

CONNECTION

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Eating chicken teriyaki on University Drive are Patricia Schenfeld and Jay Foust at the 49th annual Fairfax Fall Festival in Fairfax City last Saturday, Oct. 11

Festival Joy

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Election Guide

BEGINS ON PAGE 12

ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 16 ♦ CLASSIFIED, PAGE 18

PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

OCTOBER 16 - NOVEMBER 5, 2025

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Beware the Scares Of Halloween

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

A reminder as Halloween approaches on Oct. 31. If you are out on the streets, day or night, you may encounter zombies, vampires, witches, or other ghoulish creatures. Look for them in yards, public places, on porches or on house tops. They may be in skeletal form, or ethereal as ghosts or spirits. They may seem to walk in step with you along area sidewalks.

Possibly you will find that cemeteries have

popped up, with headstones askew, where none were located before. Spiders and their telltale cobwebs will be larger than life. Jack-O'Lanterns, with scary faces, will stare at you as you pass. Unfamiliar eerie sounds may emanate on previously quiet neighborhood streets. Beware all Hallow's eve... And enjoy the fright.

Eerie beings may join your outing

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION



A cast of ghoulish creatures may greet you as you pass



Covens of witches may offer up their spooky brews

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Fellow dog walkers may take a skeletal form



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Some pumpkins are as smooth as a baby's bottom. Enjoy pumpkins in all their looks, shapes, colors and sizes

Pumpkins, Pumpkins, Pumpkins!

Fall's icon symbols are ready to enjoy as food or decoration.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Pumpkins, in all sizes, shapes, and colors, are headlining the vegetable scene now, as they do every

year, the unofficial symbols of the Fall season. A mascot of harvest time, pumpkins are seen at festivals, often centered around the pumpkins as star attractions, especially around
SEE PUMPKINS, PAGE 8

Helping Keep Families In Need and their Pets Together

Britepaths adds pet food to its SNAP Gap Pantry.

By Bonnie Hobbs
The Connection

Families love their pets; and over time, their bonds grow even stronger. But when hard times and financial hardships befall them, they often have to make the incredibly tough decision to give up their beloved animals because they can no longer afford to feed them.

But now, thanks to Fairfax-based nonprofit Britepaths, they won't have to give up their animals because Britepaths has added pet food to its SNAP Gap Pantry. And on Sept. 30, it held a special ribbon cutting in celebration.

SNAP is the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program that gives food benefits to low-income individuals and families to bolster their grocery budget. But among the items it doesn't cover is pet food. So it's only fitting that food for cats and dogs is now available in Britepaths' SNAP Gap Pantry.

As a result, families can continue to care for their pets while meeting their own household expenses. This special pantry helps bridge the SNAP funding shortfall and addresses a critical, community need by enabling families to stay whole.

Before cutting the ribbon, Britepaths Executive Director Abra Kurt spoke to those in attendance. "Today is actually National Pet Hunger Awareness Day," she said. "We know that shelter surrenders of animals are up 43 percent this year, primarily for economic reasons. And it's an issue that touches our families, our clients. We know this from direct feedback from our clients, and we wanted to expand the pantry to offer pet food."

"We're starting with dog and cat food. And on our client-intake forms, we're now asking the question, 'Are there companion animals in your household? If so, how many and what kind?' And if we see that our clients are telling us that there are other needs, we can adjust [for them] as we go."

Kurt noted that Britepaths had



Celebrating after the ribbon cutting are (from left) Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read, Abra Kurt and Britepaths Board of Directors President Karen Wheeler.



Abra Kurt prepares to cut the ribbon.



Catherine Read holds part of the ribbon.

a "wildly successful" Stuff the Bus event in September, making it possible for the nonprofit to cut the ribbon celebrating the addition of pet food to its pantry. "We collected more than 700 pounds of dog and cat food at Stuff the Bus," said Kurt. "And our Fairfax City Mayor, Catherine Read, brought in two more bags of dog and cat food this morning. She's a dog mom, as well."

Besides that, said Read, "I'm a former board member of Britepaths. And I love the fact that Britepaths continues to be focused on the clients you serve and that you're asking different, better



Some of the pet food collected for Britepaths during the September Stuff the Bus event.

questions – because it all comes down to what you know to better serve people. You ask them what they need. I only wish we'd thought about this years earlier to ask people about the pets in their homes."

"There are so many benefits to having pets – for children, for parents – whatever your pet is," continued Read. "And tuning into families' needs and helping support families with pets is so important. I'm so proud of the organization for doing this. I definitely want to be a part of it, and I hope there will be other partnerships and coalitions for businesses in the City who also want to help."

For example, she said, they could be collection points for people who want to donate pet food for Britepaths' clients "who have food insecurity for both themselves and their companion family members. So kudos to everyone here – this is a great idea."

"I know we have a lot of pets in our staff families," added Kurt. "Our Board President, Karen Wheeler, is also a dog mom, I'm a cat mom, so this touches all of us in so many different ways. And the power of our love of animals to bring people together is one of the reasons why we're all here today – to cut the ribbon for our client families."

After the ceremony, Aisha Ali, Britepaths' senior director of development and communications, discussed the importance of offering pet food there. "Britepaths has always met clients where they are, and that's constantly changing and evolving," she said. "So we're always seeking feedback from the community about what they need now – and we know pets are part of the family."

"In addition to providing things SNAP doesn't cover, our SNAP Gap Pantry is focusing on [non-covered] things like diapers, laundry detergent, and hygiene and toiletry items, and pet food is part of that," continued Ali. "But besides just providing pet food, we're also helping keep families whole and avoid the trauma – especially for kids – of having to surrender a pet because the family can no longer afford to feed it. That's like getting rid of a family member. So we're really happy, and we can't wait to see what happens next and how we can continue to grow and evolve with our community."

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From left are James Walkinshaw, Catherine Read, David Bulova, Pathway Homes President and CEO Sylisa Lambert-Woodard, and Smitty Connolly.

David Bulova Given Spirit of Hope Award

On Oct. 3, Del. David Bulova (D-11th) received the Congressman Gerry Connolly Spirit of Hope Award at Pathway Homes' annual awards breakfast. The nonprofit provides safe, stable housing to individuals suffering from mental illness and to those marginalized by poverty and inequity.

This award – formerly called the Pathway Homes Spirit of Hope Award – is given to a leader who's supported people struggling with their recovery from mental illnesses. And this year it went to Bulova.

"I'm truly honored," he said. "This is an organization that has touched my heart. Today was especially meaningful, as the award was renamed in honor of Congressman Gerry Connolly. Thank you, Pathway Homes, for giving so many people the gift of hope and for making people feel empowered and valued, even during their greatest struggles."

U.S. Rep Connolly (D-11th) died of cancer in May, at age 75, after serving 14 years on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors – including five as chairman – and more than 16 years in the U.S. House of Representatives.



Del. David Bulova

Among those attending the awards ceremony were Connolly's widow, Smitty Connolly; U.S. Rep. James Walkinshaw (who filled Gerry Connolly's seat in Congress); and Fairfax City Mayor Catherine Read, who received this honor last year.

— BONNIE HOBBS

NEWS BRIEFS

FCPS Instructional Assistant Charged with Assault

A man believed to have assaulted a child at a Fairfax City elementary school has been arrested and charged with a misdemeanor. He is Matthew Barber, 43, of Fairfax, and police say he was an instructional assistant at Providence Elementary.

On Sept. 19, City of Fairfax Police were alerted by Fairfax County Public Schools that an alleged assault of a student had occurred at Providence, the previous day, Sept. 18. According to police, "Investigation revealed that, during physical education class, an FCPS instructional assistant aggressively handled the student for not following directions."

Police say no injuries were reported. However, a teacher who witnessed the alleged incident reported it to the school administration and identified Barber as the adult involved. He was then placed on administrative leave, and detectives with the Criminal Investigations Division obtained a warrant for his arrest.

They issued Barber a summons for misdemeanor assault and released him on his promise to appear in court. Meanwhile, City police encourage anyone who may have been a victim

SEE NEWS BRIEFS, PAGE 7

GRAND OPENING

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‘Welcome to the Kamp Washington Shake Shack, Y’All’

Popular burger chain has a new home in Fairfax City.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Sure, there are lots of burger places, but there’s only one Shake Shack – and the newest location is in Fairfax City. Situated in a prime spot between Routes 50 and 29, it’s in the Kamp Washington Shopping Center.

