

THE CONNECTION

CENTRE VIEW ♦ Chantilly ♦ Great Falls ♦ Herndon ♦ McLean ♦ Oak Hill ♦ Oakton ♦ Reston ♦ Vienna

The Fairfax Drum Circle was a popular spot for all ages to make music during the Global Passport Adventure at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts on Oct. 5

Passport To Drumming, Forest Bathing, More at Wolf Trap

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Increase in Health Care Costs, Impact Here

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PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

OCTOBER 15 - NOVEMBER 4, 2025

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Local Cost of the Deadlock

Healthcare Crisis and the Federal Shutdown.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

In an unusual setting for a national policy discussion, the Elden Street Tea Shop, located in Lake Anne in Reston, U.S. Rep. James Walkinshaw (D) led a roundtable discussion with six community members, among them a student, the tea shop owner, an attorney and parent with a young son, and a non-profit advocate. The purpose of the roundtable held on Oct. 8 was to address the human cost of the looming healthcare crisis along with the ongoing federal government shutdown. The expiration of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) premium tax credits is a critical sticking point in the current budget deadlock, threatening the financial stability and health coverage of thousands.

The looming crisis will impact millions nationwide and significantly raise costs for older Americans. If the enhanced premium tax credits expire, an estimated 3.8 million to 4.8 million people nationwide are projected to become uninsured in the following year (2026), according to various analyses from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the Urban Institute. Republicans have refused to extend the tax credits. Republicans control the House of Representatives, U.S. Senate and the White House. The expiration would affect nearly all of the approximately 20 million people who enroll in ACA Marketplace-subsidized coverage. The largest relative premium increases are projected to hit older people who are just above the 400% of the federal poverty level income cap, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation, a nonprofit focused on national health issues.

The conversation quickly brought the crisis into sharp focus through personal stories from people just trying to make ends meet.

As Lane Waldron, a part-time GMU college student and tea blender, explained: "So, I don't make a ton of money," she said. "I do get my health care through the Affordable Care Act. So if that were removed or changed, it would impact me directly."

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Rachel Rozner makes sure U.S. Rep. James Walkinshaw (D) has his cup of tea before the roundtable discussion begins at the Elden Street Tea Shop, Lake Anne, Reston on Oct. 8.

Rachel Rozner, the tea shop's owner, provided a stark example of the immediate consequences, illustrating the impossible choice already facing her staff:

"One of my employees was just talking about this with me over the phone, where she's considering dropping her insurance because the price is going to go up exponentially, and it's not going to be affordable for her. It's actually cheaper for her to just pay out of pocket when needed. But then again, she doesn't have insurance when she needs it."

Walkinshaw warned that if Congress does not act, 19,000 people in Virginia's 11th District will face significantly higher healthcare costs, averaging a \$1,200 annual increase per family. He stressed the gravity of the situation:

"[They] will see their health care costs go up when those tax credits expire ... Talking about a lot of folks, an extra \$100 to \$200 a month. It's pretty significant... So it is a big, big, big deal."

The policy deadlock has turned the healthcare crisis into Walkinshaw's fight in Washington. The congressman directly linked the

healthcare crisis to the partisan failure on Capitol Hill. The failure to extend the tax credit, along with cuts to Medicaid, make health care a critical sticking point in the ongoing government shutdown.

Walkinshaw said that Republicans are "completely unwilling to discuss the things that Democrats are fighting for." He asserted that Republican colleagues are "so set on taking health care from the people that [they] are willing to shut down the government over [it]."

A lack of affordable coverage is creating widespread financial anxiety and fear of surprise bills among participants. The participants emphasized how a lack of affordable coverage creates intense financial and health anxiety. Triston Chase O'Savio, an attorney and parent with a young son, articulated the common fear of unexpected illness. "It is a little bit anxiety provoking to be in a situation where you get sick, or your kid gets sick, and then you have to go to the hospital, and it might be a smackdown decision that you're going to have to make right then and there."

Walkinshaw noted that the ACA also plays a vital role in supporting



At the round table discussion with U.S. Rep. James Walkinshaw (D), at the Elden Street Tea Shop, Lake Anne Reston, on Oct. 8: from left, Melissa Leatherman, Katie Baker, Lauren Bealore, Triston Chase O'Savio and Lane Waldron.

small businesses, giving entrepreneurs the flexibility to take the leap without fear of losing coverage.

The discussion highlighted the disproportionate impact on women and the role of advocacy groups. Lauren Bealore of Main Street Alliance raised the critical issue of how rising premiums and Medicaid cuts would affect essential health services. "Prenatal care, or, you know, any type of health services that typically are held in a higher percentage rate for women rather than men that are also small business owners."

Katie Baker, the State Director of Protect Our Care — a national advocacy organization whose mission is to strengthen and protect healthcare — was present, underlining the support from groups actively fighting to reverse the legislative threat to health coverage.

Walkinshaw strongly agreed that reversing the Medicaid cuts and extending the ACA credits is "absolutely critical" to women across the district.

Melissa Leatherman also expressed concern for her adult daughter, who is worried about losing her Medicaid eligibility.

Walkinshaw said that people in the 11th district "are increasingly recognizing that the cumulative chaos of the last nine months of the Trump administration is adding up economically," and that he "usually talks about it in terms of real dollars." His political assertion is that "the tariffs are going to cost the average family here in Virginia \$1,200 a year. I describe the average increase in ACA premiums if we don't act to extend the tax



U.S. Rep. James Walkinshaw (D) discusses the impact of the federal shutdown and looming healthcare crisis, exacerbated by the ongoing federal government shutdown.

credits. Coincidentally, \$1,200 additional each year the provisions in the so-called Big, beautiful bill that disinvest renewable energy, clean energy projects will cost the average family in Virginia \$400 a year. So that's 1200 plus 1200 plus 400. That's almost \$3,000 a year directly tied to the policies that have been coming out of Washington."

In conclusion, Walkinshaw closed the roundtable by affirming the urgency of the crisis. Walkinshaw committed to carrying their stories and concerns directly into the legislative fight over the government shutdown and the expiration of the ACA premium tax credits. The closing remarks underscored his determination to use his constituents' personal accounts to push for a bipartisan solution that protects affordable healthcare.

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, ghou 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
Clemjyjontri Park, Oct. 19, 1-6 p.m.

Celebrate Halloween in a calm, inclusive, sensory-friendly way at Clemjyjontri 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

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
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



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.

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 arttoberVA 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 relation-



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

ships, 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 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

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 23

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PFC Kyoung Pak Is Sully's Officer of the Quarter

Honored for his dedication to community safety.

PFC Kyoung Pak is the Sully District Police Station's Officer of the Quarter for July through September. He was honored at the Oct. 8 meeting of the station's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC).

Sgt. Stewart Struthers, supervisor of the station's Midnights A Squad, wrote the letter nominating Pak for this award. In it, he explained why Pak was worthy of receiving this honor.

"On Sept. 5, officers from the Sully District Station responded to a report of a domestic assault involving a young child," wrote Struthers. "The complainant advised that the offender had struck the child multiple times with a belt, resulting in visible injuries, including a bloody nose. Prior to officers' arrival, the offender and

the child had left the scene.

