

The Arlington Connection

Evelyn Platt from Arlington holds up her pumpkin for inspection declaring she is making it look really bloody. At the Gulf Branch Fall Festival in Arlington on Oct. 11.

Hands on History

PAGE 6

Blessing of the Arlington Animals

PAGE 3

INSIDE: Election Guide

ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 8 ♦ SENIOR LIVING, PAGE 9 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 20

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OCTOBER 15 - NOVEMBER 4, 2025

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Corporal A. Robinson and Corporal Jon Burgess chat with Sandra Roston at Coffee with a Cop Day on Oct. 1.



A group of local Arlingtonians share experiences from their summer vacations with ACPD officers at Good Company Donuts.

PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE

Coffee and a Chat at Annual ACPD Event

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

It is a nice day for a stroll, a free cup of coffee and a chat with a local police officer. Oct. 1 is the annual “Coffee with a Cop” event which was held this year at Starbucks in Clarendon from 8:30-11 a.m. and then Good Company Donuts from 11:30

a.m.-2 p.m.

Corporal Jon Burgess, a member of the Community Engagement Division of the Arlington County Police Department (ACPD) says, “The location moves around from year to year. This is a perfect location on the sidewalk in Crystal City where everyone walks by.”

Corporal A. Robinson, also a member of

the Community Engagement Division, says there haven’t been any real specific concerns raised by the people stopping by today. “They just mostly want to chat.” Sandra Roston has just walked by with her dog to drop him off at a playdate for animals down the street. She had such a good conversation the first time that she stopped for a second chat on her way back.

The ACPD Community Engagement Division holds a number of community outreach events each year including collection of toys at Christmas, donations of food for Arlington Food Assistance Center, and a special Halloween trick or treat event. The events are focused on increasing understanding and trust between police officers and the community.

A Blessing for All and Sprinkles for the Animals

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Several dogs were sitting at attention in the churchyard. Others were curled up around their owners feet while a few were sniffing around looking for a new friend. It was the St. Mary’s Episcopal Church Blessing of the Animals on Saturday, Oct. 4 held outside the church at The Point in the churchyard.

The Reverend Meg Ingalls, inter-

with only one cat and “no snakes this time.”

The ceremony began with the traditional “The Lord be with you.” And the response, “And also with you,” with a few respectful barks joining in. Ingalls proceeded with an invitation to call out names in remembrance of pets departed. “Help us remember and honor the gift of companionship they have given so generously.”

Ingalls told everyone to just remain seated and she and Rev. Victoria Herd would come to each of their animals with a blessing. Ingalls dipped her evergreen branch in holy water and headed for the first row of dogs. They worked their way through the folding chairs around the church yard.

“Little Bear may the blessings of God be with you always.”

In the back row Melissa and David Urban sat holding their dog

SEE A BLESSING FOR, PAGE 4

**All dogs with only one cat
and “no snakes this time.”**
— The Reverend Meg Ingalls

im rector at St. Mary’s said Oct. 4 is the day St. Francis of Assisi is honored for his love of all nature and emphasis on the interdependence between humans and animals. In his honor churches worldwide hold ceremonies blessing the animals. She noted the animals present today seemed to be all dogs



PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

The Reverend Meg Ingalls, interim rector of St. Mary’s Episcopal Church on Glebe Rd. and the Rev. Victoria Herd hold Blessing of the Animals on Saturday, Oct. 4, the day to honor St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals.

A Blessing for All and Sprinkles for the Animals

FROM PAGE 3

Gabby. They have driven from San Antonio to visit his sister and are here today because “that’s my sister up there. She is the priest.” David says he is a retired Methodist minister.

Just down the way Herd reached the cat carrier in the last row of chairs. She carefully unzipped the carrier which housed Cinderella,

the only cat in attendance, and offered a few sprinkles of water on the top of Cinderella’s head.

When the final prayer has asked that God grant health, peace and safety, it’s time for the healthy macrosnacks filled with bone marrow to be distributed to the (mostly) patient and well-behaved wagging tails.



PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

Cinderella, the only cat present, receives sprinkles of holy water through the top of her cat carrier at Blessing of the Animals Oct. 4.



The Rev. Victoria Herd blesses Little Bear as she sprinkles holy water on his head at the Blessing of the Animals on Saturday.



Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

In accord with state and federal law, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has imposed new or changed existing weight restrictions and installed new signage indicating the updated weight restrictions on the following bridges and culverts (structures) in Virginia within the last 30 days.

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
DINWIDDIE	5930	40	MCKENNEY HIGHWAY	MILL RUN BRANCH	9/11/2025

The list above is not a comprehensive list of all structures with weight restrictions in the Commonwealth but shows only structures that have new or changed weight restrictions within the last 30 days. The list contains only basic structure identification and location information and the date the new or changed weight restriction and signage became effective.

For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit vdot.virginia.gov and navigate to Traffic and Travel/For freight operators/Truck restrictions. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

Notices regarding bridges and culverts with new or updated weight restrictions are published monthly by VDOT. For additional information or questions, please contact haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov or the Load Rating Program Manager, Manjil Devkota at 804-786-4064.

The Virginia Department of Transportation is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on VDOT's Title VI Program or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Program Specialist at 804-786-2730 or corina.herrera@vdot.virginia.gov.



Melissa and David Urban sit in the back row of chairs with their dog Gabby. They are from San Antonio and have come today because, “Well that’s my sister, Rev. Ingalls, up there. She’s the priest.”

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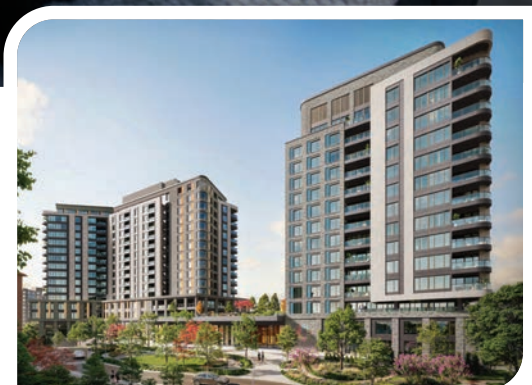
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Experience the Life of Early Arlington Settlers at Gulf Branch Heritage Fest



PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

Gulf Branch Fall Heritage Festival Oct. 11



First stand inside the park puts you in the mood by helping you make your own ghost. At the Gulf Branch Fall Festival in Arlington.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Every year Gulf Branch Fall Festival takes a step back in time to provide a hands-on experience of early Arling-tonians in their everyday life.

A crowd has gathered around the butter-making stand as Ra-chael Tolman shapes and pushes the finished mound of butter around in a bowl. "All this takes is heavy whipping cream," she explains, "and you can add salt when it's finished if you like." A line has formed at the table to taste a small slice of baguette piled high with the newly made butter. On

the ground at the other end of the table a tiny volunteer is churning another batch by pulling a lever up and down in a pottery container which gradually turns the cream into solid butter. "Thank you for all of your hard work on that." It takes about an hour.

Next door kids are circling round pushing handles that grind chunks of apples into apple cider. A table is loaded with apples from nearby orchards that get cut into chunks and then dropped into the top of the crank. The volunteer explains nothing else is added to the apples for cider; if you add water you end up with apple juice. The table next door is offering tastes of



A would-be artist is practicing with a quill and ink which she declares is pretty difficult. At the Gulf Branch Fall Festival in Arlington.

Evelyn Platt from Arlington holds up her pumpkin for inspection declaring she is making it look really bloody.



Two enthusiastic kids circle around and around pulverizing chunks of apples into fresh cider. At the Gulf Branch Fall Festival in Arlington.

cider either plain or with spices including cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and allspice.

One of the tables is loaded with a variety of squares of brightly colored material. A sample of a finished quilt sits nearby. Each person is given a square as well as a needle and thread and shown how to sew around the edges. Another table offers a choice of different yarns that will be woven into tiny carpets. Lauren Shrader from Maryland has come with two friends and is volunteering at the yarn table.

Up the stone steps on the terrace a new dyeing experience has been

added this year. Erin Cruz, who is manning the table, points to the black walnuts “just from that tree over there. They will turn material brown. And these pokeberries will produce a pinkish/purple/dye.” She says some of the dyes are from native plants, and others are from things like turmeric that produces a yellow color. She has a container with two different kinds of material that illustrate one fabric takes to dye better than the other.

Children line up at another table with a feather quill and a small container of ink made from plant, animal or mineral extract. Each

is attempting to write a note or produce a small picture but admit “this is pretty difficult.”

Just across the terrace imaginations are at work at the pumpkin decorating tables. Evelyn Platt, who has walked to the festival from her neighborhood down the block, holds up her bright red pumpkin for her mother’s inspection. “I’m making it look really bloody.”

And if this isn’t enough, the creek running through the park has attracted a number of kids who are scrambling over the rocks and throwing twigs into the water—a pastime for the ages.



Meanwhile on the other side of the apple cider machine, Amara Nirola-Raut is turning the wheel. “Look, juice is coming out.”



Erin Cruz mans the new dyeing station that illustrates colors that can be produced with native plants. At the Gulf Branch Fall Festival in Arlington.

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Lauren Shrader from Maryland is volunteering today demonstrating how to weave yarn into mini carpets. At the Gulf Branch Fall Festival in Arlington.



Rachael Tolman is mounding the completed butter ready for tasting. The process of churning heavy cream into butter takes about an hour. At the Gulf Branch Fall Festival in Arlington.

ENTERTAINMENT

EVENTS AT METROPOLITAN PARK

This October, Amazon HQ2 is welcoming its Arlington neighbors with a series of family-friendly events at Metropolitan Park. As part of their ongoing commitment to being a good neighbor, they're excited to create opportunities for the community to connect, celebrate the season, and enjoy all that Met Park has to offer.

Here's what's happening this month:

- ❖ **Met Park Movie Night** – Thursday, October 24 (7 PM): Join us under the stars for a screening of the Halloween classic *Hocus Pocus*.
- ❖ **Met Park Daily Giveaway** – All October: Back by popular demand! Throughout October, Met Park retailers will distribute various prizes to visitors as part of a daily giveaway series. Each day, a Met Park retailer or event will be posted on the National Landing Instagram story, directing participants to that location where they can enter to win that day's prize. This year, prizes range from Met Park merchandise to fitness classes, wine tastings, and gift cards.
- ❖ **Met Park Bingo** – October & November (4:30 – 5:30 PM): Our community-favorite Bingo returns at a new time this fall, giving neighbors a chance to unwind and win fun prizes.
- ❖ **MoCa on the Move**: Family and friends are invited to join the MoCa on the Move series twice a week:

Sundays from 10am - 1pm

Thursdays from 5pm - 7pm

- ❖ **Eat Loco Farmers Market**: Community members still have time to visit the Eat Loco Farmers market that ends on October 21, 2025.

Tuesdays from 10am - 2pm

Saturdays from 9am - 1pm

CENTERS FOR OPPORTUNITY ARLINGTON

The Centers for Opportunity Arlington is a safe, stigma-free place to spend time for those recovering from homelessness, substance use, and mental illness. It has a donation closet that needs adult clothing and shoes. Some participants at the Center are looking for jobs and need the proper attire. Located at 3219 Columbia Pike, Suite 101, Arlington. Contact Greg, Program Coordinator at 703-567-1346.

VOLUNTEER FOR ARLINGTON'S COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Arlington Neighborhood Village, in partnership with Arlington County and Marymount University, has started the Community Ambassador Program (CAP). CAP is a volunteer fueled system that identifies "Ambassadors" connected with civic associations, faith communities, senior centers, apartment buildings, etc. These individuals will be trained to be a reliable source of information about the many opportunities available to older adults in Arlington.