It officially opened Wednesday, Sept. 17, at 11040 Main St. The hours are Sunday-Thursday, 11 a.m.-10 p.m., and Friday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-11 p.m.

“We are so thrilled to be here,” said Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jennifer Rose. “Even though it’s a little drizzly outside, we know that Shake Shack brings sunshine into our days – especially with those shakes.”

Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read couldn’t attend the ribbon cutting because she had other mayoral duties that day at the same time. So Rose served as mistress of ceremonies. Joining her to represent the City were Economic Development Authority Vice Chair Patrick Soleymani and Commissioner of the Revenue Page Johnson.

“We’re very excited to have Shake Shack come into the City of Fairfax,” said Rose. “As Mayor Read likes to say, ‘You had a choice to make, and you chose the City of Fairfax.’ So we’re grateful for that and for having another outstandingly delicious burger place here. This is very close to the mayor’s neighborhood, so I’m sure you’ll see here in here, from time to time.”

Speaking next was the new restaurant’s general manager, Mike Lloyd. “We are so happy to be here,” he said. “It’s been a long time coming. I’ve been waiting on this store for about a year, and we’re finally here.”

“I hired some good people from the area, so we’re a part of this world here,” he continued. Noting that he and the other employees couldn’t wait to officially open Shake Shack’s doors to customers – many of whom were already lined up outside – Lloyd said, “We’re about 30 minutes away.” Then smiling broadly to the ribbon-cutting attendees, he told them, “Welcome to the Kamp Washington Shake Shack, y’all.”



Jennifer Rose welcomes the Shake Shack team to Fairfax City. Next to her (from left) are Patrick Soleymani and Mike Lloyd.

Among them was a representative from local charity, Food for Others, and Rose explained why. “One thing I love about Shake Shack is that they love giving back to the community,” she said. “They’ve been doing a canned-food drive for Food for Others’ beautiful pantry in Merrifield. And today, they’re doing a dollar donation for every burger that’s sold.”

After the ribbon was cut, Johnson – who’s also a history buff – took his turn at the mic. “Small businesses contribute to 70 percent of the City’s business revenue,” he said. “And this location right here is a very old one. One of the very first restaurants in the City of Fairfax stood on this location. It was called the Black Lantern Inn, and it lasted for 50 years, so welcome to the City.”

Then, before the doors opened at 11 a.m., Shake Shack team member Tyreek Scott led everyone there in a rousing, synchronized, overhead clap he dubbed the “Shack Clap.” And with that, the restaurant was open for business.

Of the chain’s 13 locations in

the commonwealth, this one is the seventh in Northern Virginia. Lloyd said they chose this spot because they believe it has the customer base that’ll enable it to be a success.

“We like to give back, and we know this area has lots of families and we can be part of the community and help it advance,” he said. “We’ll donate to the local schools and hold special fundraising events for them. I coach for the Fairfax Little League, and my sons go to Robinson Secondary School and have friends who go to Fairfax High – and I’ve hired a lot of them to work here.”

A proud Army veteran, Lloyd has been with Shake Shack for seven years. And since he and his family live in Burke, the new restaurant is near his home. Delighted to have it up and running at last, he said, “I can’t believe it’s finally happened. One of my goals was to be a general manager at Shake Shack.”

Pointing out some of the most popular items, he started with the ShackBurger – a hamburger with cheese, lettuce, tomato and a house-made tangy mayo called

ShackSauce. Another is the Smoke-Shack Burger, with bacon, cheese, Shack Sauce and cherry peppers. And a special offering through the end of the year is the French Onion Soup Burger topped with gruyere cheese, crispy onions, caramelized onions and roasted-garlic parmesan sauce. All burgers are a quarter pound of 100-percent Angus beef.

Other options include chicken meals – such as a crispy chicken

breast with avocado, bacon, buttermilk-herb mayo, pickles and lettuce – as well as all-beef hot dogs. Side dishes are fries, cheese fries and bacon-cheese fries.

Drinks include strawberry lemonade, mango “passionade” and cherry limeade with popping boba, in addition to iced tea, juice and fountain sodas. There’s even a selection of beer and wine. But of course, the beverage stars here are the restaurant’s renowned milkshakes. Twelve flavors are available at all times, and the current special shake flavors are banana pudding, campfire s’mores and Oreo cookie funnel cake. Also offered are root beer and Creamsicle floats, plus frozen custard.

Emblazoned on a wall in bright, neon lights is Shake Shack’s motto, “Stand for Something Good,” which refers to the company’s commitment to high-quality food and top-notch service. And Lloyd said the whole Shake Shack team takes it seriously.

“We’re all about the community, and we want everybody to be happy and have an experience here they can’t have anywhere else,” he said. “I’ve hired people who enjoy making others smile. We want our customers to not just have a meal here and leave, but to remember us and return.”



From left are Jennifer Rose, Patrick Soleymani, Page Johnson and Mike Lloyd.



Shake Shack’s current featured burger is the French Onion Soup Burger topped with gruyere cheese, crispy onions, caramelized onions and roasted-garlic parmesan sauce.



Doing the Shack Clap are (from left) Jennifer Rose, Tyreek Scott and Mike Lloyd.

NEWS BRIEFS

FROM PAGE 5

of Barber's to contact Det. Ruth Lightner at 703-385-7913.

Help Honor Local Families on Veterans Day

To honor American veterans and military families this Veterans Day, the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce is seeking veteran-owned and local businesses, advocacy groups and nonprofits to participate in a special campaign. It'll highlight discounts and promotions offered by these businesses, plus community connections available to veterans and military families.

For example, veteran Sean Carroll, owner of Great Clips hair salon on Pickett Road in Fairfax City, will provide free haircuts to military members and veterans on Veterans Day. Nonprofits and advocacy organizations serving veterans and military families are encouraged to offer services to these groups directly and to contact the Chamber to discuss hosting displays at local businesses.

The campaign will launch Nov. 1 with coordinated social media posts, local press coverage and posters in participating business storefronts. Participation is open to all Chamber member businesses. Organizations and businesses interested in taking part should contact the Chamber's executive director, Jennifer Rose, by Oct. 24 at executivedirector@cfcc.org.

Art on the Lawn in Fairfax City

Historic Blenheim will host Art on the Lawn – an event for both adults and children – on Saturday, Nov. 1, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., at 3610 Blenheim Blvd. in Fairfax City. Attendees may watch artists painting outdoors and see them demonstrate their craft. There'll also be leaf rubbing and pumpkin painting for children. Rain date is Nov. 2.

Annual Craft Fair at Woodson High

Woodson High will hold its annual holiday craft fair on Saturday, Nov. 1, from 10-4 p.m. The school is at 9525 Main St. in Fairfax.



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. Dist. Id.	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Effective 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.

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Pumpkins are in their starring role as symbols of Fall



A sea of pumpkins greets customers at Fall events

Pumpkins, Pumpkins, Pumpkins!

FROM PAGE 3

Halloween and Thanksgiving.

Valerie Nalls, of Nalls Produce in Franconia, which surely has every possible type of pumpkin or gourd you can imagine, can not say the number of pumpkins they have on site or their total weight. She describes the amount as “immense.” In preparation for their 30 year tradition of highlighting pumpkins, pumpkins begin showing up in small numbers in August, then arrive in large numbers the second week of September. Nalls says a lot come from southern areas of Pennsylvania, around Harrisburg and Lancaster County; others from Maryland, southwest Virginia, and as far as from Illinois. They will make up Nalls’ Pumpkin Hill, a free entertainment area for children; and their Pumpkin Wall, which highlights heirloom pumpkins, providing a photo backdrop.

Customers purchase pumpkins for a wide variety of uses. A type of winter squash, pumpkins are a popular culinary tradition for making pies, soups, baked goods and even coffee flavoring. Pulp, seeds and shells are used.

Many pumpkins will live a second life, becoming traditional Jack-o’-Lanterns to decorate tables or porches, lending a scary element to Halloween trick or treating.