"PFC Pak assumed the role of lead investigator and, upon the offender's return, quickly and effectively placed the suspect under arrest. Through a thorough and professional interview, Pak obtained a full confession. He subsequently secured warrants for domestic assault and felony child abuse, and the suspect was held without bond. Pak's diligence and determination in this investigation not only held the offender accountable but also ensured the safety and protection of the child victim."

In addition to this case, wrote Struthers, "Pak has demonstrated consistent excellence throughout the quarter. His enforcement efforts include five DUI arrests, seven felony arrests, and 29 misdemeanor arrests. He approaches each assignment with professionalism and a positive attitude, earning the respect of his peers and supervisors alike.

"PFC Kyoung Pak's commitment to duty, investigative skill and unwavering dedication to community safety exemplify the highest stan-



PHOTO COURTESY OF MPO SCOTT RICHARDS

From left are Capt. Aaron Spooner, assistant station commander; CAC Chair Karen Bilak and PFC Kyoung Pak.

dards of the Fairfax County Police Department. For these reasons, he

is most deserving of recognition as the Sully District Station's Officer of the Quarter."

-BONNIE HOBBS



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GFVFD Awarded Best Open House in 1st Battalion

Each of Fairfax County's 39 fire stations held an Open House on Oct. 11 to showcase their apparatus, introduce their personnel to local families, and highlight important fire safety and health measures. The Great Falls Volunteer Fire Department was awarded Best Open House in the 1st Battalion for the second year in a row.

This year's national fire prevention week theme was "Charge into Fire Safety: Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home." During the award presentation, Battalion Chief Ben Jenkins highlighted the station's activities for adults and children, and discussed potential dangers of lithium-ion batteries.

Sparky the Fire Dog posed for countless photos while passing out treats from an old-fashioned fire bucket. Kids had fun navigating an obstacle course designed to simulate elements of a real firefighter agility test. The course featured activities such as pulling a fire hose, dragging a teddy bear "rescue dummy," and using a wooden force machine — known to firefighters as "The Keiser." A fun stop, drop, and roll mat activity demonstrated to kids how to "extinguish" their body flames, and they were also able to hold and spray a real fire hose to "knock out" the fire in a display house. Quiet activities included an area with board books, fire and rescue toys, coloring and



stickers.

There were free blood pressure screenings; volunteer EMTs provided instruction on hands-only CPR, which is the new American Heart Association "CPR for bystanders." Adults and children enjoyed touring the ambulance and fire truck.

Volunteer EMTs and Open House co-chairs Leslie Smith and Sophia

Wood said the goals of the event were to welcome neighbors into their hometown fire station and provide important safety and emergency medical information in a non-intimidating way. They hope residents will feel free to reach out to the department if they have questions or want more information on ways to keep their families safe.





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Parade, Children's Activities, Pet Pageant and Awards

33rd annual Centreville Day is Saturday, Oct. 18.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Cet ready for fun at the 33rd annual Centreville Day, this Saturday, Oct. 18, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., in Historic Centreville Park. The free event is at 5714 Mount Gilead Road (off Braddock Road, across Route 29 from the IHOP) and offers a day of outdoor activities for the entire family.

"I'm thrilled to see so many new activities and people involved in this year's celebration," said event coordinator, Carol Robinson. "And there's so much to do. We have a fresh History Trail Hunt, new activities at Mount Gilead, Corvette classic cars, plus construction equipment for children to explore in the Safety Expo."

The festivities also include a parade, ghost tour, trick-or-treat trail, crafters and other vendors, live entertainment, tasty food, safety expo, pet pageant and children's activities galore. Throughout the day, Master of Ceremonies Sandy Kwon will host a variety of performances onstage, including singers, dancers and martial artists.

During the 10 a.m. opening ceremony, Supervisor Kathy Smith (D-Sully) will present Centreville Day's Citizens of the Year Awards. This year's recipients are John Boylan, Paul Woods, Megan Hawkins, the Crabtree Family Foundation and, posthumously, former U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11th).

The parade, organized by American Legion Post 1995, will begin at 11 a.m. Participating will be various Scout groups and dancers, McGruff the Crime Dog and fire, police and sheriff's personnel. It'll kick off with a cheer from the SYA cheerleaders and will be led by Madison Whitbeck, Miss Virginia 2025.

Participants will travel from Wharton Lane, passing the stage shortly before noon and continue along Mt. Gilead Road to Braddock Road. Individuals and families are welcome to decorate a bike or scooter and join the fun – and Halloween costumes are encouraged.

The parade will finish with the Walk to End Hunger, organized by Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (WFCM). Participants will wear special orange T-shirts, and their goal is to raise funds to com-

bat food insecurity in the local area.

Robinson is also active in the Rotary Club of Centreville & Chantilly, which organizes Pets in the Park for Centreville Day. So she's especially happy that the event will have a new Pet Village, thanks to the efforts of planning committee member Julia Grosz.

It'll be near the children's rides, and sponsoring it is Veterinary Emergency Group, a new veterinary clinic in Centreville. The Pet Village will offer discounted nail trimmings for pets, pet-friendly swag and tasty treats. Visit the village to meet adoptable dogs, discover fostering opportunities and learn more about therapy pets. The village also has its own resident artist; painting the scene will be Rebekah Keener of BekArt.

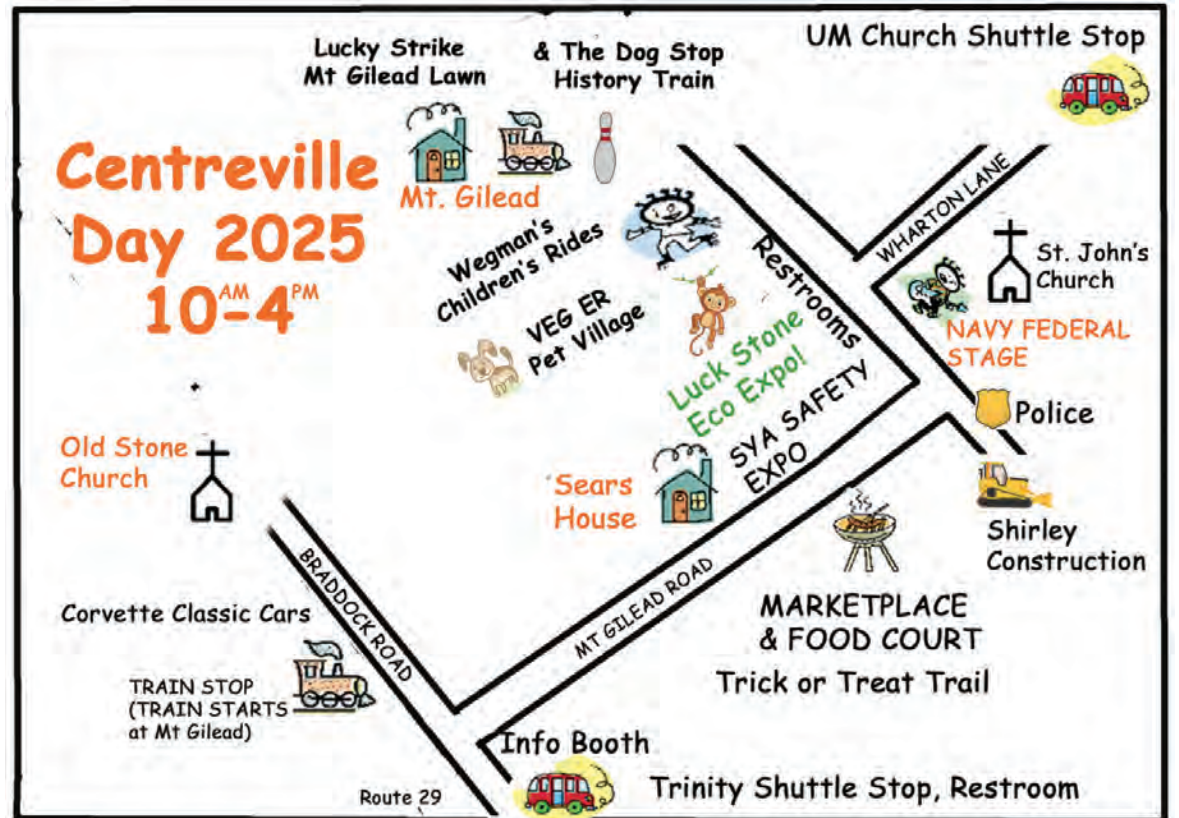
Other Pets in the Park activities that day will include the 12:30 p.m. blessing of the pets by the Rev. Kevin Laskowski of St. John's Episcopal Church. Then at 12:45 p.m., pets will participate onstage in the Rotary Club pet pageant. Attendees are welcome to share their pets' tricks or Halloween costumes and win prizes ranging from healthy treats to an aquarium from Centreville Aquarium.