Ambassadors will spread the word about programs and support services, opportunities for social and civic engagement, and educational and enrichment activities for older adults in their own neighborhoods. They are actively recruiting ambassadors to act as a bridge between their community and the Arlington safety net, providing information and soliciting feedback to improve offerings that help older adults remain safe, independent, engaged, and connected to their community.

Contact cap@anvarlington.org if this is something you are interested in or want to learn more. Let's work together to create a supported and connected community for all ages!

Receive Support Services: Are you a senior in Arlington? Do you need support services but don't know where to look? Are you looking for fun and enriching activities in Arlington? Email or call 703-509-8057 and they will connect you with an Ambassador.

THE MARJORIE HUGHES FUND FOR CHILDREN

The Marjorie Hughes Fund for Children (MHF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit serving Arlington Public Schools (APS) students, helps underinsured and uninsured students obtain medical and dental services and other necessary medical care. Established in 1992



Arlington Restaurant Week takes place Oct. 13-20, 2025 in Arlington.



A HOWL-week Dog Costume Contest will be held at Met Park on Tuesday, Oct. 21, 2025.

to honor the work of public health physician Marjorie F. Hughes, who dedicated her career to public school students in Arlington, MHF is made up of Public Health School Nurses, School Health Aides, APS staff, and community stakeholders. In collaboration with pediatric office staff and dental providers, MHF pays for school entry and sports physical exams, dental treatments, assists with the purchase of medications or medical equipment, and provides transportation via UberHealth rides to doctor and dentist appointments. MHF services are supported entirely by generous donations and grants, and they have helped students throughout Arlington schools, from kindergarten to high school, to be happy, healthy, and ready to learn. To learn more about MHF, its mission, its work, and to make a contribution, visit <https://www.marjoriehughesfund.com/>.

YEAR ROUND ON SUNDAYS

Farmer's Market. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Casa Chirilagua Community Center, 4109 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Experience fresh foods, native plants, artisan crafts, music and community at Four Mile Run Farmers & Artisans Market in the heart of Arlandria outside the Casa Chirilagua Community Center, every Sunday 9-1 p.m.

OCT. 13-20

Arlington Restaurant Week. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce will hold the seventh annual Arlington Restaurant Week, from Monday, October 13 to Monday, October 20. During this week, diners can enjoy food at many restaurants throughout Arlington at special prices. Arlington Restaurant Week highlights the region's hospitality industry and encourages the community to explore new dining options close to their homes

and businesses. More than 65 restaurants are signed up to participate in the event. Arlington Restaurant Week is open to all restaurants, from fast-casual neighborhood favorites to five-star formal dining. Participating restaurants pick their own price points, and menus range from formal three course dinners to a coffee and breakfast sandwich pairing.

WEDNESDAY/OCT. 15

Ballston Fall Market. 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

At Ballston Quarter, Arlington. Celebrate Arlington's local talent and discover unique, handcrafted goods created by our community's artisans and makers.

OCT. 17-26

"It's My Party." Presented by Pipeline Playwrights at Theatre on the Run, 3700 S Four Mile Run Drive, Arlington.

Details of the Event:

Fri. October 17th 2025, 7:30 pm
Sat. October 18th 2025, 3:00 pm
Thu. October 23rd 2025, 7:30 pm
Fri. October 24th 2025, 7:30 pm
Sat. October 25th 2025, 3:00 pm
Sat. October 25th 2025, 7:30 pm
Sun. October 26th 2025, 2:00 pm

FRIDAY/OCT. 17

Foom Sham Artist Talk and Reception. 4-7 p.m. At Marymount University Ballston Center, Ballston, Arlington. Join at Cody Gallery for an inspiring evening with artist Foom Sham as he discusses his exhibition *Tunnel Vision*, curated by Sarah Hardesty. Artist Talk, 4-5 p.m., Reception with the Artist, 5-7 p.m. This is a unique chance to hear directly from the artist and celebrate his work with the community. Free and open to the public—don't miss it!

FRIDAY/OCT. 17

Interdisciplinary Talk on Kurdish History and Identity. 6-8 p.m. At Mason Exhibitions Arlington, Virginia Square, Arlington. In this interdisciplinary talk, three Kurdish PhD Scholars across Mason will talk about their research, making connections to the artwork in the *Ki me Ez? - Who Am I?* exhibition. Join moderator Holly Mason Badra and panelists Arash Saleh, Golzar Salih, and Omer Pacal for a chance to think more about Kurdish experiences across disciplines.

SATURDAY/OCT. 18

Free Community Health Fair. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

At Carlin Springs Elementary School, 4994 5th Road, South, Arlington. The free family-friendly event, sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Arlington, in partnership with VHC Health, will offer vision, diabetes, and blood pressure screenings, Chagas disease testing, and information on nutrition, exercise, and fire safety. The first 100 attendees will receive free flu shots. In addition, there will be children's activities, information booths representing many community safety-net agencies, and children's book giveaways. Four bikes will be raffled off to participants. This is the 2nd annual Health Fair sponsored by Kiwanis and generously supported by the Diana Davis Spencer Foundation.

SATURDAY/OCT. 18

Slime Making @ Innovation Studio. 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. At 525 14th Street, South, Arlington. Get ready to roll up your sleeves and dive into the world of slimy fun. This hands-on event is perfect for kids and adults alike who love getting creative and a little messy! Our expert slime makers will guide you through the process of creating your very own slime masterpiece. From choosing colors to adding glitter and more, the possibilities are endless!

SATURDAY/OCT. 18

Pike Fest. 12-5 p.m. At Penrose Square, Arlington Heights, Arlington. Come together to celebrate and support Columbia Pike's small businesses and vibrant community. Enjoy local food and drinks, music, family-friendly activities, and pike photos, all designed to showcase and uplift the businesses that make the Pike special.

SATURDAY/OCT. 18

Voices for Justice: A Music Festival Before the Vote. 3-5 p.m. At Rock Spring UCC, Rock Spring, Arlington. From classic protest anthems to new songs of hope and resistance, this festival brings together local artists, community and church choirs, and special guest speakers. The music culminates with an all-choirs performance and audience sing-along. Alongside the music, enjoy food, community art-making, voter engagement activities, and more—a full afternoon of inspiration and action for all ages. Free and open to all.

SATURDAY/OCT. 18

Re-Gen Fall 2025 Open House. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At 3402 South Glebe Road, Arlington Drop by a family-friendly open house at the Arlington County Water Pollution Control Plant to learn about Arlington Re-Gen, a major capital improvement project scheduled to begin construction in fall 2025. The event will include plant tours, activities for kids, Q&As with project staff, and tables to learn about programs and initiatives from Arlington County Government and County partners.

SATURDAY/OCT. 18

AAUW Presentation. 10:30 a.m. Presentation by Nicholas Reynolds at the American Association of University Women, Arlington Branch at their October 18, 2025 meeting at Arlington Mill, Room 412. Mr. Reynolds will discuss his most recent book, *Need to Know: World War II and the Rise of American Intelligence*. Mr. Reynolds has worked in the field of modern history on and off for 40 years. He has taught at the Naval War College, John Hopkins University and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

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SENIOR LIVING

Flourishing After 55

Office of 55+ Programs
Department of Parks and Recreation
300 N. Park Dr., Arlington, VA 22203

55+ Programs are in person at 55+ Centers unless otherwise noted. A 55+ Pass is required to participate starting at a \$25 annual fee. To join or register, go to registration.arlingtonva.us or call 703-228-4747.

September is Senior Center Month and Fall Prevention Month

New, Memoir Writing group to share and exchange ideas, meets second and fourth Wednesdays, beginning Sept. 10 through Nov. 26, 2-4 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Registration # 911402-19.

Coffee or Tea and Thee, Mondays and Thursdays from 9 to 10 a.m., socialize with other 55+ friends at Lubber Run 55+ Center. Drop-in.

Volleyball, all skill levels welcome, Tuesdays, 3:30 – 5:30 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center; and Thursdays, 2 - 4 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Both are drop-in.

Introduction to beginners line dancing class with 55+ volunteer Suzie Pratts, Fridays, Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Learn box step, quarter turn and grapevine. Drop-in.

Cribbage, a challenging card game yet easy to learn and play, Fridays, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Drop-in.

Water walking and lap swimming to strengthen muscles at Long Bridge Aquatics Center, Mondays, 8-10 a.m., Wednesdays, 1-3 p.m. No instruction provided. Long Bridge Aquatics Center membership required or pay daily admission fee. Located at 333 Long Bridge Drive. Drop-in.

Tai Chi practice with experienced volunteers, no instruction provided, Mondays, 2-2:45 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center; Tuesdays, 1-2:15 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center; Fridays, 1-2:15 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. All are drop-ins.

55+ Ice Skating, Mondays, 8:40 – 9:40 a.m., MedStar Capitals Iceplex, roof level parking at Ballston Quarter. \$1 skate rental fee. Pre-registration required at www.medstarcapitalsiceplex.com, click on Senior Public Skate.

Memoir Writing group to share and exchange ideas, meets second and fourth Wednesdays, beginning Sept. 10 through Nov. 26, 2-4 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Registration # 911402-19.

Play pickleball, 55+ Pass required at the following 55+ centers: Walter Reed, Mondays, 8:15 a.m.- 4 p.m.; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30 – 4 p.m.; Wednesdays, 2:15 – 4 p.m.; and Fridays, 8:15 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Arlington Mill, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 10 a.m.- 3 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12 – 3 p.m. Drop-ins.

Women's drop-in basketball, Wednesdays, 7:15 p.m.-8:45 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Drop-in.

Advanced drawing and painting, beyond the basics painting and drawing techniques taught by Community Arts Programmer Jennifer Droblyen, Thursdays, through Oct. 2-30, 1:30 p.m. Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Cost: \$41.50, materials not included. Register #911303-11.

History Discussion Group led by Dwight Rodgers of Encore Learning. Discussion topics will be emailed to participants before each meeting. Thurs., Oct. 16, 1-2:30 p.m. Virtual. Registration #911402-10.

Just Beneath the Surface, presentation on the history and techniques of three artists with

Community Arts Programmer Jim Halloran. Fri., Oct. 17, 10-11:30 a.m. Virtual. Registration #911302-04.

Oct. 20

Step-by-step painting demonstration with a Community Arts Programmer, Monday, 10:30 a.m., virtual. Picture and supply list will be sent prior to class. All experience levels welcome. Registration # 911303-05.

Meet the Beatles, sing-along of favorite songs by the Beatles featuring Ken Schellenberg on the piano and

Judy McVerry, Sherry Hickey and Cameron Fletcher on vocals, Monday, 1:30 p.m., Aurora Hills

55+ Center, registration # 911304-24 and Thursday, Oct. 23, 11 a.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center, registration # 911304-25.

Oct. 21

Learn to play Euchre, a classic trick-taking card game, Tuesday, 5 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Taught by volunteer Ben Childers. Registration # 911600-16.

Acoustic Café features performances by local musicians Valeria Stewart and Kevin Dudley with the Turnips of Doom, Tuesday, 7 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Open to all ages; no 55+ Pass needed. Registration # 911301-02.

Community Clean-Up at Quincy Park, 1021 N. Quincy St. Tuesday, 8 – 10 a.m. All supplies provided; open to all ages; no 55+ Pass required. Registration # 911899-02.