Harvesting a pumpkin crop is labor inten-

sive effort. Pumpkins must be individually hand-picked and placed in cardboard bins, and stored, protected from moisture and the elements, in a dry place. Nalls shares that, at least so far, they have not experienced any lack of pumpkin availability due to farm issues with lack of workers related to immigration enforcement; perhaps because they deal with small farms. She shares that they have seen an up-tick in the number of families visiting their attractions. She attributes the increased number visiting during the week to the government shutdown. She says Nalls is especially pleased to provide a free family-oriented event that can be enjoyed outside together while families may be concerned about their financial situations.

While pumpkins are a 30-year tradition at Nalls, they have an even longer history in the Americas. Cultivation of pumpkins is believed to have begun over 7,500 years ago in Central America, with the first seeds found in Mexico. In North America, Native Americans used them as essential parts of their diet. The shells were dried for use as containers, and the seeds were a source of oil. Europeans discovered pumpkins in the Americas and took them back to introduce to Europe.

7310 Beulah St. Alexandria, VA; 703-971-4068

<https://nallsproduce.com/>



In many colors, some as warty as toads

OPINION

JOIN US for the 10th Annual Tour de Mount Vernon

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK
MOUNT VERNON DISTRICT

Get ready to pedal your way to a great time in the Mount Vernon District! Join me and the Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling (FABB) for the 10th Annual Tour de Mount Vernon Community Bike Ride on Saturday, October 18, starting and ending at the Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House. This special 10th Anniversary Ride will be packed with adventure, fun, a few challenges, and yes, cool socks (while supplies last)! All set against the backdrop of our area's rich historical and cultural treasures.

Here's what you need to know:

The ride kicks off at 8:30 a.m., with cyclists choosing between a 40-mile or 20-mile route. Check-in will begin at 7:45 a.m.

Riders will explore the northern and central Mount Vernon District, featuring Potomac Banks' historical, ecological and cultural sites. Including George Washington's Mount Vernon, River Farm, Historic Gum Springs and the newly renovated Mount Vernon Rec Center!

Whether you're a biking enthusiast or just looking for a fun ride through beautiful landscapes, this is your chance to enjoy a scenic journey with fellow cyclists.

Fairfax County Police and ride monitors will be on hand to help keep you safe and on



Dan Storck

Whether you're a seasoned cyclist or just looking for a fun and active Saturday morning, there's something for everyone at the Tour de Mount Vernon. Grab your helmet, fill up your water bottle and register today to join the fun: fairfax-county.gov/mountvernon/tour-de-mount-vernon-2025

Let's ride!



the right path, so all you need to focus on is enjoying the ride! The day will wrap up with music, camaraderie, our famous sweet potato chili and beverages for purchase by Bunnyman Brewing.

**10th Annual
Tour de
Mount Vernon**

Saturday, October 18
Ride Kickoff at 8:30 a.m.
Starting and Ending at
Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House

TOUR de MOUNT VERNON 2025
Saturday, October 18
Start at Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House
8:30 a.m.
Rain or Shine
10th Anniversary
JOIN the RIDE - EXPLORE your COMMUNITY

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event. Or via email calendar@connectionnewspapers.com.

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED

Have some extra time to drive a neighbor to a doctor's appointment? You pick the days, times, and places that are convenient for you. There is no minimum driving requirement. Not only do you help older adults in need, you also get to meet wonderful folks, often with very interesting backgrounds and stories to tell. The Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church (SCMAFC), is an all-volunteer, non-sectarian, non-profit organization. Its mission is providing free transportation to seniors for medical and dental appointments or run errands to grocery stores and pharmacies. Visit the website at <https://scmafc.org/volunteer>, or email contact@scmafc.org.

VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME

Would you like to help a neighbor feel less lonely? Will you help someone get much-needed groceries? Form new connections and make a meaningful difference. Older adults in the Annandale, Falls Church, and Alexandria regions are waiting for volunteer social visitors and grocery shoppers. If you can give the gift of your time, consider providing invaluable support to someone in your community. Learn more about Volunteer Solutions at bit.ly/FXVSVOL or email VolunteerSolutions@FairfaxCounty.gov or call 703-324-5406.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the

Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax or www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html. The Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia Caregivers' Support Group takes place the first and third Tuesdays of each month, 10-11:30 a.m. via Zoom. This group is for caregivers of family members with dementia. Meetings are gently facilitated. For more information and to get the Zoom link, contact Jack Tarr at jtarr5@verizon.net or 703-821-6838.

Haven of Northern Virginia Support Group. 703-941-7000, www.havenofnova.org or havenofnova@verizon.net.

Virginia Chronic Pain Support Group Meets from 1:30-3 p.m. the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine, 6829 Elm St., Suite 300, McLean. Group leader, Jodi Brayton, LCSW. 703-532-4892.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org.

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ALEXANDRIA FILM FESTIVAL



Festival Fun Galore in Old Town Fairfax City

Some 30,000 people filled the streets of downtown Fairfax City, last Saturday, Oct. 11, for the 49th annual Fairfax Fall Festival.



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

From left, Nicholas Prosini and Anne McMorow told people about the City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts' free concerts and movies. Next concert: Jack Hinshelwood Trio, Nov. 7, at 8 p.m., Old Town Hall.



Shelley Star and The Galaxy wow the crowd with rock music in Old Town Square.



Vendor Petrea Kasper selling The Chocolate Sauce.



Artist Brianna Camp drawing a deer with chalk pastels.



Eating chicken teriyaki on University Drive are Patricia Schenfeld and Jay Foust.



Sandy and Joel Chuah Bulosan sell hand-illustrated and designed cards, stickers, stationery, etc.



Artist Shelley Miller with her colorful, resin Christmas trees.



Jonathan Mercaldo, 4, proudly shows a pumpkin he decorated with stickers for Halloween at a booth sponsored by Fairfax Christian Church.

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News

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Painted rocks with encouraging sayings at the Kindness Rocks table.



From left, 8-year-old twin brothers, Jacob and David D., with their fancy balloons.



The huge crowd filled Main Street all day long.



Children and parents having fun on the Fantastic Flyer.



Andrea Palermo selling her Halloween wreaths.



Having lunch together in the food court are (from left) Valeria Vera (butter chicken), Tiffany Duong (chicken tikka bowl), and Lee Chapin (barbecued chicken and rice).

From left, Maisie, 3, and Ellie, 5, pose with dad Jeremy Dorfman by a Station 3 firetruck.

The High Stakes of the 2025 Virginia General Election

VOTE: Local House of Delegates Elections.

BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Voters in The Connection Newspapers’ communities of Centreville, Chantilly, Great Falls, Herndon, McLean, Oak Hill, Oakton, Reston, Vienna, located in northern Fairfax County, along with others in the surrounding areas and the commonwealth, face one of the most consequential general elections on Nov. 4, 2025. Choices will help determine the state-wide policy course over the next two years, from abortion and reproductive rights to fis-

cal 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. Votes matter even in uncontested races. Numbers of votes here could indicate opposition for current policies in Washington.

For Republican voters, the strategic goal is to prevent the opposing party from gaining control. Numbers of votes here could indicate support for current policies in Washington.

We sent questionnaires to the local House of Delegates candidates running to represent Northern Fairfax County communities.

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 Fairfax County North include the following:

- ❖ HD-10: Dan I. Helmer (D); David Woodrow Guill (R)
- ❖ HD-11: David L. Bulova (D); Adam J. Wise (R); Brandon N. Givens (Forward)
- ❖ HD-14: Vivian E. Watts (D); Eric Johnson (R)
- ❖ HD-15: Laura Jane Cohen (D); Saundra Davis (R)
- ❖ HD-16: Paul E. Krizek (D), Richard Hayden (R), Shelly Arnoldi (I)
- ❖ HD-18: Kathy Tran (D); Ed McGovern (R)

Additionally, at the state level, Virginia voters will also be voting for the executive branch of the Virginia government: governor, lieutenant governor and attorney general. The Virginia Press Association, a nonpartisan group, has produced its 2025 Virginia Voter Guide. The eight-page guide will be included with the PDF edition of this newspaper at <https://www.connectionnewspapers.com/PDFs/>

For official election details, registration, and polling information, visit: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/office-elections>

Dan Helmer (D), incumbent and candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 10

Dan Helmer (D)

Profession/Experience:
Veteran, business executive

Education:
BA, West Point; MPhil, Oxford University (Rhodes Scholarship).