Children will have a whole slew of fun things to do in the children's area. They may play games, walk across a monkey bridge, go down slides, climb up a wall and follow the Trick-or-Treat Trail for goodies in the marketplace.

And in the Eco Expo, they can paint rocks, courtesy of Luck Stone – which is bringing 10 buckets of rocks from its nearby quarry. They'll also learn a creative way to reuse glass bottles by transforming them into lights. And they'll enjoy the Wonder Wagon, Fairfax County Park Authority's mobile nature center, as well as Tagg Timm and TT's Bees.

In addition, the Safety Expo will include K9-officer Bubbles, the police seat belt convincer, Centreville Fire Station 17's canteen truck and child-identification kits offered by the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office. New this year will be Shirley Contracting Co.'s equipment display, including a skid steer vehicle used for many different tasks. Shirley will also have information about job opportunities.

Encircling the vendor marketplace will be the food court featuring Taste of Asia, A Southern Fish Fry, Two Smooth Dudes, Pop's Praiseworthy Popcorn, Fowler's Rotisserie Chicken, One More Bite, Moe's Fried Chicken and Kona Ice. For a complete list of vendors, see the Centreville Day program at



COURTESY OF CHERYL REPETTI

Map of the 2025 Centreville Day activities.

www.CentrevilleDay.org.

The colorful History Train starts at Mount Gilead and stops at Braddock Road, where attendees may see cool, classic Corvettes from the Northern Virginia Corvette Club. And to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, there'll be a History Trail Hunt through the Centreville Historic District.

Pick up a trail brochure at the Centreville Chiropractic Center booth, DAR booth or the Centre-

SEE 33RD ANNUAL, PAGE 20

Entertainment Schedule

9:45-10 a.m.	Harmony Road Music & Art
10:10-40 a.m.	Harmony Road Music & Art and the Mount Olive Baptist Church Choir
10:40 a.m.-noon and 11:30-12:30 p.m.	Mixed Greens
12:45-1:15 p.m.	Pet Pageant
1:20-1:40 p.m.	Harang Sori Korean Folk Dance Group
1:45-2:15 p.m.	Cardinal Cloggers
2:15-2:30 p.m.	Korean Central Presbyterian Church martial arts demonstration (on the Mt. Gilead Road curve)
2:30-4 p.m.	RearVue band.



Ken and Jolie Nimmannit, son Tyler and daughter Jayden wearing their Halloween costumes at last year's Centreville Day.



Police Det. Melanie Todd, of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit, displays an explosive-detecting robot at last year's event.



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OBITUARY

Community Mourns Former Fire Chief Bill Schmidt

Honored for his accomplishments and 'life well-lived.'

BY LAUREN KIRBY
SPECIAL TO THE CONNECTION

Friends and family gathered Oct. 4 at Centreville's Fire Station 17 for a memorial service in honor of Centreville Volunteer Fire Department long-time member and former chief, Bill Schmidt. He died Sept. 24, at age 86, following a stroke.

He and his wife Joan were married 64 years and lived in Centreville for more than half a century. Besides his wife, he's survived by their children, Victoria Marie Schmidt Loucks and Jonathan Scott Schmidt (wife Barbara), numerous grandchildren and other relatives.

Bill earned both a Bachelor of Science and a master's degree in physics from The George Washington University. And until retiring, he was a physicist at the United States Naval Research Laboratory. His work there resulted in the invention of the silicon chip used in television and video cameras and allowing smartphones to include cameras that



PHOTO COURTESY OF LAUREN KIRBY

Bill Schmidt

take instant, re-transmittable photographs and videos.

Locally, he was the founding Cubmaster for Cub Scout Pack 1862 and coached several SYA girls' soccer and boys' T-Ball teams. He was active in state and local Republican politics and in organizations including the National Association of Retired Federal

SEE BILL SCHMIDT, PAGE 11



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www.bankofclarke.bank **Member FDIC**

Community Mourns Former Fire Chief Bill Schmidt

FROM PAGE 10

Employees, Electrochemical Society, Centreville Area Study Group, London Towne Homeowners Assn., and Centreville Civic Assn.

A keystone in Bill's life began in 1971 when he joined the CVFD. A Station 17 member for 54 years, he served as a firefighter, EMT, rescue captain, chief, president, chairman of the board of directors, treasurer and even bingo caller.

He was instrumental in planning and completing the station's renovated firehouse on Old Centreville Road and monopole/cell tower on the property that improved cell service in the area and provided income for the fire department.

Bill also served many years as president of the Volunteer Fire and Rescue Assn. and chairman of the Fairfax County Volunteer Fire Commission. He more than earned the title of life member.

He was engaged and dedicated, sharing his deep knowledge and wisdom that will be greatly missed. In his eulogy, former CVFD Fire Chief Pete Kirby said he and Bill "made a great team because I was smart enough to listen and learn from him. Bill helped me see myself in roles I had never thought

about."

Kirby said Bill's perspective was that "we could accomplish anything we wanted if we understood the people, added value in the community and made things better. He was smart, had perspective, and knew the politics and optics for everything we were doing and could do. Clearly, if there was a need or problem, Bill rolled up his sleeves and got to work. The family, CVFD, the surrounding community have lost a great man; but just look around and you'll see Bill's handiwork."

Patti Blankenship, former CVFD president and current director, described Bill as "steady, devoted, forward-thinking and honorable. He was a man of integrity and a true public servant who had a life well-lived."

His overall accomplishments showcased the breadth of Bill's professional intellect, public service, community focus and generosity. And in 1998, he was honored by former Supervisor Michael R. Frey (R-Sully), who named him Sully District's Lord Fairfax.