Oct. 22

Local history discussion group focuses on Arlington's rich past, Wednesday, 1:30 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 911402-08.

Library services presented by the Cherrydale Library staff, Wednesday, 1 p.m., Langston-Brown

55+ Center. Learn how to access ebooks and audiobooks and sign up for a library card. Registration # 911400-13.

Oct. 23

Movie night, Thursday, 6 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center to watch a Halloween favorite, "Hocus Pocus" (1993) (PG). Registration # 911804-11.

Peak foliage and pie walk, join Arlington Regional Master Naturalist Volunteers for a 1.5 mile urban nature walk through the Arlington Village neighborhood with a stop for pie at the ACME pie shop, Thursday, 1 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Registration # 911106-30.

Explore countries in the Spanish speaking world with Ashley Gomez, 55+ Center Director. Take a virtual tour of the Western Sahara, Thursday, 1 p.m. Registration # 911400-28.

Parking at the Ballston Public Parking Garage, learn about the new payment system, Thursday, 1 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Presented by the Arlington County Parking and Curb-space Team. Registration # 911400-10.

Dwight Rodgers of Encore Learning leads a virtual discussion group about the history, economics, artistic, culture and politics of various countries, Thursday, 1 p.m. Registration # 911402-11. Discussion topics will be mailed to each participant prior to meeting.

Oct. 24

Fortunes in the attic, find out about art pieces hidden in the attic or elsewhere and learn how to identify authentic antiques, Friday, 9 a.m., virtual. Presented by Community Arts Programmer Jennifer Droblyen. Email a photo of your item to sashton@arlingtonva.us with a short description prior to session and she will research it for you. Registration # 911302-06.

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ALEXANDRIA FILM FESTIVAL



The High Stakes of the 2025 Virginia General Election

House of Delegates Election in Arlington County.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Voters in Arlington County, Virginia, along with others in the commonwealth, face one of the most consequential general elections on Nov. 4, 2025. Choices will help determine the statewide policy course over the next two years, from abortion and reproductive rights to fiscal policy and the cost of living, to public education, school funding, and more.

At the state level, the battle centers on partisan control. For Democratic voters, the election focuses on the opportunity to secure a trifecta — control of the governorship and the House of Delegates, since they already hold the state

Senate, which is not contested this year. They hope to win the governor's office while maintaining their narrow House majority. Numbers of votes in Arlington could indicate opposition for current policies in Washington.

For Republican voters, the strategic goal is to prevent the opposing party from gaining unchecked control. For Libertarian and independent voters, their vote ensures a continuing political dialogue. Numbers of votes in Arlington could indicate support for current policies in Washington.

We sent questionnaires to the local House of Delegates candidates running to represent Arlington County. Voters will cast a ballot for the candidate of their choice in their respective legislative House District. Depending on their mailing addresses, the candidates for House of Delegates running in Arlington County include the following:

- ❖HD-1: Patrick A. Hope (D); William J. "Bill" Moher III (R)
- ❖HD-2: Adele McClure (D); Wendy K. Sigley (R)
- ❖HD-3 Alfonso H. Lopez (D) (unopposed)

Votes matter even in uncontested races. In Virginia, voters can leave a single office, such as the House of Delegates, blank. This is recorded as an undervote for that race and could be interpreted as a measure of disapproval or apathy.

Additionally, at the state level, Arlington County voters will also be voting for the executive branch of the Virginia government: governor, lieutenant governor and attorney general. The Virginia Press Awards, a nonpartisan group, has produced its 2025 Virginia Voter Guide, reproduced in this paper after the House of Delegates.

Essential local races in Arlington County include County Board Member (2 seats) and School Board At-Large. For official election details, registration, and polling information, visit: <https://vote.arlingtonva.gov/Home>

Arlington County will be using ranked choice voting for the county board seat. Read more about ranked choice voting here: <https://vote.arlingtonva.gov/Elections/Ranked-Choice-Voting>

Patrick A. Hope (D), candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 1

Patrick Hope (D)

Profession/Experience:

Health care attorney with over 20 years of experience working for Virginia; recognized by numerous organizations for leadership and community service.

Education:

Bachelor of Arts degree, St. Mary's University in San Antonio ('93); Master of Arts degree, Congressional Studies, The Catholic University in Washington, D.C. ('96); Juris Doctorate degree, The Catholic University Columbus School of Law in Washington, D.C. ('01).

Personal/Activities:

Information not provided in the original text sections.

Public Service:

Member of the Virginia General Assembly as the delegate from the 1st District, running for re-election to his eighth term. Chairs the House Courts of Justice Committee; member of the House Public Safety Committee and the House Health and Human Services Committee.

Legislative Priorities/Challenges/Solutions:

Legislative Priorities: Pass resolutions to amend Virginia's Constitution (right to vote, right to reproductive freedom, and right to same-sex marriage). Pass gun safety legislation to enhance background checks for all firearm purchases. Pass legislation to update Arlington's County Manager Plan (allowing for popular election of Board chair, expanding Board size, and allowing for districts/at-large/hybrid structure). Ensure continued access and coverage for life-saving vaccines.

Residents' Biggest Challenge: Unnecessary firing of federal employees and contractors, and draconian cuts to Medicaid eligibility.

Proposed Legislative Solution: Working with Democrats to address the crisis by: 1) increasing unemployment insurance by at



Patrick A. Hope (D)

least \$100 per week; 2) amending the Landlord Tenant Act to allow recently displaced federal employees to break their lease without penalty; and 3) evaluating federal funding reductions to potentially use the Rainy Day Fund and/or Revenue Reserve Fund to provide Medicaid coverage.

Data Centers:

Supports the regulation of data centers and placing requirements on them to support their own energy generation. Must also invest in clean energy to create a sustainable future with a renewable energy supply to manage demand.

State's Underfunding of Public Schools:

Virginia is underfunding public schools by billions of dollars. Need to update the Standards of Quality (SOQ) formula to accurately reflect true costs, including a per-pupil increase, factoring in local labor costs (COCA), and funding for at-risk/higher-need students. Teachers should be paid above the national average, and positions like central office/transportation personnel should be included in the SOQ formula change, all fully funded by the commonwealth without a local match. Localities like Arlington should be given the power to raise funding for school infrastructure needs.

Casinos:

Building a casino in Arlington is not a viable economic driver for the county, as Arlington is already a desirable location for business development and residency.

What I Want District Members to Know:

"I am proud to have served the commonwealth for 16 years and am running for re-election to continue making positive changes for all Arlingtonians."

<https://www.hopeforvirginia.org/>

William J. "Bill" Moher III (R), candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 1

William J. "Bill" Moher III (R)

Profession/Experience:

Software engineer; entrepreneur for 25 years. Joined a software startup in NoVA as a consultant in 1997.

Education:

Software engineer trained at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, PA.

Personal/Activities:

Hometown: North Guilford, CT. Identifies as an engineer and an optimist, seeking to creatively solve problems in a complex system, not merely through partisan thinking.

Public Service:

Has not yet served as a public servant, but ran for office earlier.

Legislative Priorities/Challenges/Solutions:

Legislative Priorities: Residents say the biggest challenge is the effects of the reduction in force of the U.S. government, which has had ripple effects on contractors, small businesses, and future investment due to the presumptive shrinkage in the local economy. Proposed Legislative Solution: Relax permitting rules. Hire this well-educated workforce and fund sign-on bonuses through the unemployment program, forgivable after two months of full-time employment, when hiring former federal employees. The governor should provide tax incentives for companies that keep these employees full-time for at least two months, with full forgiveness for those who stay for two years.

Data Centers:

Prioritize placing data centers in the basements of existing, unused residential and



William J. "Bill" Moher III (R)

commercial buildings. The generated heat can be used to heat buildings, reducing electricity costs, as demonstrated by the Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center's ability to heat a complex of buildings. Geothermal cooling can manage

bills in the summer.

State's Underfunding of Public Schools:

Adopt Loudoun County's compromise on transgender bathrooms: single-person multigender toilets, showers, and changing areas should be available for different genders. Argues that fighting this policy is "stupid" and denies critical federal funding to Arlington schools while incurring large legal bills, funds that could be used for facility retrofitting.

Casinos:

Believes a common-sense compromise could protect residents from negative aspects while allowing local small businesses to benefit from increased foot traffic. Views existing politicians as having no concern for residents and sees it as a state revenue opportunity. Would be a "no" on a simple vote, but a "maybe" if the bill were well thought out, with local benefits proportionate to the negative impact.

What I Want District Members to Know:

As an engineer, he approaches problems differently, seeking creative solutions within complex systems rather than through partisan thinking. "The only thing that matters is how effective the tax dollars we raise are at solving the problems we are facing."

<https://www.billmoher.com/>

ARLINGTON HOUSE OF DELEGATES ELECTION GUIDE

THIS GUIDE DESIGNED, COMPILED,
CURATED AND EDITED BY MERCIA HOBSON
GRAPHIC DESIGN AND LAYOUT BY GEOVANI FLORES

Adele Y. McClure (D), candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 2

Adele Y. McClure (D)

Profession/Experience:

Delegate, Virginia House of Delegates (HD-2). Previously served as executive director of the Virginia Legislative Black Caucus and policy director for former Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax. First Black person since Reconstruction and first Asian person to represent Arlington County in the General Assembly.

Education:

Bachelor of Science in Economics, Virginia Commonwealth University (2011). First in her family to attend college.

Personal/Activities:

Born in Yuma, Arizona, raised in Northern Virginia (Fairfax County/Alexandria). Daughter of an early childhood educator and a Filipino immigrant veteran. New mother; experienced hunger and periodic homelessness as a child.

Public Service:

Delegate, House District 2. Serves on House committees for General Laws, Transportation, and Public Safety.

Legislative Priorities/Challenges/Solutions:

Top priorities include affordable housing/childcare, reproductive justice, maternal health, public education, environmental protection, and workers' rights. The biggest challenges are high housing and childcare costs and the impact of federal workforce cuts/shutdowns. Solutions include state action to insulate Virginia from federal chaos, passing a bill to create the Employee Child Care Assistance Pilot Program (employ-



Adele Y. McClure (D)

er-matching funds), and fighting for increases to the Housing Trust Fund to boost supply and financial aid.

Data Centers:

Must balance economic growth with environmental protection. Centers should not stress existing power grids or put undue pressure on consumers. Focus on combating climate change while building a diverse, future-focused economy.

State's Underfunding of Public Schools:

We must modernize school funding by updating the formula and reviewing the Standards of Quality. The state budget must address chronic underfunding and fully fund mandates to ensure a stable, student-needs-based approach.

Casinos:

Any economic project must be thoroughly vetted, provide livable wages, and serve the community. I look forward to reviewing all data, public input, and the debate on the social and financial impacts in the next legislative session.

What I Want District Members to Know:

"I will continue to work with the community to pass meaningful legislation that breaks down barriers, expands human rights, and improves access to critical services for all Virginians."

<https://adeleforva.com/>

Wendy K. Sigley (R), candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 2

Wendy K. Sigley (R)

Profession/Experience:

Homemaker and former small-business owner.

Education:

Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology, with a minor in Psychology, from Sacramento State University.

Personal/Activities:

Hometown: Arlington, Virginia. Born in Augsburg, Germany, to a military family and moved frequently during early life.

Public Service:

Candidate for Delegate, HD-2.