Personal/Activities:
Hometown: New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Public Service:
Has served in the House of Delegates since 2022.

Legislative Priorities/Challenges/Solutions:
Priorities: Virginia Democrats are running to grow Virginia’s economy and provide good-paying jobs, lower costs on working people, deliver better schools, and safeguard constitutional rights. Will expand funding for



Dan Helmer (D)

Virginia schools, pass a constitutional amendment protecting abortion access, and expand opportunities to grow the businesses of the future right here in the commonwealth.

Data Centers:
No answer

State’s Underfunding of Public Schools:
No answer

Casinos:
No answer

What I Want District Members to Know:
No answer

<https://danhelmer.com/>

David Guill (R), candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 10

David Guill (R)

Hometown
Clifton.

Profession/Experience
Retired Public Service.

Education
MS in Computer Science (Johns Hopkins University); BS in Computer Science with a minor in Mechanical Engineering.

Personal/Activities
High School Lacrosse Coach (Centreville, Westfield, Oakton, Robinson, Lake Braddock), Cub Scout and Boy Scout Leader.

Public Service
HOA Vice President.

Legislative Priorities
Reduce tax burdens on constituents. Assure criminals are prosecuted and serve requisite sentences as defined by law. Ensure clear, transparent, and timely accounting of school processes, including proceedings and happenings.

Challenges
There is no single clear challenge. The two competing for top priority are tax relief and school process issues, especially concerning males in female private spaces, including locker rooms and bathrooms, being one of two competing top priorities.

Solutions
Proposes to legislatively remove the personal property tax (car tax) and provide tax relief for seniors. Would legislate that public/school



David Guill (R)

bathrooms and locker rooms be restricted by biological sex determined at birth.

Data Centers
Notes the cantankerous issue; centers require multiple reliable energy sources (fossil fuels/nuclear), noting wind/solar unreliability. Reliable sources are provided by power companies in a monopoly-like environment. Cautions on cost, especially regarding potential huge spikes in energy costs if data center-dependent AI goes bankrupt, citing the Shoreham-Wading River nuclear plant shutdown’s ripple effect.

Public Schools Education Funding
To reduce funding burden on our public schools, proposes reducing the number of administrator positions in public schools.

Casinos
Opposes casinos as a viable path for economic development, especially for sustained development, given District 10 is a bedroom community for Washington D.C.

What I Want District Members to Know
Shares George Washington’s Farewell Address quote on unity (“Be American, Let there be no sectionalism...”). Washington urged voters to have unity of purpose and accentuate shared values/principles over differences, calling it poignant for today.

www.guill4va.com

HOUSE OF DELEGATES ELECTION GUIDE

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GRAPHIC DESIGN AND LAYOUT BY GEOVANI FLORES

David L. Bulova (D), incumbent and candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 11

David L. Bulova (D)

Profession/Experience:
Senior environmental planner with 34 years of experience in water resources planning.

Education:
BA, Government, College of William and Mary; Master of Public Administration, Virginia Tech.

Personal/Activities:
Very active in Scouts; previously coached youth sports; currently serves on the boards of Brain Injury Services and the City of Fairfax Band Association.

Public Service:
Current member, Virginia House of Delegates, representing District 11 (served 20 years). Former chair, Fairfax County Consumer Protection Commission.

Legislative Priorities/Challenges/Solutions:
Legislative Priorities: Focused on world-class public education, protecting natural resources, investing in workforce development, and addressing the housing affordability crisis. Successful initiatives include the Virginia Early Childhood Education Act (HB 1012), the Occoquan Reservoir PFAS Reduction Program (HB 2050), and expanding the Virginia Housing Opportunities Tax Credit Program. Residents' Biggest Challenge: Dealing with federal budget and workforce reductions going into the



David L. Bulova (D)

2026 session. Proposed Legislative Solution: The priority is to support those affected by unforeseen unemployment by strengthening unemployment insurance and preventing evictions due to temporary income loss. Essential to expand workforce development initiatives and make targeted investments to diversify the economy. Must maintain a structurally balanced budget and protect the AAA bond rating.

Data Centers:
Data centers are important, but the current pace of development is not sustainable. Must manage facilities to safeguard neighboring communities and avoid shifting electricity costs onto residential ratepayers.

State's Underfunding of Public Schools:
In the latest session, he secured an increase of \$20 million annually for FCPS by eliminating an obsolete funding cap. Committed to advocating for a funding formula that accurately reflects the higher cost of living in Fairfax.

Casinos:
Opposes the development of a casino in Fairfax. Acknowledges them as revenue sources but cites significant social costs (e.g., gambling

Adam J. Wise (R), candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 11

Adam J. Wise (R)

Profession/Experience:
Firearms and self-defense instructor; taught American history, economics, and government principles; worked for nonprofits.

Education:
Bachelor's degree, George Mason University; Master of Divinity, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary.

Personal/Activities:
Hometown: Fairfax, Virginia. Spent 16 years learning about American history, economics, and the proper role of government.

Public Service:
Candidate for House of Delegates, District 11 (Fairfax City and Oakton); running to implement learned principles.

Legislative Priorities/Challenges/Solutions:
Legislative Priorities: Reduce taxes and regulations to foster economic growth and ensure the government does not hinder residents' objectives. Residents' Biggest Challenge: The high cost of living. The core message is, "It's your money! Keep as much of it as possible!" Proposed Legislative Solution: Proposes a hard look at the state budget, considering cuts to taxes and regulations to encourage prosperity and economic growth.

Data Centers:
A local issue to be decided primarily by those



Adam Wise (R)

most affected. Opposes rising energy prices due to data centers. Local citizens should determine whether a data center should be built, provided environmental concerns are alleviated and a proper energy source is provided.

State's Underfunding of Public Schools:
Before requesting more funding, the current budget must be analyzed to ensure enormous resources are funding a good education and not being spent inefficiently. A critical budget look will determine if tax dollars are being properly used.

Casinos:
Skeptical that a casino is a good addition to Northern Virginia. Consideration would weigh heavily on the area's cultural and potential criminal implications.

What I Want District Members to Know:
"I want Virginians in the 11th District and across the state to wake up every morning and believe that they can achieve their goals and that the government will not stand in their way.

Readers can learn more about me at www.adamwiseforva.com."

Brandon N. Givens (Forward), candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 11

Brandon N. Givens (I) (Forward)

Profession/Experience:
Special Education Teacher; worked as a social worker for two years. Has been an educator for 19 years, with nine years in public education.

Education:
Bachelor's in Psychology; Master's degrees in Special Education and Educational Leadership; Specialist degree in Early Childhood Education.

Personal/Activities:
Born and raised in Helena, Arkansas. Daughter recently graduated from Fairfax High School.

Public Service:
Served in the Army Reserves. Much of his career has been dedicated to public benefit (as a social worker and educator).

Legislative Priorities/Challenges/Solutions:
Legislative Priorities: Seek election reforms to reduce tribalism by creating multimember districts using ranked choice voting. Also concerned about redundant student testing. Residents' Biggest Challenge: Job loss due to federal cuts.

Proposed Legislative Solution: Virginia must make up any Medicaid cuts in its budget and initiate a "New Deal." This includes investments in electricity production, public transportation, and infrastructure to create jobs and lower the cost of living. Funding: Replace federal taxes on incomes over \$200,000, using the TCJA 2017 tax cuts.



Brandon Norman Givens (I) (Forward)

Data Centers:
We must require data centers to invest in renewable energy as part of their agreements, creating green energy jobs and reducing strain on the grid. Mandate transparent Community Benefit Agreements (contributing to local education, infrastructure, and job training). We must also mandate energy efficiency and public reporting, and invest in additional electricity production.

State's Underfunding of Public Schools:
While some wealth redistribution is reasonable, the current system goes too far and dramatically underestimates the real cost of education in high-cost areas like Fairfax. Outdated metrics lead to higher property taxes, increasing wealth disparity. Proposes updating the state's funding model, such as using a price per student.

Casinos:
The people of Fairfax seem strongly opposed to it. For them, the social costs outweigh the financial benefits. I'm inclined to support the will of the people.

Additional Information:
"We need a change in leadership. We need new people and new ideas. We need office holders willing to work together and compromise to solve our common problems. We need office holders who try to unite our nation. If you would like to send a message that you're tired of partisan tribalism then you should support me and make your voice heard."