In Bill's spare time, he was a skilled craftsman and woodworker, enjoying wood turning, furniture

restoration and bottom-up restoration of a vintage Model A Ford. While he was unable to complete the restoration in his lifetime, local students are now continuing his work on it.

To close his memorial service, CVFD Past President Lauren Kirby (Pete Kirby's wife), simulated an honored fire department tradition with the poignant and

solemn ringing of a brass bell in a 5-5-5 sequence. The tradition dates back to the 1800s when a firefighter died in the line of duty. The Fire Alarm Office (forerunner of today's automated Emergency Communications Centers) tapped out a special 5-5-5 signal over the telegraph fire-alarm circuits. This alerted all station houses that they would be returning to quarters one

man short.

Describing Bill as "one of the nation's finest," she said he was a "cherished husband, father and Centreville resident."

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in his name to the American Heart Association or the Centreville Volunteer Fire Department, 5856 Old Centreville Road, Centreville, VA 20121.

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF LAUREN KIRBY

Bill Schmidt's wife Joan is flanked by their daughter Vickie and son Jon.



Schmidt's family behind the bell rung for the 5-5-5 alarm tribute and his past fire chief's cap.



Eight year old Teddy Apfelbaum, of Falls Church takes a spin to learn about how wildlife uses native plants at the Plant NOVA Natives table staffed by Dr. Maryam Dadkhah during the Global Passport Adventure at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts on Oct. 5



Author and entertainer Mary Ann Redmond of Great Falls with her recently published children's book during the Global Passport Adventure at Wolf Trap on Oct. 5



Author Mary Ann Redmond of Great Falls reads her book, "Boopable," during the Global Passport Adventure at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts on Oct. 5

Children Connect to Nature at Wolf Trap Event

Friends of Wolf Trap event stays alive during national park closure.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

In an event that nearly didn't happen, the Friends of Wolf Trap, a volunteer organization, recently invited area children on a two-hour trip around the world for a "Global Passport Adventure." The hands-on exploration at Wolf Trap included world crafts, cultural activities, nature walks, music, stories, art and a chance to explore, create and celebrate world cultures and nature.

The only national park for the performing arts, Wolf Trap, faces the same government closure limitations on staffing and services as national parks nationwide. After the shutdown, organizers scrambled to cover assistance that would



Isata and Alpha Sankoh, originally from Sierra Leone where they learned to play drums, stopped to play while attending the event with their child



Six-year-old Ella Lawrence of Falls Church examines the butterfly tattoo she selected



Master Gardner Teddy Robertson explains the growth of plants from seed using a lima bean



Forest Bathing guide Joseph Sage Raindancer



A rapt audience hears Raindancer explain how to connect to nature by personalizing sticks with twine and feathers



The Fairfax Drum Circle was a popular spot for all ages to make music

Children Connect to Nature

FROM PAGE 12

have fallen to park rangers. Says event organizer Sara Holtz, “Many coming here are themselves likely federal employees now experiencing the stresses of government closure. So it’s more important than ever to enjoy their parks and natural resources, being outside with friends, family and loved ones.”

Award winning children’s author Mary Ann Redmond, also a singer-songwriter, performer and photographer, read her book “Boopable.” The story asks readers how they would feel if they “booped” different animals on the nose. Redmond signed the book at the event, also available at book outlets.

Joseph Sage Raindancer, a certified guide, introduced attendees to the self-help practice, Forest Bathing, also known as Shinrin-yoku. The practice promotes slow-paced and gentle walking in the forest to prime one’s senses to observe, absorb, and reconnect with nature. Young enthusiasts were encouraged to find and decorate sticks as a means of connection to the woods.

Also on-hand with interesting tables of nature-related things to do and see were Plant NOVA Na-



Glenys Mulholland (left) of the Virginia Bluebird Society discusses snake forages into nests; Cora Address, 8 yrs old of Vienna, with her Passport in hand, learns more about Bluebirds

tives, the Virginia Bluebird Society and the Vienna Arts Society, among others. Craft activities at tables included making Japanese fish prints and Native American totem pole creations, and learning about seeds, butterfly migration, Bluebird nesting and other nature phenomena. The Fairfax Drum Circle’s display and opportunity to use drums was another popular stop. The passport allowed children to collect country flag stamps tracing

their world culture exploration.

The Wolf Trap event celebrates International Children’s Day, celebrated annually around the world on different dates. Wolf Trap’s donor, Catherine Filene Shouse, hoped that children would come to parks for nature and all forms of art. Event organizers Sara Holtz, Ronald Mason and Kathy Stewart said the event offered natural arts, in what the Friends hope will become an annual event.

PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

The RESIDENCE
at COLVIN RUN

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“

From the Caregiver, Marylu Jamie, MedTech/CNA

I’ve been working at The Residence at Colvin Run for the past two years. I love to see a smile when I give care to each of my residents. I love what I do and I wouldn’t trade it for anything.

“

From Sigrid Vollmeck, Daughter of a Resident

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VDOT
Virginia Department of Transportation

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	File #/Project #	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.



Congressman James Walkinshaw greets VA Senator Jennifer Boysko.



School Board members at-large Kyle McDaniel (far left) and Ryan McElveen.



Congressman James Walkinshaw, VA Senator Jennifer Boysko, and FxCo Board Supervisor Jimmy Bierman.

The Swarm Returns: Herndon Homecoming Parade 2025

Community unity and pride fuel sense of place and history.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

An annual fall event is happening across communities in Fairfax County. High schools in the pub-

lic school system are bringing their Homecoming parades—elaborate shows of spirit—to routes outside people's homes or along major town streets within school boundaries.

Students decorate floats, wear spirited attire, and the marching

band, cheerleaders, and dance teams perform to build excitement for the football game, which is generally held that day. Elected officials often join the procession, some walking the route and distributing

watching from the curb.

This year's Herndon High parade in the Town of Herndon set a record for enthusiasm. Stretching for more than an hour, the procession included Herndon High's bands and clubs, as well as local swim teams,

Cub Scouts, businesses, elementary school groups and various civic organizations. This annual parade serves as the community's most visible and enduring celebration of school spirit and shared local identity.



Flag bearers.



Mayor Keven LeBlanc and the Herndon High School Mascot, the Hornet.



Expectation of getting candy adds fun and excitement for the children.

News

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



The parade begins.



Marching band performs.



Class float.



The duck rains water.



Candy time.



Local police patrol the route.



Marching banner.



Cheerleaders.



Marching band performs.

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-6: Richard C. (Rip) Sullivan, Jr. (D); Kristin. L. Hoffman (R)
- ❖ HD-7: Karen Keys-Gamarra (D); Cassandra R. Aucoin (R)
- ❖ HD-8: Irene Shin (D); Indira S. Massey (R)
- ❖ HD-9: Karrie Delaney (D); Nhan C. Huynh (R)
- ❖ 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-12: Holly Seibold (D); Figueroa-Velez (R)
- ❖ HD-13: Marcus B. Simon (D), Sylwia Oleksy (R), Dave A. Crance Jr. (Libertarian)

Additionally, at the state level, Northern Fairfax County voters will also be voting for the executive branch of the Virginia government: governor, lieutenant governor and attorney general. The Virginia Press Awards, a nonpartisan group, has produced its 2025 Virginia Voter Guide. It 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>

Richard C. “Rip” Sullivan Jr. (D), incumbent and candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 6

HD-6 Richard C. “Rip” Sullivan, Jr. (D)

Profession/Experience:

Lawyer at Bean, Kinney, and Korman, P.C. Dedicates career to serving the communities of McLean, Great Falls, Vienna, and the broader Fairfax area. Experience includes service on the Consumer Protection Commission, Transportation Advisory Commission, Park Authority, Redevelopment and Housing Authority, and the Dranesville Budget Task Force.