Legislative Priorities/Challenges/Solutions:

Legislative Priorities: Sponsor bills to incentivize farmers to prioritize purer produce and livestock, aiming to phase out FDA-permitted food additives banned in other countries. Focus on programs that assist Virginia's veterans living below the federal poverty level, with frugal budget oversight. Residents' Biggest Challenge: High costs of housing and health care. Many residents, including young couples, are delaying having children or buying a modest starter home because they can't afford them. Proposed Legislative Solution: Legislation will aim to lower taxes and encourage the Arlington County Board to reduce costs for builders (including zoning and permits). Will collaborate with other legislators to encourage builders to construct more modest homes in the 1,500- to 2,500-square-foot range.

Data Centers:

Balancing economic benefits (jobs, tax revenue) with environmental and social costs requires a strategic, sustainable approach. Given Arlington's environmental consciousness, early outreach is vital. Prop-



Wendy K. Sigley (R)

er strategic thought regarding aesthetics and blending construction with the landscape is crucial. Must implement strict efficiency standards and engage with communities early to address concerns about noise, water usage, and infrastructure strain.

State's Underfunding of Public Schools:

Conduct a funding equity analysis, build a nonpartisan coalition, and launch a public awareness campaign. Work with finance experts to compare Arlington District 2's funding and create a data-driven report highlighting disparities. Partner with other disadvantaged districts and parent organizations to create a unified voice and meet with state legislators to propose changes to the funding formula.

Casinos:

Does not believe a casino is a viable path to economic development. Argues that the long-term social costs (problem gambling, crime, financial instability) often outweigh the financial benefits, even if funds could offset K-12 education costs.

What I Want District Members to Know:

"My priorities lie with the men, women and children of Arlington County, District 2. Although I am proud to be a conservative leader, I am most committed to serving the socioeconomic and related needs of our community. I will lead as a Virginian first, espousing the ethos, "Virginia is for Lovers." The love of our state and district is my greatest platform."

<https://www.wendyforva.com/>

Alfonso H. Lopez (D), candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 3

Alfonso H. Lopez (D) unopposed

Profession/Experience:

Federal advocate (public and government relations firm).

Education:

BA, Vassar College; JD, Tulane University Law School; Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership at the University of Virginia (Fellow - Political Leaders Program).

Personal/Activities:

Hometown: Arlington, Virginia. First Latino Democrat elected to the Virginia General Assembly; founder of the Virginia Environment & Renewable Energy and the Virginia Latino Caucuses.

Public Service:

Seven-term member of the Virginia House



Alfonso H. Lopez (D)

of Delegates. Former Obama Administration political appointee and cabinet-level appointee in then-Gov. Tim Kaine's administration. Senior member of the House Labor and Commerce Committee, the Public Safety Committee, and the chair of the House Agriculture, Chesapeake, and Natural Resources Committee. Has been the patron, co-patron, or chief co-patron of over 150 bills enacted into law.

Legislative Priorities/Challenges/Solutions:

Legislative Priorities: Top priorities include addressing inflation and cost-of-living issues, combating threats to democracy, improving K-12 education, supporting small businesses, improving protections for New Americans and immigrants, environmental

protection, and expanding renewable energy sources. Residents' Biggest Challenge: Cost-of-living/housing affordability, exacerbated by the housing crisis and federal employment cuts. Proposed Legislative Solution: Will work to remove supply chain obstacles, expand the supply of housing options, reduce home prices, increase labor options, and reduce income inequality. Also aims to address occupational licensing rules and make it easier to access child care resources/services.

Data Centers:

While data centers bring some economic benefits, they also bring concerning environmental impacts and energy consumption levels that could affect electric bills for regular Virginians. Regulators need to charge data centers for the costs they incur instead of putting increased costs on residential customers and require these facilities to make investments in energy efficiency and clean energy.

Virginia's K-12 public schools should be the best in the nation, but funding formulas across the commonwealth need to be updated. Significant uncertainty exists regarding federal pass-through funding (e.g., Title 1, school meals, and IDEA/Medicaid). Localities, especially poorer ones, lack access to local revenue to fill gaps that address varied student learning needs; these considerations must be baked into funding formulas from the start.

Casinos:

Does not oppose casinos in concept, provided a locality requests it, voters approve it via referendum, workers are afforded worker protections and the right to unionize, and sufficient set-asides are made to address problem gambling.

<https://www.alfonsolopez.org/>

2025 VIRGINIA VOTER GUIDE

REPUBLICAN

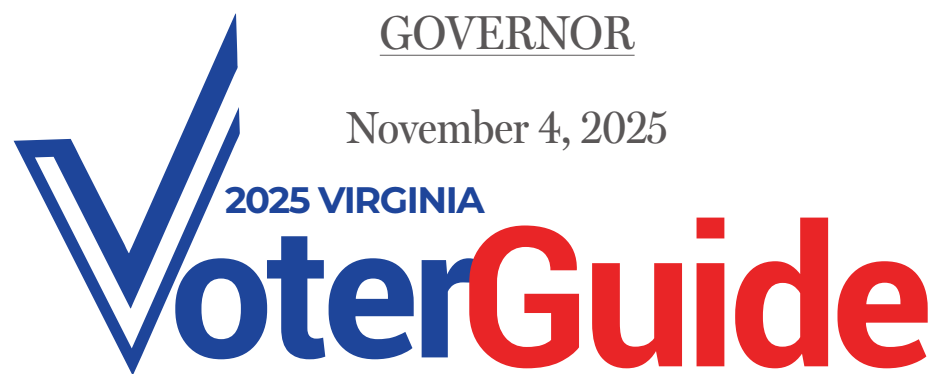


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GOVERNOR

November 4, 2025



VIRGINIA PRESS ASSOCIATION | VIRGINIA LOCAL NEWS PROJECT

The **governor of Virginia** is the state's chief executive, responsible for enforcing laws, overseeing state agencies and proposing a budget. The governor can sign or veto legislation passed by the General Assembly, appoint judges and key officials, and represent Virginia in dealings with other states and the federal government. The job pays \$175,000 a year, an amount set in 2013. Under the state constitution, governors serve a single four-year term and cannot serve consecutive terms. The governor and lieutenant governor are elected separately and may be from different political parties.

DEMOCRAT



**ABIGAIL
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abigailspanberger.com

THE ISSUES

MINIMUM WAGE

Virginia's minimum wage is set to rise to \$12.77 on January 1, 2026. Do you support further increasing the minimum wage to \$15 or higher? If so, what timeline would you propose, and how would you ensure the increase balances the needs of workers and small businesses?

As I travel across Virginia, I hear from families who have to choose between paying rent, keeping the lights on, or putting food on the table. Every Virginian who works full time deserves the opportunity to save for their futures and their children's futures. As bills increase and Virginians are forced to spend more of their pay to keep up, working families need stronger wages to make ends meet — and I will sign into law legislation to finally raise Virginia's minimum wage to \$15 per hour. As we see attacks on Virginia's workforce and economy, it's an important step forward to ensure that Virginians who are working hard in every corner of our commonwealth can get a pay raise and keep up with increasing costs.

Virginia's minimum wage is already set to rise to \$12.77 on January 1, 2026, and I support those responsible, inflation-based adjustments because they help workers while giving small businesses the ability to plan ahead. But I do not support rushing to \$15 or higher just because that's what California did. We've all seen the results there, higher prices, fewer entry-level opportunities, and businesses cutting hours or closing altogether. That is not the future I want for Virginia.

I believe the real way to raise wages is by raising value. That's why, as lieutenant governor, I fought to raise salaries for teachers and support staff, and it's why I'll keep focusing on creating better-paying jobs through economic growth, career training, and workforce development. Mandates and one-size-fits-all policies hurt more than they help. Virginians deserve opportunity and prosperity, not California-style economic damage.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

With the median home price in Virginia at \$443,000 and median rent at \$1,700, housing affordability remains a growing concern. What specific policies would you support to lower housing costs and increase the availability of affordable housing across Virginia?

The cost and supply of housing is a top concern for Virginia families, seniors, and veterans as I travel across the commonwealth. Virginia deserves a governor who is focused on lowering costs and giving families more breathing room, which is why I rolled out my *Affordable Virginia Plan* earlier this year to build more affordable housing, work with localities to respond to Virginia's unique regional housing challenges, and reduce burdensome regulations that drive up the cost of housing and slow down production. As the next governor of Virginia, I will help direct investments towards housing that families can afford — from incentives for new construction of starter homes to increasing funding for the Virginia Housing Trust Fund. I want to make Virginia the nationwide leader in addressing the housing affordability crisis and make sure more Virginians—including first-time homebuyers—can afford to make our commonwealth their home.

Virginians are right to be worried about housing affordability. With the median home price over \$440,000 and rent climbing every month, families across the commonwealth feel squeezed. Abigail Spanberger claims she will incentivize new construction and protect affordable housing, but her record in Congress tells a very different story.

She supported Biden's Build Back Better Act, the basis for the Inflation Reduction Act, which the National Association of Home Builders opposed because it piled on new housing code mandates, radical climate goals, and wage requirements that drive up costs. That same law added countless energy mandates, worsening Virginia's cost-of-energy crisis and limiting the land available for construction. Spanberger also voted for the PRO Act, which would have gutted Virginia's right-to-work law and imposed restrictions that hurt builders, realtors, and contractors.

While she talks about protecting affordable housing, she ignores naturally occurring affordable units and instead backs government programs and regulations that risk raising prices and shrinking supply. By the NAHB's estimate, regulations already account for about 24 percent of housing costs—and Spanberger voted to make them higher.

On top of that, she supports raising the minimum wage to \$15, a policy that would cripple construction, and she wants to create yet another interagency housing council, adding bureaucracy instead of solutions.

The bottom line is simple: Spanberger's record makes housing less affordable. Virginians deserve a governor who cuts red tape, supports right-to-work, lowers energy costs, and unleashes construction. The only way we fix the housing crisis is to build, build, build.

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THE ISSUES

IMMIGRATION and NATIONAL GUARD

Would you support the federal government deploying the Virginia National Guard to enforce federal immigration policy within the state? Why or why not, and under what circumstances, if any, would you consider such cooperation appropriate?

I am a former federal law enforcement officer who worked narcotics cases and CIA case officer who tracked cartels and transnational criminal organizations. Given this experience, I know the incredible value of varied agency coordination, but if making the decision today with the set of facts we see on the ground in Virginia, I would absolutely not deploy the Virginia Guard to enforce federal immigration policy within our commonwealth. That task of detaining individuals on immigration detainers should remain within the purview of federal immigration agents, while the task of arresting those for whom an arrest warrant – for any variety of offenses – has been signed should fall to local, state, or federal agencies depending upon the charges. Notably, during my time in Congress, the Virginia Guard deployed to Texas on a border security support mission, and I supported that mission as the authorities and purpose of that mission were clear and appropriate given the guard's training and statute.

As a Marine, I believe in law and order, and that means securing our borders and enforcing immigration laws. I would absolutely support cooperation with the federal government, including deploying the Virginia National Guard if necessary, to stop illegal immigration and protect Virginians.

When Washington brings resources to the table, we should take advantage of them to strengthen enforcement and keep our communities safe. If the mission is to stop illegal crossings, crack down on drug and human trafficking, and keep violent criminals out of our communities, then I will make sure Virginia is a partner.

Protecting Virginians comes first, and I won't hesitate to work with the federal government when it means enforcing the law and keeping our commonwealth safe.

DATA CENTERS and STATE REGULATION

Virginia is home to over 600 data centers and handles a large portion of the world's internet and cloud computing services. What role should the commonwealth play in regulating or setting policy around data center development, especially in terms of land use, energy consumption, and environmental impact?