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Vivian E. Watts (D), incumbent and candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 14

Vivian Watts (D)

Professional:

Retired. Served as Secretary of Transportation and Public Safety

Education:

University of Michigan, B.A. with honors. First in family to graduate from college.

Hometown:

Annandale

Personal:

Named Fairfax Citizen of the Year for 15 years of active involvement

Public Service:

Delegate, House District 14. Chair of House Finance and the Criminal Law Subcommittee. Current special appointments: House Emergency Committee on Federal Reductions and the Behavioral Health Commission. Past appointments: Select Committee on School Safety and the Veteran Services Board.

Legislative Priorities:

Unchecked federal actions. Keeping a job, the cost of housing, paying student debt, access to health care, and inflation all surface in these voter comments, but most are concerned about attacks on the principles of democracy. Residents' Biggest Challenge: I hear most about unchecked federal actions. Most are concerned about attacks on the principles of democracy. Keeping a job, cost of housing, student debt, health care, and inflation all surface. State issues have been overwhelmed. Proposed Legislative Solution: It'll be extremely difficult to deal with the effect of federal actions on tax revenues. Dealing with all these cuts is crucial, but so is ongoing state funding of K-12 and mental health services. Priorities will compete: health care, education, food aid, unemployment and student debt.

Data Centers:

Data center development is beneficial for



Vivian E. Watts (D)

tax revenue (Loudoun and Prince William). However, cramming a data center beside Bren Mar townhouses is absolutely the wrong way to go. Since data centers are driving electricity demand (projected to increase as much as 10-fold due

to AI, mainly for cooling), they should pay for it through higher consumption rates, as well as committing to pay for the required new transmission infrastructure. Current tax breaks should be shifted to investments data centers make to save energy. Dominion needs to partner in upgrading the current transmission lines.

State Underfunding of Public Education:

The current funding formulas are old and unfair. Two reforms are essential for FCPS: First, provide direct support for staffing for students with disabilities, English language learners, and those who get free and reduced meals because poverty reduces their family's ability to provide basics (including access to internet learning). Second, ensure realistic support for competitive salaries for teachers to offset the high Northern Virginia cost of living, which currently results in less than 3% state support.

Casinos:

A Northern Virginia casino is not justified; it wouldn't attract major outside money and couldn't compete with National Harbor's location and amenities. National Harbor has it locked up due to its river location and 300-acre amenities. The only competition Tysons would win is having the worst traffic. Gambling addiction is a serious social cost that draws revenue from those least able to pay.

What I Want District Members to Know:

"Your vote is your voice. Your community involvement is our strength."

Website: <https://vivianwatts.com/>

Laura Jane H. Cohen (D), incumbent and candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 15

Laura Jane H. Cohen (D)

Professional:

Worked on Capitol Hill (secured funding for disease organizations). Served as director of outreach for a national Parkinson's nonprofit. Experience includes time as a preschool teacher and a long-term substitute teacher for Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS).

Education:

Political Science degree from the University of Georgia.



Laura Jane H. Cohen (D)

Personal:

Lives in Burke with husband Seth and two children, currently in college. Served on the Cherry Run Elementary School PTA for eight years, including two terms as president.

Public Service:

Delegate, House District 15 (since 2023).

SEE LAURA JANE H. COHEN, PAGE 15

Eric Johnson (R), candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 14

HD-14 Eric Johnson (R)

Professional:

Currently an English as a Second Language teacher and substitute at Arlington and Alexandria public schools. Was laid off as a loan specialist at the U.S. Small Business Administration in 2023. Retired as vice president of finance and accounting at Easy Buy LTD in Thailand. Held roles in sales and events at Marriott International.

Education:

Bachelor's degree in business administration from Cleveland State University.

Personal:

Hometown: Lincolnia, Virginia. Founded Shuttle Your Customers. Serves as senior adviser for the Harriet Tubman Learning Center in Georgia and as a youth leader at Annandale Church of Jesus Christ, LDS in Virginia. Worked with several nonprofits.

Public Service:

Candidate for Delegate, HD-14.

Legislative Priorities:

Revisit tax measures, including increases to the gasoline, electricity, car and restaurant taxes. Optimize allocation of the \$84 billion state budget for schools. Residents' Biggest Challenge(s): Jobs and financial insecurity. Proposed Legislative Solution: Sponsor legislation aimed at reducing taxes on gasoline, food, electricity, and vehicles. Increase support for programs that match unemployed individuals with high-skill technology positions.



HD-14 Eric Johnson (R)

Data Centers:

Neither the state nor local governments should treat data centers differently from other businesses that comply with applicable law.

State's Underfunding of Public Schools:

Concerns regarding unequal treatment should be formally presented to the attorney general, as unequal treatment is prohibited. It is essential to ensure every student receives equitable opportunities and resources for academic advancement.

Casinos:

Does not believe casinos are an appropriate vehicle for economic development. Encourages House colleagues to prioritize alternative sectors, such as technology, education, tourism and trade.

What I Want District Members to Know:

Committed to serving as a legislator who represents individuals unable to advocate for themselves. Encourages citizens to prioritize economic considerations. Johnson asserts that it is time for new leadership committed to reversing the incremental tax increases, enabling citizens to foster more prosperous businesses, improved schools, and safer communities.

Website: <https://ericjohnson4virginia.org/>

Saundra Davis (R), candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 15

Saundra Davis (R)

Professional:

Director of a secure memory care unit in a nursing home; served in leadership roles in military spouse organizations, including vice president, secretary, and family events coordinator; president of the Manassas MOM's Club; team mom for children's sports.

Education:

Bachelor's in Psychology with a minor in



Saundra Davis (R)

Sociology, Colorado State University (1992); dual master's degrees in Health Care Administration and Gerontology, University of Southern California (1996).

Personal:

Lived in Burke, Virginia, for more than 13 years; mother of three sons.

Public Service:

Deeply involved in education and paren-

SEE SAUNDRA DAVIS, PAGE 15

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Laura Jane H. Cohen (D)

Former member of the Fairfax County School Board, Springfield District. Serves on the House of Delegates Transportation, Education, and Counties, Cities, and Towns Committees. Councils/Commissions include the Autism Council, Disability Commission, School Health Services Committee, and Addiction and Recovery Council.

Legislative Priorities:

Addressing the gun violence epidemic, advocating for reproductive rights, and working to improve life for students with disabilities. Passed several bills during the first term, including those making playgrounds legally accessible, protecting students during school emergencies, and increasing college accessibility for students with IEPs and 504 plans. Residents' Biggest Challenge: Cost-of-living issues, specifically the high cost of housing. More must be done in Fairfax County to increase housing affordability. Proposed Legislative Solution: Solutions must be creative and geared toward increasing the number of affordable and "workforce" housing units. The state must encourage localities to expedite the permitting process, allow more "by right" projects, provide model plans to reduce associated costs, and improve parking requirements, among other measures. Also working with houses of worship on plans to use their land for affordable and senior housing

Data Centers:

Data centers are a useful economic tool as tax revenue supports education and local services. Cites counties like Loudoun that used this revenue to raise educator salaries and lower property taxes. Localities must be able to specify where data centers are

located, including minimum distance from schools/neighborhoods, and require the use of the most up-to-date "clean energy" options. It should require water recycling and movement away from diesel battery backups. Favors creating a new rate class so data centers pay more for their energy consumption, preventing the cost from being borne by residential ratepayers.

State Underfunding Public Education:

The JLARC report on K-12 education was affirming. Plans, if the majority is retained, include continuing to invest in schools, staff, and students to chip away at 40 years of underfunding and undervaluing public education. Has directly helped by using a per-student funding model (instead of the LCI) for English Language Learners last year and for Special Education this year.

Casinos:

Whether Fairfax County should have a casino should be decided by the voters and the Board of Supervisors. Fairfax County must figure out how to close the huge revenue deficit left by the commercial real estate crash.

Many counties have used data centers, casinos, and entertainment venues to close this gap. Increasing property taxes is unacceptable, as it harms seniors and lower-income residents.

What I Want District Members to Know:

"Every day I talk to my constituents and every single time they bring up cost of living issues. More specifically, the high cost of housing here. We know we need to do more in Fairfax County to make housing more affordable."

