

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

OCTOBER 16, 2025

Honoring Mount Vernon's Enslaved People



Congresswoman Jennifer McClellan (red dress) represents a Richmond-area district in the U.S. House of Representatives.



Dr. Doug Bradburn, Mount Vernon's CEO, said that enslaved people "helped shape the origins of our nation."



Susan King, age 101, was a riveter in World War II.

Hardship, Sacrifice and Resilience.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

In a sun-dappled, green cathedral of towering oaks, sycamores and hollies, around 400 people gathered on Oct. 4 to honor the men, women and children that George and Martha Washington enslaved on their 18th century Virginia plantation, Mount Vernon. From 1754 to 1799, the Washingtons enslaved at least 577 people.

Welcoming the attendees, Ann Petri, the Mount Vernon Ladies Association regent from Wisconsin,

pointed out that George Washington, who led a revolution for the colonies' freedom and independence, wrote that slavery was his "only unavoidable subject of regret."

Dr. Doug Bradburn, Mount Vernon's Chief Executive Officer and President, said that enslaved people's stories "sometimes were only dimly visible" and that "the past like the present is messy." He committed to "telling a more complete story," adding, "We are not afraid to tell the truth. African American history is American history."

"They made George Washington's life possible," he continued, referring to the enslaved people's unpaid labor on the plantation. Contending that the country today is facing "the worst political violence since the 1960s," he offered,

"This country will not be healed by hate. True community is based on love. They understood sacrifice, resilience and love."

Linda Allen-Hollis lamented that many of today's youngsters know little about the country's history of slavery. "We will never forget," she told the group, soberly adding, "The earth still cradles the bones of the men, women and children who labored on this land." Allen-Hollis, who came from California, is a descendant of West Ford who worked at the estate for almost 60 years and in 1833 founded the Gum Springs community in Mount Vernon, the oldest Black community in Fairfax County.

A group of young people, the Youth Readers and Writers, wearing kente cloth scarfs, read known

SEE HONORING, PAGE 6



Sheila Coates, founder of BWUFA, is "a ball of fire," said Cozy Bailey, Virginia NAACP president.



The Howard University choir performed, along with choirs from Norfolk State and Morgan State Universities.



Joseph Ngwa, Lamont Mitchell and Eric Lewis played African djembe drums.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH/MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

corcoran

MCENEARNEY

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JenWalker.com

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ACM ATLANTIC COAST
MORTGAGE

Time to Tune Up for Turkeys

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Turkey time is coming soon. Turkey-ordering time is here. The Cut Butchery in Mount Vernon's Hollin Hall Shopping Center will tingle the tastebuds at a turkey carving and tasting on Oct. 18, 12 noon to 2 p.m. in their shop at 7968 Fort Hunt Road.

The Cut's turkeys are not those plastic-wrapped butterballs bulging from supermarket freezers. The butchery is featuring and now taking orders for Kelly Bronze turkeys for Thanksgiving tables. Some say these are the "Rolls-Royces" of turkeys.

A Unique Turkey

Judd and Cari Culver raise these special turkeys on their Crozet farm in Albemarle County, Virginia.

The name "Kelly" comes from the British farmer, Derek Kelly, who started raising and selling them in 1984 in Essex, England. "Bronze" refers to their glossy brown color.

The Culvers' turkey motto is, "Bred to Be Wild." These turkeys waddle around 17 acres of pastures and woods and eat mosquitoes, ticks, flies and grasshoppers. They also get a corn and soy diet, fresh well water and shade and are not given antibiotics, feed additives or growth hormones. Turkeys need food, water and fresh air, notes Judd, who studied animal science at Virginia Tech.

When ready for harvest, handlers hand pluck the turkeys and hang and dry age them for 14 to 21 days, a process that tenderizes the birds and deepens the flavor.

Tasty Turkeys

Kelly Bronze turkeys are "moist, delicious and succulent," says Alex Kilroy, The Cut's owner and manager.

The Culvers raise their birds to sexual maturity, to 21 to 24 weeks old, when they have good fat marbling. Commercially-raised turkeys, they say, are typically slaughtered at 12 to 14 weeks old, despite the turkey's maturity. The Culvers do not try to meet an arbitrary weight requirement.