I believe Virginia needs a clear statewide strategy on data centers that helps localities across every corner of Virginia make informed decisions about their best path forward. Virginia can benefit from having data centers here – but to reap those benefits, we need to make sure we are accounting and planning for the energy generation, water, and other resources needed to support them. We also need to make sure they aren't driving up energy bills for everyone else. I rolled out my *Affordable Virginia Plan* to lower costs – including energy costs – and as Virginia's next governor, my strategy will focus on bringing Virginians together to meet rising energy demand while accounting for local resource needs, driving down costs for ratepayers, and supporting good-paying jobs in this sector.

Virginia is the world's leader in data centers, and that industry is critical to our economy, our tax base, and our jobs. At the same time, we have to recognize the unique challenges data centers bring in terms of land use, energy consumption, and environmental impact. I believe the commonwealth's role is to set clear, consistent, and commonsense standards that balance economic growth with protecting our communities. That means respecting local zoning decisions, ensuring infrastructure keeps pace with demand, and pursuing an all-of-the-above energy strategy so we can power this growth reliably and affordably.

What I won't support are heavy-handed mandates that drive investment out of Virginia or raise costs on families. As governor, I'll make sure we keep Virginia competitive, attract cutting-edge industries like data centers, and do it in a way that safeguards our land, our resources, and our taxpayers.

TEACHER PAY, RECRUITMENT and RETENTION

Teacher shortages are a pressing issue in Virginia, where teacher pay remains below the national average despite a raise this year. What is your plan to improve teacher recruitment and retention, especially in high-need areas and subjects, and do you support another raise? How would you fund these initiatives and ensure long-term sustainability?

Every student in Virginia should have access to a world-class education. Like many states, Virginia faces challenges recruiting and retaining teachers, but Virginia can be a leader in addressing this challenge. My *Strengthening Virginia Schools Plan* will focus on increasing funding for teacher residency and apprenticeship programs, expanding the recruitment pool to include federal employees, teaching assistants, and servicemembers transitioning to civilian life and increasing pay for Virginia's teachers to keep our best and brightest in the classroom. We also need to boost grow-your-own teacher preparation programs, which can help to strengthen the teacher pipeline in rural areas of the commonwealth, and improve career pathways for middle and high schoolers to enter the teaching profession through increased collaboration between K-12 schools and institutions of higher education. As governor, I look forward to working with the general assembly to give localities the option to raise funds for public school construction and renovation.

Virginia cannot have strong schools without strong teachers, and right now we're losing too many of them to other states and other careers. I absolutely support building on the progress we've made with teacher raises, because pay has to be competitive if we want to recruit and keep the best educators. This is why we increased teacher pay by 18% across the board, especially in high-need areas like math, science, and special education.

But pay alone isn't enough. We need to restore respect for the teaching profession, give teachers more support in the classroom, and make sure parents and administrators are partners, not adversaries. That means cutting red tape, improving discipline policies, and focusing resources where they have the most impact. To fund these initiatives, I will prioritize education in the state budget, cut wasteful spending, and grow Virginia's economy so we can sustain higher salaries long-term.

Additionally, I am going to invest in early childhood education and ensure we attract and retain the very best early childhood educators as well. However, my plan is about more than just raising pay; it's about creating an environment where teachers feel valued, supported, and empowered to do the job they were called to do.

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THE ISSUES

I believe every parent deserves the right to choose the best education for their child, whether that's a public school, a charter school, a private school, or homeschooling. Public funds should follow the student, not the system, because education is about children, not bureaucracy.

School choice, including vouchers, gives families real options and hope for a better future. I do not believe this harms public education; in fact, competition pushes every school to do better. At the same time, I will continue to invest in our public schools, raise teacher pay, and hold all schools—public or private—accountable for results.

Educational fairness means giving every child, regardless of zip code or family income, the opportunity to succeed. As governor, I will put parents in charge and ensure Virginia's education system is built around students, not politics.

SCHOOL VOUCHERS

What is your position on the use of public funds for private school vouchers in Virginia? Do you believe vouchers help or harm public education, and how would you address concerns around educational fairness and accountability?

I do not support efforts to defund our public schools, and unfortunately, my opponent has a decades-long track record of wanting to do just that. But as a mom of three daughters in Virginia public schools, I believe we need to focus on strengthening our schools and expanding opportunities for all students—especially at a time when Virginia ranks dead-last in the country in student math recovery. That includes making sure Virginia has an accountability system in place that provides clear insights into how our kids are progressing and allows parents and teachers to use these insights to drive improvements that respond to the needs of Virginia students. My *Strengthening Virginia Schools Plan* will provide the commonwealth's schools with the resources they need to prepare every student—regardless of their zip code—for success and give parents more options within our public school system.

Our administration has seen successes in healthcare, like our Right Help, Right Now initiative, which has tripled the number of crisis centers and distributed life-saving drugs. We've also increased coverage to much-needed areas like OB-GYN and psychiatry. And we're adding more doctors through common-sense programs like SB 995, which allows foreign-trained doctors to gain a Virginia license if they work at least two years in an underserved area.

Additionally, fiscal responsibility is essential to keeping taxes low and making sure the state has enough money for our healthcare programs. So we should embrace a host of pro-business, pro-growth policies while also ensuring only those who really need social services receive them. Those who are able-bodied and of-age should not receive taxpayer-funded healthcare coverage without even applying to work part-time, volunteer, or go to school.

I do want to see continued protection and expansion of Medicaid in Virginia, but under those stipulations. I will prioritize rural hospitals. I want to flip the conversation from one of closure to one of opportunity: How can we be an attractive place to start a hospital? Access to infrastructure, an abundance of doctors and other human capital, and a high quality of life are all essential to answering that question.

In short: our efforts are already helping to keep down the cost of healthcare. I'll continue in that common-sense vein as governor. I will also continue our administration's fiscal sanity to keep all of our programs at peak efficiency and meet the needs of Virginians.

HEALTHCARE COSTS and MEDICAID

Healthcare costs continue to rise for many Virginians. As governor, how would you work to contain costs while ensuring access to quality care? Do you support continued protection and expansion of Medicaid in Virginia, and if so, how would you approach funding and implementation?

Everywhere I go across the commonwealth, I hear from seniors, families, and Virginians who are worried about increasing healthcare and prescription drug costs. I know there are steps we can take right now to save Virginians money and prevent Virginians from falling into medical debt. In Congress, I helped lead the charge to give Medicare the power to negotiate for lower drug prices, capped the cost of insulin at \$35 dollars for Medicare beneficiaries, and stood up to transnational pharmaceutical companies. Particularly in the wake of the passage of the disastrous "Big Beautiful Bill," which my opponent has praised, we need to use every resource at the commonwealth's disposal to protect Virginians' access to healthcare they can afford. As governor, I intend to work with the general assembly to address shortfalls in Virginia's budget and protect safety net providers, and work with our attorney general to defend critical programs Virginians rely on. Additionally, my *Affordable Virginia Plan* will focus on preventing Virginians from falling into medical debt by cracking down on pharmacy benefit managers and stopping predatory billing practices. Virginia deserves a governor who is focused on lowering healthcare costs for Virginians.

VOTER INFORMATION

IMPORTANT DATES

OCT. 24

- Last day to register or update your address to vote a regular ballot for this election
- Voters may register in person after this date, through Election Day, and vote using a provisional ballot

OCT. 24 (by 5 p.m.)

- Last day to request that a ballot be mailed to you

OCT. 25 (Saturday)

- Local voter registration offices open for in-person voting

NOV. 1 (Saturday)

- Last day to vote early in-person at your local voter registration office

NOV. 4 (Election Day)

Vote at your polling place. Polls are open 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

INFORMATION and LINKS

Register to vote or update an existing registration - <https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation>

- Through Friday, Oct. 24, 2025.
- Register to vote or update

an existing registration online using the Citizen Portal.

- Voters may register and vote using a provisional ballot In-Person after Oct. 24, 2025, through Election Day.
- Contact your local registrar's offices for more information.

EARLY, IN-PERSON VOTING

- Available Monday - Friday and Saturday, Oct. 25 and Nov. 1 through 5 p.m.
- Contact your local registrar's offices for all early voting and satellite location information.
- Voter registration offices will be open for early voting on Satur-



day, Oct. 25, 2025 and Nov. 1, 2025.

Apply for a ballot to be mailed to you: <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/citizen-portal/>

- Through 5 p.m., Friday, Oct. 24, 2025.
- Your request must be received by your local registrar's office by 5:00 p.m.
- Apply for an absentee ballot online using the Citizen Portal.

CANDIDATE LISTS

See who is on your ballot by viewing the candidate lists.

POLLING PLACES

Find your polling place: <https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation>

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THE ISSUES

Everywhere I go, Virginians tell me the same thing: it's getting harder to make ends meet. Groceries, childcare, utilities, and transportation are eating up more and more of family budgets, and too many hardworking people feel like they're falling behind even with full-time jobs.

As governor, I will tackle the cost-of-living crisis head-on. That means cutting taxes on essentials so families keep more of what they earn, reining in utility costs by pursuing an all-of-the-above energy strategy for affordable and reliable power, and expanding access to childcare through public-private partnerships that increase availability without driving up prices. I will also invest in better roads and transit options so Virginians spend less time and money getting to work.

My focus will be on targeted, sustainable relief policies that work for both urban and rural communities, not one-size-fits-all mandates from Washington. At the end of the day, it comes down to common sense: lower costs, more opportunity, and a government that puts families first.

COST OF LIVING and ECONOMIC RELIEF

With the rising cost of essentials such as groceries, utilities, childcare, and transportation, many Virginians report difficulty making ends meet—even with full-time employment. As governor, what specific policies would you propose to ease the cost-of-living burden for low- and middle-income residents? How would you ensure these efforts are targeted, sustainable, and effective across both urban and rural communities?

As I've talked to families across Virginia, I hear from families who are working harder and harder, yet finding it more difficult to get by, which is why I've rolled out my *Affordable Virginia Plan* to lower healthcare, housing, and energy costs for Virginia families. As governor, I'll lower prescription drug costs and protect access to affordable healthcare coverage. Additionally, I want Virginia to be the nationwide leader in addressing the housing affordability and supply crisis. And I want to see Virginia become more energy independent and become a global leader in developing the energy technologies of the future—all while saving Virginia consumers money along the way. At a time when Republicans in Washington—backed by Winsome Earle-Sears—are trying to make life more expensive for everyday Virginians, I want to work with both parties in Richmond to make sure every Virginian can afford to call the commonwealth their home.

Virginia's universities should be first and foremost places of learning, not laboratories for DEI ideology. I applauded UVA's decision to dissolve its DEI office because it was a win for merit, opportunity, and the American Dream. When institutions take federal funding, accountability naturally follows. Taxpayers have a right to demand transparency and results. That's not overreach, that's responsibility.

As governor, I will make sure our universities stay focused on academic excellence, fiscal responsibility, and preparing students for real careers. I also believe our boards of visitors must be reformed to reduce political gamesmanship and strengthen accountability to Virginians. My priority is simple: protect free speech, cut wasteful DEI bureaucracy, and ensure every dollar—state or federal—goes toward real education, not politics.

FEDERAL INTERVENTION in PUBLIC UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

The Trump administration has recently delved into Virginia's public university system, resulting in the resignation of UVA's president under pressure and investigations into George Mason University's diversity, equity and inclusion practices. As governor, would you welcome that type of federal involvement in matters typically handled by university boards? If not, what specific actions would you take to oppose it? Do you support changes to how universities are governed or their boards appointed to reduce political or external influence, and if so, what changes would you propose?