Website: <https://www.laurajanecohen.com/>

Saundra Davis (R)

tal rights advocacy; previously ran for an at-large seat on the Fairfax County School Board. Serves on the Virginia Public Guardian and Conservator Advisory Board.

Legislative Priorities: To repeal Virginia's unfair car tax. Will work with any legislators, regardless of party, including Lieutenant Governor Winsome Sears. Residents' Biggest Challenge: High property taxes, as evidenced by talking with thousands of residents. Car tax revenue goes into the county's general fund, where Democratic officials have shown little fiscal responsibility. Proposed Legislative Solution: Will sponsor a bill to repeal the car tax to give families relief, noting Virginia is running a surplus.

Data Centers:

Need a balanced, conservative approach that protects neighborhoods, farmland, and the environment without driving business away. Requires common-sense regulation, locating them where infrastructure can handle the demand, and encouraging investment in energy-efficient technology. Advocates for nuclear and natural gas to keep energy reliable and independent to prevent blackouts or higher bills

State Underfunding of Public Schools:

Fairfax County Public Schools doesn't have a funding problem; it has a spending problem, as the JLARC study shows FCPS

receives more than its fair share. Despite declining enrollment in the \$4 billion system, there is waste and misplaced priorities. The top priority is demanding a full, independent financial and performance audit to restore accountability. Will push for fiscal discipline and ensure taxpayer dollars go toward teachers, students, and classrooms.

Casinos:

Do not believe a casino is a viable or responsible path to economic development. Voters are concerned about traffic, crime, and the impact on families/small businesses. The potential social costs (addiction, financial hardship, strain on local services) far outweigh any short-term financial benefit. Prefers growing the economy through smart fiscal management, lower taxes, and support for local entrepreneurs.

Additional Information:

"I believe diversity of thought among elected officials is essential, especially in a county where all but one elected official is a Democrat. I do not think local Democrats allow moderation or moderate candidates through their primaries, leaving political and ideological radicals in office. Diverse perspectives must be heard and considered when making decisions that impact our community."

Website: <https://davisfordelegate.org/>

Paul E. Krizek (D), incumbent and candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 16

Paul E. Krizek (D)

Professional:

Served as Congressman Jim Moran's first immigration constituent service staffer and legislative aide for eight years. Was the first executive director of Running Strong for American Indian Youth (1998). Has been the chief counsel and vice president for Christian Relief Services Charities, Inc. since 1999, managing a humanitarian organization.

Education:

A degree from the University of Virginia. JD degree from the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

Personal:

Raised a family in the 16th District. (Also noted: Grew up, lives, and works in the 16th District — Mount Vernon area, Fairfax County).

Public Service:

Delegate, HD-16 (since 2016). Serves on the Privileges and Elections, General Laws, and



Paul E. Krizek (D)

Appropriations, and Agriculture, Chesapeake, and Natural Resources Committees. Chairs the Appropriations – Transportation and Public Safety Subcommittee, the General Laws – ABC/Gaming Subcommittee, and the Privileges and Elections – Gubernatorial Appointments Subcommittee.

Legislative Priorities:

Legislation is introduced directly in response to constituents' needs. A priority is protecting families in mobile home parks (e.g., Audubon Estates, Woodley Hills), which provide naturally occurring affordable housing. Worked for over five years in a bipartisan manner to increase tenant rights and preserve these. A top priority for the upcoming session is establishing a safe, well-regulated adult-use retail canna-

SEE PAUL KRIZEK, PAGE 16

Richard T. Hayden (R), candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 16

Richard Hayden (R)

Professional:
Attorney

Education:
Juris Doctor

Personal/Activities:

Member of the Knights of Columbus Council 5998 for over 20 years. Currently serves as president of the Mount Vernon Columbus Club, Inc., a nonprofit corporation; past Scoutmaster in Troop 996/Aldersgate Methodist Church; past VP Bucknell Little League.

Legislative Priorities:

Plan to lower taxes, keep communities safe, and give every child a chance at a quality education. Also supports parents' right to vouchers for private education if public schools fail. Residents' Biggest Challenge: Taxes and the cost of living in Fairfax County; voters also want to feel safe from crime and repeat offenders. Proposed Legislative Solution: Will sponsor a bill to remove the car tax once and for all. Revenue losses can be offset



Richard Hayden (R)

by cutting expenses in other areas and by attracting new businesses to expand the commercial tax base.

Data Centers:

Data centers are an important part of the state economy, creating jobs and adding to the tax base. Better planning will mitigate community impact and disruption. Calls the Virginia Clean Energy Act (VCEA) a cause for energy crisis and advocates exiting the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). Proposes building more natural gas plants, stating wind and solar are not sustainable.

State Underfunding Public Education:

Education on the K-12 level has to be opened up to competition, such as charter schools and vouchers. Home schooling needs to be supported.

Casinos:

Casinos serve themselves and are a lazy

SEE RICHARD HAYDEN, PAGE 16

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Paul E. Krizek (D)

bis market in Virginia. Legalization must include a framework that prioritizes public health, ensures equity, and generates revenue for reinvestment in historically harmed communities.

Data Centers:

Data centers are essential infrastructure but present trade-offs: high energy consumption, strain on utilities, and impacts on communities (noise, land use, environmental degradation). Advocates for stronger oversight through work on the Major Employment and Investment (MEI) Commission. While these are major economic drivers, local zoning must remain key to guiding growth and ensuring appropriate placement without burdening infrastructure or neighborhoods.

State Underfunding Public Education:

Fully funding Fairfax County's public schools is a top priority. This year, House Democrats secured a historic \$784.7 million increase in K-12 funding statewide, which will directly benefit local schools.

Casinos:

Opposes any expansion of gaming until the bill to create a Virginia Gaming Commission, to streamline oversight and accountability, is passed.

What I Want District Members to Know:

"Here in Fairfax, we must pair growth with smart investment in green energy and resilient infrastructure so that our economy and environment can thrive together."

Website: <https://www.paulkrizek.com/>

Richard Hayden (R)

fix to any revenue shortfall.

What I Want District Members to Know:

"Mount Vernon needs a fresh voice in Richmond. I will put money back into residents' pockets, not take it out, and be a good

and faithful steward of our financial and environmental resources. I am not beholden to special interests and will better represent your needs and concerns. A vote for Hayden is a vote for a better future in Virginia."

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

Shelly M. Arnoldi (Independent), candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 16

Shelly Arnoldi (I)

Professional:

Licensed professional engineer; U.S. Navy veteran.

Education:

Engineering degree, Marquette University (ROTC scholarship); Master's in Environmental Engineering, Old Dominion University.

Personal:

Hometown: Wisconsin. Lifelong runner and triathlete; wife and mother of four — two college-aged daughters, two stepsons.

Public Service:

Lifelong law-abiding citizen and taxpayer.

Legislative Priorities:

Strengthen families, restore common sense and protect freedoms. Focus includes parental rights in education, cutting taxes, enforcing immigration law, and securing elections (photo ID, no early voting or drop boxes). Residents' Biggest Challenge: Residents feel unheard and misinformed, and are distracted by media narratives on issues such as school quality, the cost of living, and trust in government. The focus is on protecting children's education and restoring common-sense leadership. Proposed Legislative Solution: Propose a Parents' Bill of Rights Act to protect the fundamental role of parents in their children's education and health care. Legislation mandates explicit parental consent for minors' medical, mental health, or gender counseling, and requires school transparency on curriculum and records.



Shelly Arnoldi (I)

Policy requires no new funding, utilizing existing budgets by prioritizing parental engagement over bureaucracy.

Data Centers:

Require any company building a data center to develop its own dedicated energy source, ensuring local residents are not burdened by higher costs or reduced power. This allows communities to benefit from economic growth and job creation while protecting families and small businesses from the strain on the grid.

State Underfunding Public Education:

Advocate to ensure Fairfax County receives its "fair share of state funds" based on student needs. Would refocus FCPS funding on academics by eliminating non-core programs and redirecting funds to instruction in reading, writing, math, civics, and history.

Casinos:

Casinos are a terrible idea for Fairfax County, bringing increased traffic, crime, addiction, and family instability. They exploit vulnerable residents and divert money from local businesses. Fairfax County should instead focus on attracting high-quality employers, supporting entrepreneurs, and investing in education.