Most grocery store turkeys have not walked around much, Judd maintains, and they are bred for breast meat. Exercise makes meat dark, gives it more fat and more flavor, he explains. He contends that Kelly Bronze turkeys are the



PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

The Cut Butchery, which opened earlier this year, is on Fort Hunt Road in the Hollin Hall Shopping Center.



Valentine Miller has a farm stand every Wednesday at the Mount Vernon Farmers Market and sells meats and bakery products.

juiciest, tastiest turkeys available.

At the Oct. 18 demonstration, Kilroy will also make wine pairing suggestions and offer Kelly Bronze turkey cooking tips.

"They are not frozen so there's no thawing and no brining," says Kilroy. "You just pull it out and cook it." Cook time depends on the bird's size, but a turkey weighing under 12 pounds will be ready in under two hours.

Kelly Bronze turkeys typically cost more than supermarket turkeys. The Culvers' website shows prices from \$133.38 to \$474.24, from nine pounds to 32 pounds. You'll have to visit The Cut to learn their prices.

The Cut is taking orders now by telephone, 571-347-7775, in the store or on the website. Pickup will be between Nov. 22 and 26.

Farmers Market Turkeys

Long-time Mount Vernon Farmers Market vendor Valentine Miller, owner of Valentine's Bakery and Meats, is also now taking orders for turkeys. His family raises around 50 free-range turkeys that roam around their Orange County, Virginia, pastures. In an Oct. 8 interview, he said that his turkeys eat mostly grass and insects, get no GMO (genetically modified organism) feed or soy.

He's at the market at the Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, every Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 12 noon and taking orders for 14- to 20-pound birds at \$8.99 per pound, until he runs out of turkeys. Customers can pick them up on Nov. 22 at the Falls Church market (City Hall, 223 Little Falls Street) or Nov. 26 at the Mount Vernon market.



PHOTO BY MARISA KELLY

Paul Kelly and Kelly Bronze turkeys.



PHOTO BY MARISA KELLY

Kelly Bronze turkeys thrive on the Culvers' farm near Charlottesville, Virginia.

Information

The Cut, www.thecutbutchery.com

The Culver Farm, www.kellyturkeys.com

Valentine's Bakery and Meats,

<https://valentinesbakeryandmeats.grazecart.com/>



The Cut Butchery offers many choices of meat products.

Ukraine Tattoo Artist Escapes Russian Bombs, Sets Up Shop in Arlington

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

As the Russian artillery pounded the city of Zaporizhzhia in Ukraine, Karyna Sidorenko and Artem Ivanov knew there must be other options for their tattoo business so they packed up and left, ending up in Arlington where they opened “Banana Peel Tattoos,” on Washington Boulevard.

“Where our shop was located, now it’s the front lines,” said Karyna. “It was not easy,” she added. They’ve combined art with resilience and cultural exchange to make it work at Banana Peel.

They found the right spot too, and since they moved in 2023 they’ve won over 30 trophies and brought on a sponsor, “Extreme Inks,” for the ink that they use. Throw in custom needles from Galliot Needles, snacks and tea around the shop and they have a winning formula. More is planned too, but they’re keeping it secret.

“Something really, really new in the tattoo industry,” Karyna said.

Even the name “Banana Peel,” says a little more. They serve fresh fruit to customers and their receptionist is a barista too so she brews a variety of teas to make the customers’ experience feel unique. So unique that when the name “Banana Peel,” was brought up, they liked it. “We want to make something funny,” she added, “our clients like it.”

Clients chimed in too. “Artem is an incredible artist” said one reviewer while another named Pablo noted his experience: “He made sure I was comfortable the whole time and helped me get through the whole 8+ hour tattoo in one session”

Next week, they plan on setting up shop at the tattoo convention at the Dulles Town Center. On Friday, Oct. 24 thru Sunday, Oct. 26, Dulles is hosting the Villain Arts’ 1st Annual Northern Virginia Tattoo Arts Festival.

In addition to all the tattoos, there will be expert piercers, tooth gem artists, and vendors selling everything from fancy jewelry and stylish clothing to rare oddities and art pieces.