Virginia's public universities are incredible assets to our communities and our economy, and should be recognized for their immense value. It has been sad to watch Governor Youngkin stand by as the Trump administration aggressively attacked the University of Virginia and now continues to do the same at George Mason University. These political games are an attack on academic freedom, Virginia's institutions, and our economy. As governor, I will expect the members of our commonwealth's boards of visitors to be uniquely focused on strengthening the individual universities they serve, and that the members of our boards demonstrate the fortitude necessary not to kowtow to any administration – whether it be in the Trump administration in Washington or mine in Richmond. As governor, I will ensure that all board appointees I select understand that they must demonstrate a standard of leadership that puts academic excellence, Virginia's students, and the strength of Virginia's public colleges and universities ahead of any political agenda.

VIRGINIA PRESS ASSOCIATION (VPA)

The Virginia Press Association is a nonprofit trade organization that represents print and online news outlets across the state. Founded in 1881, VPA supports local news through training, legal resources, advocacy, and recognition programs. The association's mission is to strengthen the role of newspapers in their communities and highlight the importance of a free press in sustaining democracy.



VIRGINIA LOCAL NEWS PROJECT (VLNP)

The Virginia Local News Project is a nonprofit organization dedicated to sustaining, supporting and growing local news in every Virginia community. Founded by the Virginia Press Association in 2013, VLNP provides programs, and to help strengthen the digital capabilities of local news, train the next generation of journalists, protect press freedoms, and grow the public's understanding of the value of local news.



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LT. GOVERNOR

THE ISSUES

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As lieutenant governor, I will approach my responsibility to preside over the Senate with humility and fairness. My role is not to dominate debate but to ensure the chamber functions smoothly, rules are respected, and every voice has a chance to be heard. When called upon to cast a tie-breaking vote, I will use a clear set of principles: fidelity to the Constitution, commitment to limited and accountable government, and putting the interests of Virginia families first.

Too often, partisan politics in Richmond lead to gridlock or heavy-handed solutions that make life harder for working people. I believe tie-breaking votes should not be cast based on party loyalty but on what best advances freedom, affordability, and opportunity for Virginians. For example, I would oppose measures that expand bureaucracy, raise taxes, or limit parental rights. At the same time, I would support policies that lower costs, strengthen public safety, and expand choice in education and health care.

My goal as presiding officer is to ensure transparency in how the Senate conducts its business. I will foster respect across party lines by encouraging open debate and refusing to use the gavel as a partisan weapon. Virginians expect their elected leaders to govern responsibly. In the rare moments when my vote decides the outcome, I will honor that responsibility with the seriousness it deserves, guided by conservative, common-sense values, and a focus on the long-term well-being of our commonwealth.

TIE-BREAKING VOTES AND PRESIDING OVER THE SENATE

As lieutenant governor, you would be responsible for presiding over the Virginia Senate and may be called upon to cast tie-breaking votes on key legislation. How would you approach this role to ensure fairness, transparency, and the effective functioning of the Senate across party lines? What values or decision-making principles would guide you when voting on highly contested or partisan issues?

I will approach the role of lieutenant governor (LG) with the same degree of attention and thought that I have brought to my legislative work over the past six years. As the tie-breaker in the Virginia Senate, the LG plays a crucial role, especially in a narrowly-divided Senate.

In addition to carefully reviewing all legislation that is under debate on the Senate Floor, I will engage with my Senate colleagues on both sides of the aisle, discuss legislation and policy proposals with a variety of stakeholders, research and analyze the issues, and base decisions on facts, data, and merit.

Over my two terms in the Senate, I have learned the vital importance of listening to the perspectives of different parties, compromising when possible, and being able to explain one's own position to others. I will bring these same approaches to the role of lieutenant governor.

Every parent deserves the right to choose the best education for their child. That is why I support expanding charter schools, lab schools, and education savings accounts. These tools give families real options and create competition that raises the bar across all schools. Parents—not politicians or bureaucrats—should be in the driver's seat when it comes to their children's education.

On SOL reform, it is time to move beyond a test-driven system that too often narrows learning. Assessments should measure mastery of skills and knowledge, not just test-taking ability. I would support reforms that reduce "teaching to the test," incorporate career and technical readiness and give schools more flexibility in how they demonstrate student success. Our goal should be excellence, fairness, and preparation for the real world.

Education should prepare students for life—college, career, and citizenship—not just a multiple-choice exam. By expanding choice, respecting parents, and reforming outdated testing models, we can restore rigor, fairness, and opportunity to Virginia's schools. Stronger schools mean stronger families, and that is the foundation for a stronger commonwealth.

EDUCATION POLICY: SCHOOL CHOICE and SOL REFORM

Virginia continues to debate the role of school choice and the effectiveness of the Standards of Learning (SOL) system. As lieutenant governor, what is your position on expanding school choice options such as charter schools and education savings accounts? Additionally, would you support reforms to Virginia's SOL assessments, and if so, what changes would you propose to improve educational outcomes and fairness across the commonwealth?

As a public educator for nearly three decades, as the Chair of the Senate Education and Health Committee, and as a mom of two daughters who attended our public schools, I am strongly opposed to school vouchers and privatizing public education. I have stood up to Governor Glenn Youngkin's attempts to direct public school dollars into private hands. My opponent, John Reid, supports Governor Youngkin's school voucher agenda. Reid said [in January 2022] it was "time to just close the public schools," and he wants to funnel taxpayer dollars into expensive private schools instead. A recent JLARC report found that Virginia public schools have faced severe underfunding to the tune of \$6.6 billion.

For the last two sessions, I have led efforts in the general assembly to prioritize funding our public schools, and we've been able to increase public education support by almost \$3 billion. However, more needs to be done to strengthen Virginia's education system, both K-12 and post-secondary opportunities. To ensure all children in Virginia can enjoy quality education that prepares them for well-paying jobs or higher education, we must fully fund public education and lower the costs of post-secondary credentials and college degrees.

I believe Virginia's universities should be accountable first and foremost to Virginians—not to Washington, and not to outside political agendas. Federal micromanagement of our schools is not the answer. The best way to protect academic integrity is through transparency, accountability, and strong boards of visitors who reflect the diversity of Virginia's communities and viewpoints. I support reforms to make these boards more balanced and less political, with a focus on student outcomes—graduation rates, affordability, and workforce readiness.

Universities should be centers of learning, not partisan battlegrounds. We need to protect free inquiry, encourage debate, and prepare the next generation to thrive. As lieutenant governor, I will work to ensure higher education in Virginia is focused on opportunity, affordability, and excellence—not ideology or outside interference.

FEDERAL INTERVENTION in PUBLIC UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

The Trump administration has recently delved into Virginia's public university system, resulting in the resignation of UVA's president under pressure and investigations into George Mason University's diversity, equity and inclusion practices. As lieutenant governor, would you welcome that type of federal involvement in matters typically handled by university boards? If not, what specific actions would you take to oppose it? Do you support changes to how universities are governed or their boards appointed to reduce political or external influence, and if so, what changes would you propose?

The resignation of UVA President Jim Ryan is a deeply troubling escalation in the partisan attacks against higher education, and it should alarm every Virginian who believes in academic freedom. As a lifelong educator and as a mom, I believe Virginia's universities, both public and private, should remain dedicated to serving the people of the commonwealth with excellence and independence and not serve as playgrounds for partisan agendas.

Over the past few years, Governor Youngkin has replaced highly qualified and experienced board members with individuals whose top credentials appear to be ideological alignment and partisan loyalty. Many of the new appointees have expressed open hostility toward the initiatives and programs that support student learning and success. As Virginia's next lieutenant governor I will continue fighting to protect opportunity and academic freedom across every corner of our commonwealth.

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THE ISSUES

Every Virginian deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. Marriage equality is protected under federal law, and I do not support efforts to overturn that. Families should never be caught in the crossfire of politics.

If I were called upon to cast a tie-breaking vote on issues affecting LGBTQ+ Virginians, my guiding principles would be fairness, individual liberty, and equal protection under the law. As a conservative, I believe in limited government. That means government should not intrude into private lives or relationships.

At the same time, I will stand firmly against measures that foster discrimination or divide our communities. My focus is on building a Virginia where every family can thrive, where opportunity is open to all, and where the rights of individuals are respected. We may not always agree on every issue, but we can agree on treating each other with respect and ensuring that freedom and dignity are preserved for every Virginian.

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE and LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

While same-sex marriage is currently protected under federal law, recent court challenges and legislative proposals have raised concerns about the durability of those protections. As lieutenant governor, how would you approach legislation affecting the rights of LGBTQ+ Virginians, including marriage equality? If called to cast a tie-breaking vote on such issues, what principles would guide your decision?

We have a fundamental responsibility to ensure that this country's ideals of justice, equality, and fairness are a reality for all, including LGBTQ+ Virginians. After the disastrous Dobbs Supreme Court decision, Justice Clarence Thomas expressed interest in rolling back the legalization of same-sex marriage. Virginia's constitution currently does not protect same-sex marriage and leaves the rights of LGBTQ+ Virginians vulnerable to the whims of the conservative Supreme Court that has proven willing to take away freedoms.

In the past general assembly session, I voted for a constitutional amendment that would protect marriage equality. My opponent, John Reid, said he would have voted "no." I am the candidate that can be trusted to guarantee Virginia enshrines marriage equality into our constitution, and I will fight for the right of every Virginian to marry the person they love.

Virginia families deserve rising paychecks and a stronger economy, but government mandates are not the best way to achieve that. A rapid push to \$15 or higher sounds simple but risks hurting the very people we want to help. Small businesses—the backbone of our communities—often operate on razor-thin margins. Forcing higher costs overnight can mean higher prices, fewer hours, or even layoffs. That does not help families; it makes things worse.

The better path is building an economy where wages rise because opportunity grows. I want to see small businesses flourish, expand, and compete for workers by paying more. That means cutting unnecessary regulations, reducing taxes, and making Virginia the best place to start and grow a business. It also means investing in workforce development and apprenticeships so Virginians have the skills that command higher pay in a free market.

We also cannot ignore inflation. Families know that a bigger paycheck does not mean much if groceries, gas, and rent keep climbing. Tackling inflation and the cost of living must be part of the conversation.

I do not support rushing to \$15 or higher without considering the impact on small businesses and rural communities. Instead, I support policies that give every Virginian a chance to climb the ladder of opportunity—policies that make it easier to find work, keep work, and build a career that supports a family. That is how we achieve real, lasting prosperity.

MINIMUM WAGE

Virginia's minimum wage is scheduled to rise to \$12.77 by January 2026. Do you support increasing it to \$15 or higher? What timeline and economic factors would inform your position, especially regarding small business impact and cost of living?

Recent reports show that Virginia families are going into debt in order to put food on the table; prices are rising much faster than wages. With the rising costs of housing, childcare, health care, and basic needs, a basic living wage is essential. That's why I support raising the minimum wage to at least \$15 and establishing an alignment of wages with inflation and cost of living.

I have championed efforts to increase the minimum wage and supported legislation to eliminate minimum wage exemptions for domestic workers and farm workers. When workers are paid a living wage, those dollars go right back into the local economy, supporting small businesses, entrepreneurs, and communities.

Healthcare in Virginia is too expensive, too complicated, and too limited in choice. Families worry about affording a new baby, seniors struggle with prescription costs, and small business owners cannot keep up with premiums. Politicians in Richmond have layered on red tape but have not fixed the problem.