What I Want District Members to Know:

"I filled out a detailed survey on Ballotpedia." <https://ballotpedia.org/ShellyArnoldi>

Kathy Tran (D), Candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 18

Kathy Tran (D)

Professional:

Member, Virginia House of Delegates (current Majority Caucus Chair). Public servant delegate.

Prior work experience: U.S. Department of Labor (national workforce policy) and National Immigration Forum (immigrant workforce advocacy). Wife and a mom to five children.

Education:

B.A., History, Duke University; M.S.W. (Master of Social Work), University of Michigan.



Kathy Tran (D)

Hometown:

West Springfield (Fairfax County)

Public Service:

Serving in the Virginia House of Delegates for 8 years (previously the 42nd, now the 18th District). Focus is on ensuring

families have resources and opportunities, informed by her experience as a boat refugee. Prior work included national workforce policy at the U.S. Department of Labor and immigrant workforce advocacy at the Na-

SEE PAUL KATHY TRAN, PAGE 17

Edward F. McGovern (R), candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 18

Ed McGovern (R)

Professional:

Retired federal employee

Education:

Master's degree in public and international affairs

Personal:

Moved with family to Springfield in 1993 for excellent schools, balanced government and opportunities.

Public Service:

Serving a second term on HOA board.



Ed McGovern (R)

Legislative Priorities: Axe the car tax (argues it reduces car sales and leaves older cars on the road). Calls for a full audit of Fairfax County's billions of tax dollars spent, noting that education dollars are not in the classroom and that top

county officials receive excellent pay while workers/teachers do not. Residents' Biggest Challenge: Affordability, due to ever-increasing taxes. Residents feel the schools are demonstrably worse (with favoritism for a

SEE ED MCGOVERN, PAGE 17

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HOUSE OF DELEGATES ELECTION GUIDE

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

Kathy Tran (D)

tional Immigration Forum.

Legislative Priorities:

Priorities are making life more affordable for families and ensuring access to world-class public education. Challenges include rising costs (groceries, rent, childcare, health care) and financial stress on federal families/contractors due to cuts/shutdowns. Solutions include expanding affordable housing, childcare, and health care, while investing in public education and raising teacher pay.

Data Centers:

Concerns include increased electricity bills and data centers being built too close to schools, neighborhoods, and historic sites. They must pay their fair share for electricity and infrastructure. Advocates for data centers to implement green energy solutions (such as solar panels) and calls for a deeper understanding of their impact on water, farmland, natural resources, and neighbor-

hoods.

Public School Underfunding:

Committed to fully funding schools and raising teacher pay to the national average. Supported historic investments in early childhood/public education, dedicated funding for special education and English learners, and eliminated the cap on support staff to meet all student needs.

Casinos:

Opposed Senate Bill 982 (2025 session) for a proposed casino/ entertainment district in Tysons Corner, citing a lack of broad public and local government support. Believes community-changing development requires careful local review and a transparent/rigorous bidding process.

Call to Action:

"I encourage everyone to exercise your right to vote and choose your representation in Richmond. Thank you for voting!"

Website: kathyfordelegate.com

Ed McGovern (R)

small group) and do not feel safe. Proposed Legislative Solution: A full audit of Fairfax County tax dollars is necessary. The state is reluctant to send money to Fairfax, and the "Return on the Dollar" from Richmond has decreased as one-party rule increases. The real solution is a return to balance; taxpayers need both parties represented to watch each other.

Data Centers:

Energy and data center demand are growing, and current plans (RGGI and Green Energy) are overwhelmed. Calls for new, flexible plans using an "all of the above" approach. Innovation is vital; colleges should focus on solutions so data centers do not continue using the same amount of space/energy or producing the same noise levels.

State Underfunding of Public Schools:

Fairfax County is at a disadvantage, but current officeholders are not delivering results due to rigid adherence to an insular education establishment and an unwillingness

to work across the aisle. The solution is to replace the people who caused the problem.

Casinos:

Most people don't want casinos, but one will likely be built unless there is political balance.

Notes that several Democrats take large donations from the gaming industry. Fairfax County does not need a casino for economic development.

What I Want District Members to Know:

Fairfax County is now run by big special interest donors. Will work to bring real solutions by fighting for affordable energy, supporting families, and for a government that answers to voters, not special interests. Believes one-party rule is stifling diverse opinions and failing to keep pace with change. "One party rule is suffocating diverse opinions and not keeping up with change. Please look at McGovernForDelegate.org and I ask for your vote for Delegate in the 18th District."

ENTERTAINMENT

HALLOWEENKEND THRILLS

AWAIT IN FAIRFAX PARKS!

Step into a Halloween season packed with thrills, treats and traditions across Fairfax County parks. Ghostly golf, costumed parades, harvest festivals and family-friendly haunts fill the calendar with festive fun. Create memories with loved ones, explore new adventures and celebrate the magic of fall at Fairfax County Park Authority events designed for every ghost, goblin and goblin.

Goblin Golf

Burke Lake Park, Oct. 18-19, Choose times between 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Grab your Halloween costume (not required) and join us at Burke Lake Park for Halloween-themed mini golf, treats and family fun! Cost is \$10 per person.

Farm Harvest Festival – Big Trucks, Carnival Rides and Fall Fun!

Frying Pan Farm Park, Oct. 17-19

Join us at Frying Pan Farm Park for the Farm Harvest Festival, featuring Big Truck Night, carnival rides, games and tasty fair food. Enjoy unlimited ride specials on Friday night or Sunday for \$25, or grab individual tickets on Saturday for even more fall fun. Parking is just \$10 per day, so bring the family and celebrate the season with us. Learn more.

Sensory-Friendly Family Trick-or-Treat Clemjjontri Park, Oct. 19, 1-6 p.m.

Celebrate Halloween in a calm, inclusive, sensory-friendly way at Clemjjontri Park. Enjoy a variety of fun and accessible activities, including the carousel, train, arts and crafts, sensory tent and themed treat stations throughout the playground, all with reduced noise and sensory support. Costumes are welcome but not required. Tickets cost \$20 per person. Secure your ticket to the all-inclusive fun.

Halloween on the Farm

Frying Pan Farm Park, Oct. 25, 5-7 p.m. or Oct. 26, 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Trick-or-treat at Halloween on the Farm. Enjoy trick-or-treating on the farm, visit with farm animals, make spooky crafts, play Halloween games and take a tour of the decorated farmhouse. Cost is \$12 per person. Register today.

Haunted Mini Golf

Oakmont Rec Center, Oct. 24-25, 4-9 p.m.

All werewolves, vampires and goblins (and their families) are invited for a fun night of mini golf. Trick-or-treat and win various goodies at Oakmont Mini Golf. Enjoy food trucks, face painting, popcorn and games. Come dressed in your best costume! Cost is \$12 in advance and \$15 at the door. Register today.

Ghost Town

www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



The Sterling Playmakers present "Our Town" on Oct. 17-19 and Oct. 24-26 in Sterling.



The Workhouse Haunt Returns Oct. 10 thru Nov. 1, 2025 at Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton.



The 22nd annual Great Falls Studios Art Tour runs Oct. 18-19, 2025 in Great Falls.

Burke Lake Park; Oct. 25-26, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

Get ready for a full day of fun at Burke Lake Park's Ghost Town. Enjoy themed activities, a train ride, carousel, crafts, mini golf and tons of treats — no scares, just treats. Join the fun and make it a Halloween to remember. Cost is \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door. Ticket pickup for registrants, 3 p.m. Register today.

Halloween Bash

South Run Rec Center, Oct. 25, beginning at 3:30 p.m.

Hustle down to the South Run Rec Center to join in some Halloween fitness fun featuring the Monster Mash 5K Dash, Halloween Fun Run 1-Mile and Spooktacular Tiny Tot Trot. Come in your best costume to enjoy the spooktacular atmosphere with your community. Cost is \$25 for the 5K and \$15 for other runs.

Register today.

Family Skate Night - Halloween Costume Skate and Dance Night

Franconia Rec Center, Oct. 25, 5-10 p.m.