Education:

BA, Amherst College; JD, University of Virginia

Personal/Activities:

Delegate, HD-6. Has spent career serving McLean, Great Falls, Vienna, and the broader Fairfax community. Public service includes roles on the Consumer Protection Commission, Transportation Advisory Commission, Park Authority, Redevelopment and Housing Authority, Dranesville Budget Task Force, and leadership roles in affordable housing and legal services.

Legislative Priorities/Challenges/Solutions:

Legislative Priorities: Lowering costs for housing, health care, and energy. Priorities include ensuring an affordable, clean and reliable electric grid by increasing state targets for energy storage and accelerating renewable energy installation. Focuses on expanding the use and understanding of Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO/Red Flag law). Aims to pass three proposed constitutional amendments: enshrining a woman's right to make her own health care decisions, ensuring the voting rights of those coming out of the criminal justice system, and securing the right of Virginians to marry who they want.



Richard C. “Rip” Sullivan Jr. (D)

Residents’ Biggest Challenge:

Affordability. In Northern Virginia, costs for everyday life (housing, groceries, health care, energy) are rising. Leaders in Richmond must address these issues to make meaningful impacts on people's lives. Proposed Legislative Solution: Must secure affordable, clean, and renewable energy generation on the grid quickly, given increased energy demand. Solutions include improving the permitting process for energy generation and spurring the development of energy storage to maximize grid reliability and reduce ratepayer costs.

Data Centers:

Must ensure that data centers operate as energy efficiently as possible while minimizing pollution and harm to communities and the environment. Has carried legislation focused on these issues in previous General Assembly years.

State’s Underfunding of Public Schools:

Recent JLARC studies show Virginia is underfunding education statewide, not just in Fairfax. Will continue to advocate for the region to ensure Fairfax schools receive their fair share of education tax dollars. Notes that the number of free/reduced lunch students in Fairfax alone would be the commonwealth's fourth-largest school district.

Casinos:

Opposed to the proposed casino in Tysons Corner and will remain so.

What I Want District Members to Know:

“Many of my successful pieces of legislation over the course of my career have had broad, bipartisan support.”
<https://www.ripsullivan.com/>

Kristin Lee Hoffman (R), candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 6

Kristin Lee Hoffman (R),

Profession/Experience:

Retired Program Manager / Product Manager in technology and finance.

Education:

BA Economics, University of Pennsylvania; MBA in Marketing & Entrepreneurial Management, the Wharton School of Business.

Hometown:

Vienna, VA

Personal/Activities:

President of a local women's club; member of several art and professional organizations.

Public Service:

Serves on the board of an organization providing equine therapy to veterans; job counselor at a nonprofit.

Legislative Priorities:

Lower taxes (eliminate the car tax), improve schools (expand magnet and charter schools), and enhance public safety (ensure police have tools to keep violent offenders off the streets).

Challenges:

The prevalence of violent crime. Fairfax County is short nearly 150 police officers, and the Commonwealth Attorney only prosecutes 1 out of 5 criminal cases.

Solutions:

Repeal the early release law. Propose legislation requiring Commonwealth Attorneys to submit an annual report on dropped charges, plea bargains, and diversion programs, and authorize the Attorney General's office to intervene when prosecution rates fall below a



Kristin Lee Hoffman (R)

certain threshold. Collaboration: N/A.

Data Centers:

Data centers are our future and many problems can be addressed with better zoning and more construction aesthetic design. Need more energy-efficient infrastructure, including geothermal. Should require data center operators to contribute to new energy facilities.

Public Schools Education Funding:

Schools are failing, but not due to a lack of funding. Administration positions have increased ten-fold over the past 15 years. Need less administration, more teaching of core subjects, and an independent audit of the \$4 billion budget.

Casinos:

I am NOT in favor of a casino in Tyson's now or ever, and pledge to never take money from gambling or casino interests. It is not a viable path to economic development, as generated revenue will be drowned out by the cost to prosecute the crimes it would bring.

What I Want District Members to Know

I am a commonsense Republican who believes in fiscal responsibility and financial accountability. I believe strongly in education as the ultimate equalizer and the greatest gift we can give. I promise to be respectful, research both sides of an issue, and make decisions based on facts and best outcomes, not partisan politics.

Candidate Website

<https://www.kristin4delegate.org/>

HOUSE OF DELEGATES ELECTION GUIDE

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

Karen Keys-Gamarra (D), incumbent and candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 7

Karen Keys-Gamarra HD-7, Fairfax County North

Profession/Experience

Private civil practice, Family Law as a Guardian ad Litem (representing children's best interests).

Education

Tulane University, Washington University School of Law (St. Louis, Missouri).

Personal/Activities

Born in St. Louis, Missouri. Married to Antoine, raised three sons in Fairfax County.

Public Service

Current Delegate (District 7), former At-Large School Board Member (Fairfax County Public Schools), former Planning Commissioner, volunteered as a CASA advocate.

Legislative Priorities

Top priority listening to the concerns of constituents. Focused on improving access to healthcare (including Reproductive Health); collaborating with other state representatives to address our region's concerns fully improving access to legal redress, building economic opportunities (including workforce training and small businesses); developing measures for affordable housing; and achieving gun safety reform. Welcomes constituent input for legislative agenda.

Challenges

Addressing funding shortages and creating economic opportunities due to the federal administration's erratic actions and potential loss of federal jobs and business capital. Concerned about the government shutdown's ripple effect and funding loss for community safety-net organizations.

Solutions

Addressing funding shortages and creating economic opportunities due to the federal administration's erratic actions and potential loss of federal jobs and business capital. Concerned about the government shutdown's ripple effect and funding loss for community safety-net organizations.

Solutions

Preparing legislation to create economic



Karen
Keys-Gamarra (D)

opportunity and support community organizations for mental health issues, increase affordable housing and public education, and aid workforce re-entry. Working to align proposals with General Assembly goals to secure state funding.

Data Centers

Working with environmental groups to balance economic benefits and environmental concerns (e.g., electricity usage/cost apportionment, waterway pollution, clean water table access). Supports legislation that evaluates electricity use and apportionment of costs. Collaborating with community members to address our region's concerns full.

Public Schools Education Funding

Opposes the federal administration's demands to align school systems with its approach, which she calls a wrongful attack on the LGBTQIA community and an attempt to extort funding from educational institutions. Supports educational entities in protecting the free exchange of thought. Has proposed budget changes to adequately fund education based on JLARC studies that show significant underfunding.

Casinos

Opposes the Casino as a viable path for economic development. Believes land use decisions are for local authorities and the General Assembly should not pressure the Board of Supervisors or communities. Notes that no objective economic cost and benefit analysis has been completed, nor has the county requested this nor has such been presented to the General Assembly regarding a Casino in Fairfax.

