

## **NAACP Bio for Larry Fishtahler**

**16APR2024 – (Full recording/transcript not available yet)**

### **NAACP BIO for Larry Fishtahler**

“The NAACP has a long and storied history here in Arlington County.” I am proud to say that I played some small part in that story - in the legal case: Tuttle v. Arlington County School Board: “The question before this Court is whether an oversubscribed public school may use a weighted lottery in admissions to promote racial and ethnic diversity in its student body.” See: <https://caselaw.findlaw.com/court/us-4th-circuit/1161132.html> The National Association for The Advancement of Colored People; The Arlington County Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; The League of United Latin American Citizens, Amici Curiae. (1999). I was the author of that lottery, won its approval and its adoption by Superintendent Smith and the School Board, and was the LULAC representative who reached out to the Arlington County Chapter of the NAACP, and together with the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law filed an Amici Curiae brief. In all I have done related to APS, I have worked hard to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion – especially in my leadership of the ACI and the CCPTAs. I have continued to work, in my post-COVID teaching at Wakefield High School, to understand equity issues and provide equitable and inclusive education in a truly diverse school – the best sources of information about my efforts are the people for whom, and with whom I have worked.

Larry has three decades of dedicated service to our schools including as Chair of the Advisory Council on Instruction (ACI), and as President of the County Council of PTAs (CCPTAs). His involvement began as the LULAC Council for Education liaison to APS; his advocacy was recognized with APS’s Honored Citizen award. Larry is a certified secondary math teacher. He has just completed a four-month substitute assignment teaching Physics at Wakefield; and post-COVID had long-term assignments at Wakefield (Special Ed. Earth Science), and at W-L (Special Ed. Earth Science and Physics for English Learners). Before COVID he taught math for several years. Larry’s prior professional experience of twenty-five years was as a systems engineer working at the highest levels on NASA’s development programs – including Space Station, and Climate Change Research. Larry’s wife, Elva Verastegui, is a retired Yorktown Spanish teacher. They have two children, Eduardo, and Camila: both APS K-12 graduates.

## NAACP Opening Statement

My objective this evening is to convince you that of all four of us, I have a true understanding what needs to be done, but most importantly, I have actually done things, and I have experience essential to knowing how to get things done. There are five aspects of my experience that I want to highlight:

1. Parenting: son & daughter K – 12 in APS – high school is important.
2. Advocate: LULAC & joined forces with you – for equitable access to our choice schools.
3. Leadership: Science, ACI & CCPTAs – beyond inclusion – went to you:
  - a. To get your participation,
  - b. To strategize,
  - c. To make sure your voice was heard, understood, honored, & incorporated into actionable recommendations – we made real progress closing gaps.
4. Teacher: W-L & Wakefield – I know what actually happens in the classroom – school board needs this perspective to turn words into real governance.
5. Governance: how you do it – from my professional experience with NASA – Space Station & climate change research – I learned and practiced it.

All this went into my AEA-PAC endorsement

*Everyone gives lip service to supporting teachers – no other candidate took my pledge.*

All of us are going to say how we will support Black students; my questions are:

- What have you actually done?
- Do you really know what it's like to be in the classroom – how it *FEELS*?
- Do you really know how to govern?

Let's get beyond "happy talk" about what we intend to do – let's be *real*!

## NAACP Closing Statement

Teachers are our most important resource – everybody says so.

Post-COVID we teachers are under greatly increased workloads and stress

- Class sizes way too big
- Teaching extra classes
- Under staffed
- Struggling to keep veteran teachers
- Struggling to recruit new talent

The School Board does not now have anyone with my perspective & experience

They *really* need it.

The AEA endorsed me because I know what teaching is & how it *feels*...

*Read their statement on my website – [LarryForArlington.org](http://LarryForArlington.org)*

It's based on

- what I understand
- what I have done
- and what they know I will do

The Superintendent will see and respect my ability to govern

He will know that I and the Board will not *be managed*

We have serious problems – especially post-COVID

*Too often we have not anticipated what is coming*

I have devoted my life to creating the future

I will dedicate myself full time to the governance of our schools

Please read and consider carefully what the AEA has said about their endorsees

I'm Larry I ask for your #1 vote, not for myself but for all our teachers

Signal that you really do care about them. Thank you.