Ghouls and goblins beware — Halloween Family Skate and Dance Night is coming to Franconia Rec Center. Gather your favorite spooky crew and head out for this thrilling family-friendly event with tunes sure to bring you back from the dead. Cost is \$10 per person. Register today.

NATURE HIKE WITH A RANGER

Along the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Join a ranger on nature hikes:

Oct. 21 at 9 a.m. at Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 198

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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 17

All hikes will be 1.2 to 2 hours of slow, moderate hiking. Turkey Run hike will have steep stairs both ways. Join NPS Natural Resources Program Manager Brent Steury for a hike. Brent has worked as a scientist in this area for over 20 years.

OCT. 10 – NOV. 1, 2025

Workhouse Haunt Returns. At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. Haunt Nights: Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings. This year's event, Apocalypse: Kingdom of Shadows, promises even darker thrills, more immersive storylines, and terrifyingly interactive experiences designed to challenge even the bravest thrill seekers. Guests travel in small groups for frightening experiences that bring them through the abandoned, historic buildings and into the dark woods where they will encounter terrifying characters and sights unfit for the faint of heart. Visit www.workhousearts.org.

WEDNESDAY/OCT. 15

Journey Within: Self-Discovery Book Club (Virtual). 6:00pm-7:30pm. At Reston Regional Library, Reston. A literary discussion that focuses on a character's personal growth and how it relates to our own. Led by life coach Shabnam Curtis.

At September's meeting we will discuss the novel *Gilead* by Marilynne Robinson.

Website: Journey Within: Self-Discovery Book Club - Fairfax Library Calendar - Library Home

OCT. 16-19

Chantilly High School Presents "Disney's Newsies." Set in turn-of-the-century New York City, *Newsies* tells the story of Jack Kelly, a charismatic newsboy who dreams of a better life beyond the streets. When powerful publishing giants raise distribution prices at the expense of the young newsies, Jack and his friends band together to fight back. With grit, determination, and the power of community, they take on the big guys to demand fairness and justice. Performance Dates:

October 16, 17, and 18 at 7:00 p.m.

October 19 at 2:00 p.m.

Tickets are available online at chantillydrama.org.

SPRINGFIELD TOWN CENTER EVENTS

Springfield Town Center is bringing the community together this October with two events that blend family fun and local culture.

On Thursday, Oct. 16, the ArtsFairfax Art Show opens. As part of the artoberVA celebration, this new exhibition highlights Northern Virginia artists and will include remarks from Fairfax County District Supervisor Rodney Lusk.

On Saturday, October 18, the center will host its Fall Fest—an outdoor, family-friendly celebration featuring dozens of exhibitors, live music, a DJ, and seasonal activities. Families are even encouraged to come in costume, making for great visuals and community coverage.

OCT. 16 TO NOV. 2

1st Stage Presents "Fair Play." At 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. The clocks are set. The line is drawn. Ann and Sophie have a chance to be champions. As their relationships, their bodies and their very identities are pulled into public scrutiny, does being exceptional come at too high a price? A gripping exploration of the underside of women's athletics, *Fair Play* is the new work from Ella Road (The Phlebotomist). Show times as follows: Thursdays at 7:30 pm, Fridays at 7:30 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm and 7:30 pm, and Sundays at 2pm. Visit the website www.1st-stage.org or by calling the 1st Stage box office at 703-854-1856.

THURSDAY/OCT. 16

"Theater of War." 1 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. A behind-the-scenes look at The Public Theater's production of Bertolt Brecht's "Mother Courage" starring Meryl Streep and Kevin



A Fall Festival will be held Saturday, Oct. 25, 2025 at Pender Village Shopping Center in Fairfax.

Kline. Recommended for audiences over 13 years old.

THURSDAY/OCT. 16

The Sandwich Squeeze: Prioritizing Well-Being While Caring for All. 7-8:30 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Being part of the sandwich generation means you're often stretched thin, juggling the needs of your children and your aging parents. This can lead to overwhelming stress, guilt and exhaustion. Join our guided parent discussion, led by licensed mental health professionals, to explore effective strategies for managing these multifaceted responsibilities while safeguarding your own mental and emotional well-being.

FRIDAY/OCT. 17

The MCC Wayback Machine. 7 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. McLean historian and former MCC Board member Carole Herrick will present a history talk highlighting the community efforts that brought about the creation of the center and its early history.

OCT. 17 TO NOV. 2

"Under a Cowboy Moon." At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. Set in the dusty town of Spitwhistle, Texas, "Under a Cowboy Moon" tells the story of locals who host a cowboy poetry contest to revive their struggling community. When a PBS crew arrives to film the event and raises the prize to \$5,000, the competition heats up. Cowboys and dreamers, young and old,

(even a disguised English professor) step into the spotlight in this witty showdown celebrating the American West. The Vienna Theatre Company's performances of "Under a Cowboy Moon" are at 8 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays: Oct. 17-18, Oct. 24-25 and Oct. 31 and Nov. 1. Matinee performances begin at 2 p.m. on Sundays, Oct. 26 and Nov. 2. Tickets are \$16 each and may be purchased online at www.viennava.gov/webtrac or in person at Vienna Community Center.

FRIDAY/OCT. 17

50th Anniversary Celebration: The MCC Wayback Machine. 7 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. McLean historian and former MCC Board member Carole Herrick will present a history talk highlighting the community efforts that brought about the creation of the center and its early history.

SATURDAY/OCT. 18

MCC Community 50th Anniversary Celebration. 5-10 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. After a year-long celebration at the center and all about town, the McLean Community Center wants you to come out for our big 50th anniversary bash! Come dance through the decades with dance instructors and demonstrations on the hour, sip a signature mocktail or cocktail, enjoy fabulous foods, immerse yourself in our old school video games, enjoy our 50th anniversary video and engage in MCC trivia. There is so much fun planned for this once-in-a-lifetime special event!

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.

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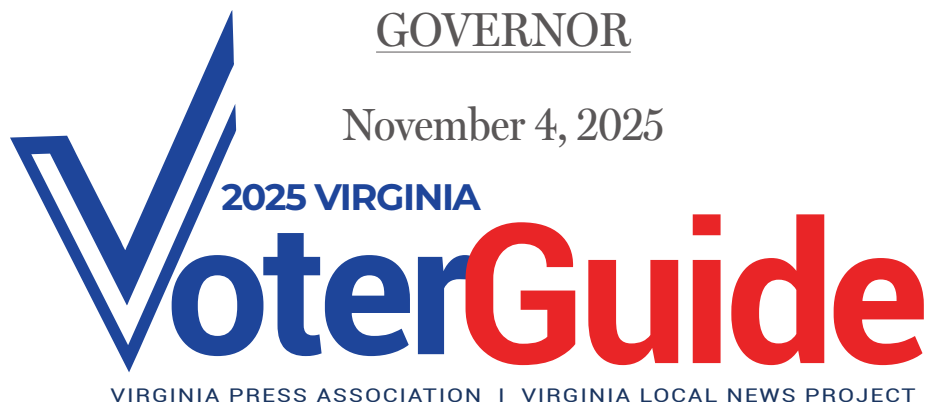


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GOVERNOR

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



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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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

REPUBLICAN

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GOVERNOR



DEMOCRAT

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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>

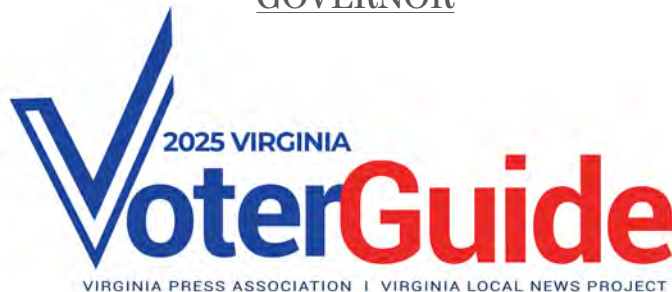
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THE ISSUES

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.



REPUBLICAN

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LT. GOVERNOR



DEMOCRAT

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HASHMI

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THE ISSUES

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.

REPUBLICAN



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LT. GOVERNOR

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THE ISSUES

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.

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 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?

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.

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.

REPUBLICAN

JOHN
REID

johnreidforvirginia.com





DEMOCRAT

GHAZALAH
HASHMI

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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.

REPUBLICAN



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

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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 gener-

al, 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.