I believe Medicaid must remain strong for the vulnerable who rely on it, but we also need to make the system more efficient and accountable. Protecting Medicaid does not mean expanding bureaucracy—it means ensuring the program delivers care effectively without waste.

More broadly, we must tackle the root issue: rising costs. Virginians deserve price transparency so they know what procedures and medicines cost before they walk into a hospital or pharmacy.

We need more competition—allowing insurance purchases across state lines and encouraging innovative models like telemedicine. And we should reduce mandates that drive up premiums and limit choices.

The state's role should be to empower patients, not bureaucrats. I want families to be in charge of their healthcare decisions, with real options that fit their needs. That means fostering competition, innovation, and transparency to bring down costs and expand access. My approach is rooted in conservative, common-sense principles: protect the vulnerable, ensure efficiency, and trust Virginians to make the best choices for themselves and their families.

HEALTHCARE and MEDICAID

How would you work to protect and improve health-care access for Virginians, particularly those who rely on Medicaid? What role do you believe the state should play in addressing rising healthcare costs and protecting vulnerable populations?

Republicans in Washington have passed a bill, which my opponent supports, that will rip away health care coverage from 322,000 Virginians and put rural hospitals at risk of closing. We have already begun to see the closure of clinics and hospitals in Southwest Virginia. These federal cuts to Medicaid will leave vulnerable Virginians without access to critical health care and will have ripple effects across our entire health care system.

Virginia needs new leaders who take these cuts seriously and act to ensure all Virginians have access to affordable and quality health care, including reproductive health care, safe and legal abortion, contraception, and low-cost prescription drugs. As the Chair of the Senate Education and Health Committee and as the Vice Chair of the Joint Commission on Health Care, I am fully aware of the looming crisis facing Virginia with the potential loss of Medicaid expansion, Congressional failure to reauthorize the Enhanced Premium Tax Credits, and the devastating effects these cuts will have, especially on our rural communities. That's why, in 2025, I wrote the budget amendment to protect Medicaid in Virginia. I will be focused on responding to this crisis.

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The **attorney general of Virginia** is the state's chief legal officer, responsible for providing legal advice to the governor and executive agencies, representing the state in court and defending the constitutionality of state laws. The office also handles consumer protection, public safety and other legal matters affecting Virginians. The \$150,000 per year salary was set in 2006. The attorney general serves a four-year term.

THE ISSUES

The dream of homeownership should not be slipping further out of reach for Virginia families, yet rising prices and limited supply are making it harder than ever for young people and working families to buy a home. The answer is not more bureaucracy from Richmond, but smart policies that expand supply, lower costs, and respect local needs.

First, I support a first-time homebuyer tax credit of up to \$25,000 to help families build equity rather than being stuck renting forever. That kind of targeted relief empowers working- and middle-class Virginians without inflating the market further. Second, I believe in local flexibility—not a one-size-fits-all housing mandate from the state. Counties and cities should be able to use tools like bonding authority to build housing options that fit their communities' character and needs.

We must also tackle red tape. Excessive permitting, zoning restrictions, and outdated state regulations add unnecessary costs to new housing. By streamlining processes and encouraging innovation, we can create more affordable options. Partnerships with community colleges, trade schools, and the private sector can also help train more builders and contractors to meet demand.

Finally, expanding pathways to affordable rentals while protecting property rights will ensure stability for those not yet ready to buy. Housing is about more than shelter—it is about families putting down roots and communities thriving. My approach is focused on empowering localities, cutting costs and giving every Virginian a fair shot at the American dream of homeownership.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

With home prices and rents outpacing income for many Virginians, what specific policies would you support to increase affordable housing availability and reduce barriers to homeownership across the commonwealth?

My husband and I arrived in Richmond in 1991 as a young newlywed couple. Our income was limited so we lived paycheck to paycheck, severely restricted all discretionary spending, and frequently had \$50 or less at the end of every month after paying our rent. These experiences have all served to make me attuned to the hardships and insecurities that so many in our communities face because housing prices continue to go up.

All Virginians deserve housing that they can afford without having to sacrifice putting food on the table or paying for lifesaving medication. I will continue my work to find solutions that make housing more affordable, increase higher density housing development, support financial products that help first-time homebuyers, and decrease eviction rates. I was a leader in the general assembly in finding solutions to ensure people can afford clean, safe and decent housing, including my Faith in Housing Act to allow faith-based institutions and non-profits to build affordable housing on land they own.

The lieutenant governor's office is unique in that it carries influence without a direct legislative agenda. I see that as an opportunity to use the visibility of the office to lift up voices too often ignored in Richmond—working families struggling with high costs, parents seeking better schools for their kids, small business owners weighed down by red tape, and communities left behind by one-size-fits-all policies.

I intend to be a convener, not just a presider. That means bringing together stakeholders from across the commonwealth—local leaders, entrepreneurs, educators, health providers, law enforcement, and faith communities—to find solutions rooted in real-world experience, not ideology. For example, I will use the platform of the office to highlight workforce and childcare challenges, expand conversations on affordable housing, and ensure veterans and first-responders get the support they deserve.

Because I do not carry a voting card in the Senate, I have the freedom to build bridges and elevate issues without being tied down to partisan maneuvering. That also means holding Richmond accountable when it forgets that its purpose is to serve the people, not itself.

I believe the lieutenant governor should be the voice that cuts through bureaucracy and red tape. By traveling the commonwealth, listening, and shining a spotlight on practical solutions, I can help shape the debate in a way that benefits all Virginians. My goal is to use this office to champion freedom, opportunity, and fairness—not to grow government, but to ensure it works for the people it serves.

LEADERSHIP WITHOUT A LEGISLATIVE VOTE

The lieutenant governor doesn't sponsor legislation or serve as a voting member except in ties. How would you use the platform and visibility of the office to influence policy, elevate underrepresented issues, or convene stakeholders across Virginia?

As the Chair of the Senate Education and Health Committee, Vice Chair of the Joint Commission on Health Care, member of the Virginia Housing Commission, as well as numerous other commissions and boards, I have built the critical relationships across state agencies and developed policy insights that will help me to serve as a strong, capable, and effective leader in Virginia's next administration. I will use my platform to address the most pressing issues facing Virginia, including fully funding public education to put every student on the path to success, ensuring every Virginian has access to affordable health care, and bringing down costs on everything from housing to child care to make life more affordable in Virginia.

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**JASON
MIYARES**

jasonmiyares.com



The Miyares campaign declined to provide answers for the VPA/VLNP Voter Guide.



The **attorney general of Virginia** is the state's chief legal officer, responsible for providing legal advice to the governor and executive agencies, representing the state in court and defending the constitutionality of state laws. The office also handles consumer protection, public safety and other legal matters affecting Virginians. The \$150,000 per year salary was set in 2006. The attorney general serves a four-year term.

DEMOCRAT

**JAY
JONES**

jayjones.com



Answers to each of the questions below were provided by the Jay Jones campaign.

ABORTION and STATE vs. FEDERAL LAW

If federal restrictions are imposed on abortion medications like Mifepristone, would you defend Virginians' access under existing state law, or would you support enforcing the federal limits within Virginia?

JONES: I will always defend Virginians' abortion rights under state law, and I look forward to protecting those rights in our Constitution in November. Virginia women deserve the right to make their own healthcare decisions, and as attorney general, I will use every tool available to defend these rights against federal attacks and ensure every Virginian can make personal healthcare decisions free from political interference.

As a delegate, I eliminated unnecessary barriers to abortion and safeguarded Virginians' right to birth control. I also served on the board of the Virginia League of Planned Parenthood to protect those rights and ensure women had access to critical preventive services, including breast cancer screenings.

By contrast, my opponent has an extreme anti-abortion record: urging the Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, endorsing an abortion ban, voting repeatedly against Virginia's Reproductive Health Protection Act, aligning with anti-abortion extremists, and attempting to defund Planned Parenthood – the same agenda now being carried out under the Trump administration.

MIYARES: No response.

USE of NATIONAL GUARD in IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

Would you support the federal government's use of the Virginia National Guard to enforce immigration policies in the commonwealth? What legal standards or precedents would guide your decision?

JONES: This is federal overreach by Donald Trump to distract voters from rising prices and his disastrous economy. Fighting crime is critically important, but you make communities safer by doing the hard work over the long run: building strong law enforcement departments, supporting officers with good training, and building ties with local communities – not by grabbing headlines. As attorney general,

I'll absolutely work with partners in the District of Columbia and Maryland to fight crime over the long term in our region, and I will ensure our National Guard is ready to support us in emergency situations as intended.

MIYARES: No response.

PROTECTING PUBLIC OFFICIALS from THREATS

What role should Virginia's attorney general play in preventing and responding to violent threats against school boards, election officials, and other local public servants? How would your office coordinate with local law enforcement in such cases?

JONES: As attorney general, my office will send a very clear message that violence and hate-driven acts will not be tolerated in our commonwealth and that if you engage in violence, you will be held accountable. I will work closely with the Virginia State Police and local law enforcement to ensure Virginians are protected as threats arise.

MIYARES: No response.

CONSUMER PROTECTION and ONLINE SCAMS

With online scams, identity theft, and deceptive business practices on the rise, what specific tools or strategies would you use as attorney general to protect Virginia consumers, particularly seniors and vulnerable populations?

JONES: As an assistant attorney general in the Office of Consumer Protection, I fought to prevent higher grocery prices by working to block the Albertsons-Kroger merger and took on corporations unfairly raising prices. As Virginia's next attorney general, I'll bolster the Office of Consumer Protection and fight back against corporate landlords, predatory lenders, scams, and corporate fraud on behalf of consumers. I'll do this by cracking down on illegal price fixing and discrimination in the housing process, holding companies accountable for illegally deceiving Virginians with junk fees and deceptive pricing, and helping Virginians navigate complex healthcare billing schemes so they can fight back against insurance companies.

By contrast, Jason Miyares has done little to stand up for Virginia's consumers.

Time and again, he's sided with special interests instead of Virginia families, whether it's letting utility companies hike up electricity bills, letting corporate landlords off the hook, or failing to protect people from predatory lenders.

MIYARES: No response.

PARTISANSHIP and the AG'S OFFICE

The attorney general serves as the commonwealth's top legal officer. How would you maintain the office's independence and impartiality in politically sensitive cases, especially when they involve state agencies or the actions of elected officials?

JONES: As Virginia's next attorney general, the only client that I will ever be beholden to is the people of Virginia. Unlike Jason Miyares, I'll make decisions based on the laws and the facts, not on political pressure or personal relationships. That means if a state agency or elected official violates the law or infringes on Virginians' rights, I won't hesitate to hold them accountable, regardless of their position or party. And I'll never back down and follow orders from Washington politicians, no matter which party is in power.

MIYARES: No response.

GUN VIOLENCE and PUBLIC SAFETY

What is your position on enforcing and defending existing gun safety laws in Virginia? Are there specific public safety initiatives or legal tools you would prioritize to address gun violence in communities across the state?

JONES: Guns are the leading cause of death for Virginia kids, and as attorney general, I will not stand for it. As a delegate, I expanded background checks, passed a law holding people accountable who allow children to access loaded guns, and got guns out of the hands of domestic abusers – all measures that Jason Miyares voted against. And as an assistant attorney general, I put the nation's largest ghost gun manufacturers out of business.

