morton is "mean and vindictive," says one person who spoke only on the condition of anonymity.

A source indicates that Morton's alleged crime came from her certification that she had witnessed people signing a petition in a constitutional officer race last year in Fluvanna. Falsely certifying a petition is a Class 5 felony, which carries up to 10 years in jail. The rules for gathering signatures are pretty clear, says the person familiar with the race.

"For someone with 25 years of experience, this wasn't a mistake," opines the source. "And how many other petitions has she filed on behalf of other candidates that she's signed? If she did it on a local level, I wonder if she did on a state or national level."

Morton did not return a call for comment from a reporter, nor did her attorney, Rob Hagy.

A biology teacher at Fluvanna High School, Morton remains employed at the school.

"We have a policy in place," says Fluvanna Schools superintendent Gena Keller, noting that the school system may choose to place someone arrested for a felony on suspension or administrative leave, a policy that mandates such removal only for crimes against a child.

"And this," says Keller, "clearly is not."

As superintendent, Keller would be the one who makes any recommendation of teacher suspension to the School Board, but she declines to divulge her thinking on Morton's continued employment.

"I'm not going to comment on that," says Keller. "That would be a personnel issue."

What the unnamed source is most fearful of is that Morton— who is scheduled for a preliminary court hearing May 15— will get a deal, plead guilty to a misdemeanor, and continue in politics. In Virginia, felons are not allowed to vote or run for office unless their rights get restored by the governor.

"If it's a felony, she's out of politics forever," says the Fluvannan. "The relief felt among people who want to run for office would be huge."