What I Want District Members to Know

"Thus far, I am focusing on improving access to healthcare, including Reproductive Health; Improving access to legal redress, building economic opportunities, including access to workforce training, and creating more small businesses; developing measures to provide affordable housing; and achieving gun safety reform."

Candidate Website

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

Irene Shin (D), candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 8

Irene Shin (D)

Profession/Experience:

Nonprofit executive

Education:

Not provided

Personal/Activities:

Hometown: Burbank, CA. Grew up without health insurance before the ACA; father flew to Korea for life-saving surgery due to costs.

Public Service:

Proudly served the community in the Virginia House of Delegates for the last four years.



Irene Shin (D)

Legislative Priorities/Challenges/Solutions:

Legislative Priorities: The Top priority is access to quality, affordable health care. Has fought to expand insurance coverage and for better support for family caregivers; invested in reducing prescription drug costs.

Believes Virginia needs to better fund public schools, which lag behind neighboring states

SEE IRENE SHIN, PAGE 18

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Cassandra R. Aucoin (R) Cassandra Aucoin, House of Delegates Candidate - District 7

Cassandra Aucoin (R)

Profession/ Experience:

Retired federal manager with nearly 40 years of service in the Departments of the Army, Navy, NGA and NRO. Managed multi-billion-dollar budgets, oversaw human resources programs and led major analyses and teams that drove efficiency, savings and organizational and process reforms.

Education:

Bachelor of Science, Business Management, Virginia Tech.

Legislative Priorities/ Challenges/ Solutions:

Affordability and Economy, Public Safety and Health, Stronger Education and Better Commutes. Work to cut the car tax, end the tax on tips and support federal employees and small businesses and protect Virginia's Right-to-Work law. Back law enforcement, fight fentanyl and human trafficking, stop repeat offenders and strengthen mental health and Lyme disease support. Improve education by supporting parents, funding schools and promoting accountability, and expanding learning options. Focus on better commutes by improving roads and lowering tolls.

Biggest concern for residents is affordability, high taxes, tolls, energy costs and housing prices that make it hard for families to stay in Fairfax. Combined with federal workforce downsizing and job uncertainty, these pressures threaten the local economy. Need to lower costs and strengthen stability.

Introduce a Virginia Tax Relief and Economic Opportunity Act to make life more affordable and strengthen our economy. Pan would cut the car tax, end the tax on tips, reform tolls, reform costly energy mandates and promote affordable housing, job growth and workforce training. Reforms funded by re-prioritizing spending and improving efficiency. Protect Virginia's Right-to-Work law to attract investment and preserve worker freedom.

Data Centers:

Data centers have become an important part of Northern Virginia's economy, creating jobs and generating tax revenue. While planning and zoning occur locally, the state should encourage and work with local governments



Cassandra
Aucoin (R)

to guide development toward areas that minimize impacts on nearby neighborhoods and infrastructure investments. Support transparency in understanding plans for energy use, water management and noise impacts before decisions

are made at the local level. Do not support our residents subsidizing higher energy costs from expansion; those should be paid by developers and operators.

State's Underfunding of Public Schools:

We must get Virginia's education funding formula right, so it reflects Fairfax County's needs. Fairfax already bridges much of the state's funding gap, with over half of its budget supporting FCPS. Despite a \$4 billion budget, per-student costs have risen while test scores have not recovered since COVID. Need to examine how funds are used, particularly the balance between overhead and classroom instruction. Administrative costs remain high with many sub-organizations. Support an independent third-party review of FCPS programs and administration to identify what works and where efficiencies can be found. Support a predictable teacher pay plan. Tax dollars should focus on children's learning, not institutional overhead.

Casinos: The social and economic costs are too great. Communities near casinos often experience higher rates of gambling addiction, debt and family instability, along with increased crime and strain on public safety and social services. Local restaurants and small businesses cannot compete with casino-subsidized offerings like a \$10 steak, leading to fewer neighborhood jobs and more economic displacement. Support sustainable, community-driven growth that creates opportunities without sacrificing our quality of life.

What I Want District Members to Know:

"As the District 7 delegate, I will always focus on what matters most to our community and work to bring balance, accountability and practical solutions to make our community more affordable, safer and stronger." Readers can learn more at <https://www.vote4cassandra.com>

Indira Massey, candidate for House of Delegates district 8

Indira Massey (R) did not reply.

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



Indira Massey
(R)

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Irene Shin (D)

like West Virginia in per-student spending. Calls for addressing student-teacher ratios, improving school infrastructure, and the eventual funding of universal pre-K. Residents' Biggest Challenge: Deep concern about the country's direction, citing federal administration actions such as DOGE layoffs, dismantling the Department of Education, destruction of the EPA, ICE raids, attacks on abortion rights, and erosion of civil liberties. Committed to fighting back against this "federal administration and its dangerous proclivity for authoritarianism." Proposed Legislative Solution: Must amend the Virginia Constitution to guarantee access to the full spectrum of reproductive freedom (including fertility treatments, contraception, and abortion rights). Also needs to affirm marriage equality in the commonwealth. Co-patron on both the reproductive freedom and marriage equality constitutional amendments.

Data Centers:

Given that data center growth drives the overwhelming majority of Virginia's new energy demand, ensuring these facilities and other large load users bear their fair share of infrastructure costs through extended service commitments is reasonable. Passed legislation to study whether new customer classifications are warranted to better shield residential customers from subsidizing large load users.

State's Underfunding of Public Schools:

K-12 public education is the top funding priority. Will continue to push colleagues to allocate additional funding and is committed to only supporting budget efforts that expand public education funding (opposed to any cuts). Supports a comprehensive look at the funding formula to find a more equitable formula to better support Fairfax County students and families.

Casinos:

Opposed to the development of a casino in the community since Day 1. Believes communities should be involved and that the message from neighbors is "loud and clear." Stands with the Reston Association Board of Directors, Reston Citizens Association, and 2,900+ individuals united against a casino in Reston/Tysons.

What I Want District Members to Know:

"I understand the struggles of working families, the importance of public education, and the urgency of affordable health care because I've lived through these issues. I am a strong advocate for racial justice, and I firmly believe in listening to and uplifting all voices, especially those from historically marginalized communities. My dedication to increasing voter access, affordable housing, workers' rights, and equitable opportunities reflects my commitment to building a more just and inclusive Virginia."

<https://ireneforva.com/>

Karrie K. Delaney (D), candidate and incumbent for Virginia House of Delegates District 9

Karrie K. Delaney (D)

Profession/Experience:

Represents the 9th House District (Chantilly and parts of Centreville) in her fourth term. Previously worked in roles supporting foster care youth, as a sexual assault crisis counselor, and at a nonprofit focused on stopping human trafficking. Currently works as an advocate for national sexual violence issues.

Education: (NOT PROVIDED)

Personal/Activities:

Appointed, then elected chair of the Fairfax County Library Board of Trustees.

Public Service:

Chair of the Transportation Committee. Sits on the Courts of Justice and General Laws committees.

Legislative Priorities/Challenges/Solutions:

Legislative Priorities: Top priorities include building out Virginia's transit and multimodal infrastructure, education, support systems for survivors of domestic/sexual assault and human trafficking, and health care affordability.