As attorney general, I'll work closely with local law enforcement and commonwealth's attorneys' offices, making sure they have access to the most up-to-date technologies to trace gun crimes and prosecute bad actors, and increase interagency

cooperation with regional partners. I'll crack down on unscrupulous gun dealers who are not following the law—unlike my opponent, who has spent his administration catering to his gun lobby endorsers and refusing to hold bad gun dealers accountable. To target the root causes of gun violence, I'll expand violence interruption programs, including placing more anti-violence coordinators on the ground. Finally, I'll hold gun manufacturers who created the gun violence epidemic accountable for stopping it, like cutting off the flow of illegal guns and using settlements to fund violence interruption and gun safety programs.

MIYARES: No response.

CIVIL RIGHTS and DISCRIMINATION

How would you use the attorney general's office to protect civil rights and combat discrimination in Virginia, including in areas such as housing, employment, policing, and voting access?

JONES: We must ensure every Virginian is protected in their civil rights and civil liberties every single day. That's why one of my top priorities as attorney general is expanding the Civil Rights Division, including broadening its authority to combat predatory practices in housing and employment to lower costs for Virginians.

I'll crack down on housing discrimination by holding lenders and landlords accountable for preying on Virginia renters. As a former member of AFGE 1403, I'll strengthen enforcement against workplace discrimination and wage theft, so that every Virginian has a fair shot at earning a decent living without fear of retaliation or bias. And as I did with the NAACP, I'll protect the right to vote by fighting back against suppression tactics and defending the ballot box so every voice in Virginia is heard.

Our current attorney general, Jason Miyares, has turned a blind eye to these abuses. He's left Virginians unprotected from predatory landlords, ignored discrimination in the workplace, and done nothing to ensure fair treatment in our justice system. As attorney general, I'll make sure this office stands up for all Virginians and delivers real protections, every single day.

MIYARES: No response.

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PHOTOS BY EDEN BROWN/THE CONNECTION
Gal Polani played Layla, one half of the “Farsi chorus.”.



TyAndre Alvin and Travis Persick (1st Assistant Camera & Gaffer)

Christmas Party Movie Set In Arlington Premiers in D.C.

Young filmmaker calls this his “Love Letter to D.C. area.”

BY EDEN BROWN
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

The red carpet premiere of “A Christmas Party” at the Avalon Theatre on Connecticut Avenue was very Hollywood. The director wore sunglasses (of course.) There was splashy red decor, glittering gowns featuring low décolleté, and well-heeled Washingtonians stepping onto the red carpet for photos with beautiful people. Jaxon Keller, the lead actor, worked the room sporting a blue/black velvet dinner jacket, the young star acting the part, happy the hard work of the past year was going to be on the big screen at last. The enthusiasm was bright and the crowd was pumped. It was almost like being in L.A.

But the movie, true to its Indie roots, is not Hollywood. It’s niche and it’s young. There were movie buffs who drove nine hours from South Carolina or flew a few hours from Canada to check out the first feature film from young filmmaker Alex Helmer, who hails from Washington, D.C. The anticipation on Instagram over the past year promised fun. The message seemed clear even before the lights dimmed: this was an amazing group of young creators and actors who were really close, creative, dynamic



McNeill Mulliken was sporting “movie fan” socks his girlfriend gave him. That’s how serious Mulliken is about films.

and anxious to push some boundaries.

“A Christmas Party” takes place in Arlington, Virginia (although you would be forgiven if you thought it was Glover Park or Chevy Chase D.C.) Helmer, fresh from time in L.A. learning the business and making

connections, recently turned 23 and the fact that he pulled off his first feature film on a \$50,000 budget is impressive in and of itself. Everything worked. The movie takes place in a large house in Arlington (and backyard) with only one scene elsewhere (a stroll in Georgetown). The camera work is noteworthy, with a focus on faces, not scenery. Close ups of Adam’s face and others as they negotiate moments of confusion or conflict serve to introduce each character and put viewers right in the moment. The captions which provide dinner ETA times and other bulletins from the front are hilarious and convey the creativity and fun Helmer and his co-writer Guy David Knoll bring as collaborators — they’ve worked together since high school at Woodrow Wilson High. It’s a little chaotic, which most Christmas parties are, and some of the subplots (there were more than five?) were hard to pin down. Whether it is our ever-shortening attention spans or some other force driving theatre to trend in the direction of short-form content, this is not the only recent movie or play from a writer under 40 where it is not always clear WHAT JUST HAPPENED. Think everything, everywhere, all at once.

Helmer describes his debut feature film as

SEE CHRISTMAS PARTY MOVIE, PAGE 22

Dish Soap “Dissin”



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

What; no line on the “refill” bottle of dish soap to tell me when I should make another purchase/refill? You (the manufacturer) felt confident and arrogant enough to put lines and arrows on my regular/non-refill sizes but nothing on the actual “refill” size. What are you afraid of? Creating a dependency of line-reading on your bottles? Are you thinking that if a consumer has purchased a regular size bottle of your dish soap - the ones with the refill line and arrows, he/she doesn’t need a similar reminder; especially since they swallowed their previous bottles’ advisory and actually bought the “refill” sized bottle? I can understand the company’s motivation in reminding me, but why are you stopping so soon after starting?

I mean; you (again the manufacturer) lead me down this garden path (not the rose garden path because then you would have been plowed over - literally) to advise/coerce me to buy another bottle of dish soap - before the one I’m currently using is even empty. Then, once I’ve followed your stupid line/arrow and then bought and used the “refill” bottle enough times to where I’ve nearly emptied of its soapy contents, there’s no such line/arrow to encourage me to buy another bottle. What kind of relationship is that? As my late father would say, many times about such behavior: “They name street signs after people like you: one way.” Having primed my pump, so to speak, you don’t follow through. You figure our relationship has been cemented in plastic and since I already purchased a regular-sized bottle and then a “refill” bottle then you’ve secured my dish soap dollars forever and thus need not care about me anymore? Since when is abandoning the consumer/customer in his/her hour of vulnerability a prudent advertising/branding strategy?

I just so happen to be one of your best customers: a homeowner living in a nearly 300-year-old home - with no dishwasher. Let me amend that: I (Kenny) have no dishwasher. My wife, Dina however, has a dishwasher: me. And my tools of the trade are rubber gloves, a scrub brush and wait for it: dish soap, and plenty of it. Take away any of these three co-equal tools (now where have I heard that before?) and the task becomes unnecessarily more difficult. If I didn’t have the view I have in our kitchen, standing over our double-sinks looking out any one of the three windows to see our two acres, I might find myself less inclined/certainly less frequently engaged, in this rather dreary but reoccurring and extremely dull task.

This is the kind of consequence your presumption that I am a customer for life and need not be reminded/encouraged to back-up/buy a dish soap “refill” size when my current one reaches the same low point as is “lined” and “arrowed” on your regular-sized bottle is difficult to understand. You’ve built a friendship here. Dare I say you’ve created a sort of dependency that doesn’t bode well for the consumer if he/she is neglected and left to wither on the vine in this manner. When you assume - as is so often said: “You make and ass out of you and me.” I just want/need to wash dishes at my convenience, not yours. Give me the tools and I’ll give you the dollars.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for
The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

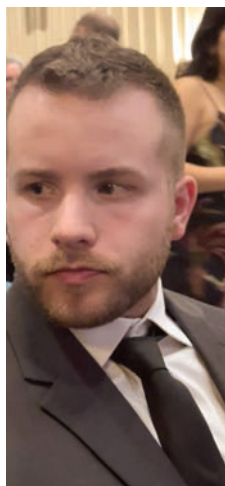
Young Filmmaker Calls this His “Love Letter to D.C. Area.”

FROM PAGE 21

an uplifting cult movie. The definition of a cult film is that it's beloved by a dedicated group of fans who embrace the movie (check); often the fans go from simple appreciation to active participation, like quoting lines, dressing up as characters, or attending special screenings. (Based on the premiere event, check.) Cult films push boundaries with themes or characters, and some are intentionally absurd (check.) Funny? Yes, there were chuckles throughout, like when Roman, the British boyfriend played by Max Cazier, whose first American Christmas party this is, has to be taught how to aggressively dip the chip and shove it in his mouth, American nacho macho style.

Jaxon Keller and the rest of the cast were very believable and well acted characters typical of most family gatherings (there is always some uncle wearing a Hawaiian shirt). Performances by Joe Rashbaum as C.J. and other “older guys” in the movie were fun to watch. Jaxon plays Adam, home from college, understandably disoriented and having put distance between himself and family, experiencing it all anew. It is affective to watch him work through his feelings for his (would be) leading lady, Ally, played perfectly by Sarah-Grace Donnelly. He is a hoodie-wearing 19 year old and if he is immature, well, that's part of the story. As for the location in Arlington and DC, don't go looking for iconic shots of Clarendon or Key Bridge but the affluent home, talk of politics and jobs in government and visitors from other countries does more to set the stage than any physical setting could.

The Christmas party is, not surprisingly, dysfunctional. The dinner is late and the main course roast is a questionable oblong. The hostess is stressed, for any number of reasons. The boy doesn't get the girl. The jealous husband is jealous for all the wrong reasons. Throughout it all, the two Iranian women trade acerbic commentary — Greek chorus-like — about the party which we can't understand unless we speak Farsi. And when the Black congressman shows up midway through dinner, possibly uninvited, wearing a scarf, Marion Barry style, and blows up in con-



Podcast editor and film critic McNeill Mulliken drove nine hours from South Carolina to see the movie. His film podcasts are, “25 Cent Film” and “McNeill and Friends.”

flict with Ally, his staffer, it's more uncomfortable than funny.

Helmer promised there would be more questions asked than answered in the movie, and he was right. It is thought-provoking, and stays with you. As my friend Carles Fabregat reminded me as we talked about the movie over coffee at the Ibiza yacht club, “Remember Pedro Almodovar, the Spanish cult movie director, made his first feature film on a very low budget and while the film had its critics, it ended up setting the stage for Almodovar's future as a sought-after filmmaker.” Helmer could well be on the same path.

Indie filmmakers know their audience and my guess is Helmer knows his, fans who are just stepping over the threshold to adulthood, trying to make sense of the post-Pandemic, post Trump, post-George Floyd, post sexual ambiguity, post social media and fake news world in which they find themselves, somehow still relying on the old values of tradition, family, mentors who aren't your parents, community and belief in the magic of the holiday season. Despite all the



Director Alex Helmer with Gal Polani.



Guy David Knoll co-wrote the script with Alex Helmer. Knoll is a stand-up comedian when not collaborating with Helmer.

poor decisions and weird entanglements, unanswered questions and misunderstandings, love matters the most. And isn't that the theme of all Christmas movies?

And anyway, never mind the chaos, because this is a cult movie, and Helmer clearly has an immense fan club of followers who filled the

Avalon Theatre and appreciated “A Christmas Party,” giving it a standing ovation at the end. Helmer's teamwork approach to making this movie, getting it funded, and honoring everyone who worked on it, even shouting out his parents and those of Knoll and Keller, stood out. Keller told everyone at the

premiere that any of these people would follow Helmer to the next film and beyond -- some came with him from his last short -- because just as he makes clear in the movie, he cares about people, community matters to him, uplifting people is part of his game plan and ... love is all around.



Script writer Knoll, TyAndre Alvin, and cinematographer Spencer Bruttig, who did an amazing job working in a limited area with 17 characters, address the crowd before the movie. Knoll's comments about his grandmother feeding the entire cast and crew were an indication of the community surrounding this movie.



Ozzie Coyne & Shaun Callaghan (B 2nd Assistant Camera & Art Production Assistant.)



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