Residents' Biggest Challenge: Affording the high costs of health care. Residents face the "impossible decision" of paying rent/mortgage versus paying for necessary medications.

Proposed Legislative Solution: Since 2023, has proposed the Prescription Drug Affordability Board, empowered to hold pharmaceutical companies accountable for cost increases and, if appropriate, impose an upper price limit (price cap) on specific medications. The legislation has a one-time cost of approximately \$650,000, which is already included in the proposed budgets via existing state funds.

Data Centers:

Local and county officials must manage land use decisions. However, because data center impacts (especially on the shared energy infra-



Karrie K. Delaney (D)

structure) go beyond local boundaries, the General Assembly must act. The General Assembly has a responsibility to set clear guidelines and protect the long-term viability of the energy grid. The cost of increased energy use should not be borne by ratepayers, but by the companies that profit from the facilities.

State's Underfunding of Public Schools:

A JLARC report highlighted severe underfunding. In response, HB 761, incorporated into a larger General Assembly effort, which introduced hundreds of millions of dollars by centering funding formulas on students rather than staff positions.

Casinos:

Opposed to the Tysons casino proposal due to the process. Proponents cited jobs, homes, and tax revenue to alleviate property taxes. Believes state legislators should not make county land-use decisions. The proposal did not follow typical processes, including planning/zoning reviews, community engagement, and support for local elected officials. Will re-evaluate and vote based on merits if the project returns, having undergone the proper local process.

What I Want District Members to Know:

"In times of division, I believe we are called to rise to the higher ground of common good. As I have done since I was first elected, I remain steadfast in the belief that meaningful solutions must rise above partisan politics and that our shared future depends not on scoring political points, but on the courage to listen, to engage, and to govern with purpose. We must reclaim the lost art of civil discourse — where we stand firm in our values, yet remain willing to work together in pursuit of progress that serves everyone."

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

Nhan C. Huynh (R) Did not reply.

<https://huynhforvirginia.com/>



Nhan C. Huynh (R)

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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 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

SEE DAVID L. BULOVA, PAGE 20

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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

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."

HOUSE OF DELEGATES ELECTION GUIDE

THIS GUIDE DESIGNED, COMPILED,
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David L. Bulova (D)

addition). Argues local buy-in is essential, and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has not requested a casino. Bypassing local support sets a concerning precedent.

What I Want District Members to Know:
“The most important job is to actively listen and make it easy for constituents to share ideas through the annual town hall, electronic newsletter, and time spent with constituents.”

<https://www.davidbulova.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.”



Cub Scout Pack 2011 in last year's parade.



COURTESY OF
ROGERS POLK
Madison Whitbeck

COURTESY OF
CHERYL REPETTI
Carol Robinson

33rd Annual Centreville Day is Saturday, Oct. 18

FROM PAGE 8

ville History Booth in front of the Spindle Sears House. People may visit the seven sites on the trail and answer the questions about each one. Then they'll bring their answers to any of the three booths and receive a prize. History Trail maps may also be downloaded at www.CentrevilleDay.org. Historian John Carter will have books and

historical information at the History Booth, and also on the Sears House lawn will be the Fairfax 250th Commission.

After being closed for repairs last year, the historic Mount Gilead home will again be part of Centreville Day. It was built in 1785, and the resident curators, Kristyn and Spencer Marrott, will have the first floor open for tours. And on

the front lawn, Lucky Strike Entertainment will offer activities for the whole family. It's also hosting an afterparty for children at its Centreville bowling alley, plus an after-dark edition for adults, later that evening.

Other historical activities will include tours of the Spindle Sears House, the Old Stone Church, and St. John's Episcopal Church and

cemetery. At 2:15 p.m., St. John's will present a program titled, “Clergy and the American Revolution.” And a not-so-scary ghost tour will then depart from there at 2:30 p.m.

Centreville Day parking and shuttles will be available at the Trinity Centre, 5820 Trinity Pkwy., and at Centreville United Methodist Church, 6400 Old Centreville

Road. Shuttles from Trinity will drop off on Braddock Road. And new this year, the church shuttle will drop passengers on Wharton Lane. Thanks to the generosity of Centreville Day's vendors and sponsors, parking and shuttles are free.

— CHERYL REPETTI
CONTRIBUTED TO THIS STORY.
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GRAPHIC DESIGN AND LAYOUT BY GEOVANI FLORES

Holly Seibold (D), incumbent and candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 12

Holly Seibold (D)

Profession/Experience:
Delegate, Virginia House of Delegates. Non-profit Executive. Founder of BRAWS (nonprofit serving women/girls in crisis).

Education:
B.A. Interdisciplinary Study (Communication, Law, Economics, Government), American University; M.Ed., Education, George Washington University.

Hometown:
Vienna, Virginia.

Legislative Priorities/Challenges/Solutions:
Priorities are strengthening public education, community safety, environmental protection, and safeguarding women's/human rights. As a former teacher, she championed record school funding, special needs support, and school mental health resources. She has also led highway safety reforms, advanced clean



Holly Seibold (D)

energy, and strengthened child labor/criminal justice protections. Residents' concerns include traffic safety, environmental preservation, equitable access to healthcare, and protections for vulnerable populations. Solutions include pursuing legislation to improve transportation safety, promote responsible development, protect natural resources, and expand safeguards for women and children.

Casinos:
Opposed to development. "I do not believe a casino is a viable path for economic development here; the potential social costs—including gambling-related harms — outweigh the financial benefits."

www.hollyseibold.com

Marcus Simon (D) Marcus Simon, incumbent, no reply received

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



Marcus Simon (D)

Nelson Figueroa-Velez (R) No reply received

<https://figueroaforvirginia.com/>



Nelson Figueroa-Velez (R)

Sylwia Oleksy (R), candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 13

Sylwia Oleksy (R)

Profession/Experience:
Accountant, CPA candidate.

Education:
BA Economics — UMD, College Park; BS Accounting — GMU, Fairfax

Personal/Activities:
Hometown: Fairfax County. Mother with children in a public elementary school, a legal immigrant, and the wife of a federal worker.

Public Service:
Lifelong experience of being a law-abiding legal citizen and taxpayer.

Legislative Priorities/Challenges/Solutions:
Legislative Priorities: Focus on increasing housing affordability and reducing the taxpayer burden on residents. Residents' Biggest Challenge: Affordability crisis due to economically unsustainable policies. Cites higher-income residents leaving for lower-tax counties with better schools, and increased open-border immigrant resettlement, straining taxpayer resources. Believes Fairfax "can't compete with neighboring counties" due to "politically motivated decision-making." Proposed Legislative Solution: Families who pay property taxes and opt out of public schools should receive a tax credit. This provides school choice and reduces costs for the school system. The average tax credit would be approximately half that amount, requiring no additional revenue sources. Would collaborate with "all willing Republican House of Delegates candidates."

Data Centers:
Building data centers in Fairfax is neither reasonable nor profitable, even short term.



Sylwia Oleksy (R)

They consume a large amount of local energy for global traffic (internet, AI), forcing Fairfax households to effectively subsidize global data usage through higher costs. Believes nuclear energy must be developed in Virginia before more data centers are built.

State's Underfunding of Public Schools:
Asserts that the Fairfax School system, which consumes over \$3 billion annually in property tax revenue, is not underfunded. It is seen as mismanaged and wasteful with taxpayer funds, citing a "frivolous million-dollar lawsuit" against the federal government due to the superintendent's agenda regarding biological males in women's bathrooms and sports. Also says 70% of students fall below proficiency in English and Math.

Casinos:
Opposes a casino. Notes: a casino exists outside Fairfax in the D.C. area, and oversaturation does not lead to long-term profitability. Cites that gambling addiction disproportionately impacts low-income communities, and casinos tend to attract "prostitution, drug use, and other criminal or socially undesirable acts and actors." Concludes community costs will outweigh county profits.

What I Want District Members to Know:
"I am a mother with children in public elementary school, legal immigrant, wife of a federal worker, former Democrat, and I believe we make Fairfax County affordable again."

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Obituary

Obituary



Candis Mae (Odom) Anhalt, 63, of Fruita, CO, passed away unexpectedly from natural causes early Friday afternoon, September 19, 2025, at her cherished cabin near Brian Head, Utah. Arrangements are in the care of Callahan Edfast in Grand Junction, CO where a visitation will be held on Monday, September 29, from 3-7pm. Funeral service will be on Tuesday, September 30, at 10am with visitation starting at 9am at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. Mother of four, dear wife of retired USAF Colonel David Anhalt, she will be sorely missed by all she touched in her neighborhoods, communities, activities, and families across the country.

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HOUSE OF DELEGATES ELECTION GUIDE

Dave A. Crance Jr. (Libertarian), candidate for Virginia House of Delegates District 13

Dave Crance (L)

Profession/Experience:

Certified Hotel Administrator (CHA), Regional Hotel Manager.

Education:

No answer

Personal/Activities:

No answer

Public Service:

US Army Paratrooper with combat tours in Central America and the Middle East (Operations Just Cause, Desert Shield, Desert Storm). Served as VFW Chaplain; on boards for the Chamber of Commerce, Little League, and youth sports. Coached for over a decade. Served as Chair of the Libertarian Party of Northern Virginia and 2024 Libertarian National Convention Delegate.

Legislative Priorities/Challenges/Solutions:



Dave Crance (L)

Priorities include a Taxpayers' Bill of Rights that requires voter approval for new taxes/increases and returns excess revenue to taxpayers. This would force fiscal responsibility and cut waste. Other goals: eliminate the car tax, end the taxation of military pensions, and

review support for first responders and military families. The biggest challenge is the rising cost of living/affordability in Fairfax; the solution is the Taxpayers' Bill of Rights and removing red tape to allow for lower-cost housing/accessory dwelling units.

Data Centers:

Community desire is key. Site selection should prioritize accessible energy, preferably from a renewable source. Companies must invest in on-site renewable energy and adopt efficiency measures. Centers should offer local

benefits, such as infrastructure development or emergency backup power.

State's Underfunding of Public Schools:

Before reviewing the Standards of Quality, I would demand an outside audit of Fairfax County Schools to eliminate waste and potential fraud within the "bloated school administration" so funds can better support teachers and frontline employees.

Casinos:

Not a community discussion; no one I've spoken with is in favor. I am not seeking to impose my view but to be a voice for what the community decides.

What I Want District Members to Know:

"I look forward to representing neighbors, returning political discourse to a healthy place, and holding the state legislature accountable. It's time to put Community before Politics and move beyond the failed two-party system."

Dave4va.com

ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 4

member Carole Herrick will present a history talk highlighting the community efforts that brought about the creation of the center and its early history.

FRIDAY/OCT. 17

Monster Mash Party. 7-9:30 p.m. At the Old Firehouse in McLean. Old Firehouse 5th-6th grader parties are themed and decorated accordingly. Free catered food and beverages will be distributed to participants. The parties feature a DJ, an open dance floor and a variety of activities. Preregistration is recommended. Parent volunteer opportunities available.

OCT. 17-19 AND 24-26

Sterling Playmakers' "Our Town." At Sterling Middle School, Sterling. Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m.; Sundays at 2 p.m. If you've ever wondered what life was like one hundred years ago, and what your hometown was like then, whether it's the town of Sterling or Dranesville, or Herndon, or Leesburg, or Fairfax or Lansing, Michigan; Grover's Corner is a likely stand in. This timeless American classic reminds us to treasure each ordinary day and the connections we share with one another. Visit the website: www.sterlingplaymakers.org.

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!

SATURDAY/OCT. 18

Native Tree Seedling Giveaway. 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. Volunteers will give away 150 bareroot seedlings in six species—25 each of Allegheny Serviceberry, American Hornbeam, Black Gum, Northern Red Oak, Redbud, and White Pine. Planting instructions will be provided. The seedlings will be available to Town of Vienna residents on a first-come, first-served basis and are

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limited to two seedlings per household. Visit www.viennava.gov/csc and www.viennava.gov/tac.

SATURDAY/OCT. 18

Laurie Berkner Band. 11 a.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Back by popular demand, Laurie Berkner and her band perform a concert event for the whole family. Trick or treat yourself by wearing your costume for

this performance of some Halloween songs as well as classics from the Laurie Berkner Greatest Hits album.

SATURDAY/OCT. 18

Health Fair. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Carlin Springs Elementary School, 5995 5th Rd. S, Arlington. Sponsored by The Virginia Hospital Center and the Kiwanis Club. Contact bbertram@vhchealth.org.

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ALEXANDRIA FILM FESTIVAL 

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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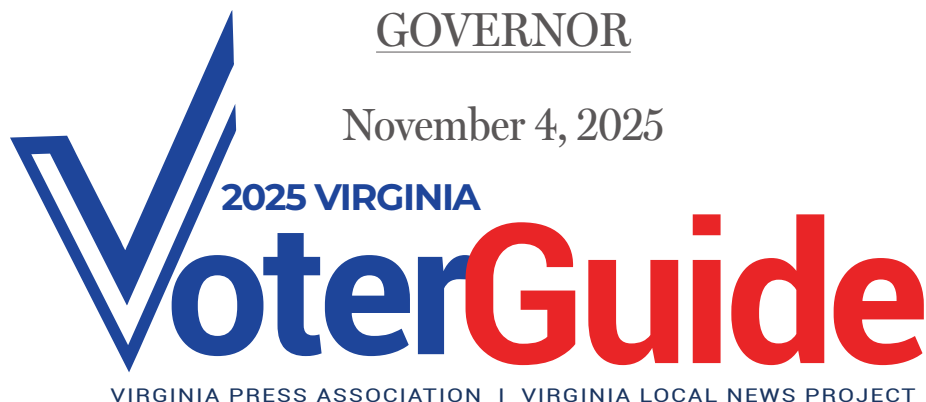


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GOVERNOR

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



**ABIGAIL
SPANBERGER**

abigailspanberger.com

THE ISSUES

MINIMUM WAGE

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

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

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

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

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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THE ISSUES

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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.

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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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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.

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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

ghazalaforvirginia.com



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.



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DEMOCRAT

JAY
JONES

jayjones.com



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

ABORTION and STATE vs. FEDERAL LAW

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

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

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

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

MIYARES: No response.

USE of NATIONAL GUARD in IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

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

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