There is also a full lineup of live entertainment all weekend, including a contortionist archer, dazzling burlesque sideshow performances, circus acts, and even stunning human suspension, the description said.

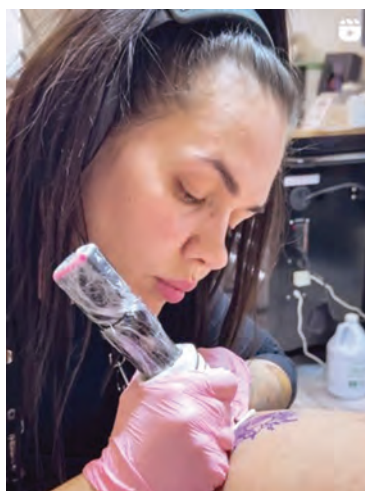


Artem and one of his awards.

Award Winning

Artem has received several top awards during his time in the U.S., including:

- ❖ 1st place at the Baltimore Tattoo Convention in 2023, 2024, and 2025
- ❖ 1st place at the DC Tattoo Convention in 2023
- ❖ 1st place at the Richmond Tattoo Convention in 2024



It takes a steady hand with the needle machine.



Batman on the calf.



Karyna Sidorenko and Artem Ivanov brought their tattoo skills from Ukraine.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



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Alexandria Rotary Foundation

On November 7, 2025, the Alexandria Rotary Foundation will host the **18th Annual Taste for Giving** at the Atrium Building in Old Town Alexandria.

Now one of the city's premier events, Taste for Giving draws hundreds of guests for an evening of gourmet food and desserts from local restaurants, wine and beer from area wineries and breweries, live music, a lively auction, and—most importantly—a celebration of community and giving.

Proceeds benefit Alexandria-based charities, supporting vital programs and services for those in need.

[Buy Tickets at alexandriarotary.org](http://alexandriarotary.org)

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7:00 - 9:30 P.M.**

**Atrium Building
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2025 RESTAURANT PARTNERS



Honoring Mount Vernon's Enslaved People

FROM PAGE 1
names of those enslaved at Mount Vernon, from infants to ages one to 70, solemnly reciting names like Billy, age 16; Lucy, age 11; infant, name unknown.

Tributes

A special guest was Baltimorean Susan Taylor King, age 101, the last "Rosie the Riveter." During World War II, King helped assemble airplanes at Eastern Aircraft in Baltimore. Former President Joe Biden awarded her the Congressional Gold Medal in 2024.

Speakers paid tribute to three other champions who died since the last commemoration: Nikki Giovanni, Judge Rohulamin Quander and Harry Robinson III.

Giovanni was an award-winning poet and professor at Virginia Tech for 36 years and died on Dec. 9, 2024.

Quander was an administrative law judge in Washington, D.C., and lead historian of the Quander family whose roots in America go back 350 years. He authored a book, "The Quanders," and died on Aug. 16, 2025.

Robinson was Dean of the School of Architecture and Planning at Howard University and led students there to win a design competition for Mount Vernon's Slave Memorial, dedicated in 1983. He died on June 13, 2025.

Heart-felt prayers and songs expressed faith and hope, and Malik Roberts applauded, "the strength to endure."

"The sun always shines again," Barika Porter told attendees. She's an officer with Black Women United for Action (BWUFA), the lead sponsor of the event.

Choirs from Howard, Morgan State and Norfolk State Universities lifted spirits with their melodious harmonies and hopeful lyrics, like "Rocka My Soul."

Mount Vernonite Queenie Cox remarked, "I came because this is an opportunity to keep the enslaved's memories alive, particularly the blood, sweat and tears they expended for us to have freedom."

After the two-hour program, Richmond-area Congresswoman Jennifer McClellan led a silent procession to the Slave Memorial in the African American Burial Ground, where 100 to 150 people are interred, near George Washington's tomb. Participants laid a wreath and boxwood sprigs on the memorial. Its truncated design represents unfinished lives. Bradburn said it is "a granite monument like a song in stone," adding, "Their graves are unmarked, but



Attendees filled the chairs and many stood for the event.



PHOTOS BY CLENDIA BOOTH/MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE



The event's program included history, profiles and facts.



The Slave Memorial was designed by Howard University architecture students.



The African American Burial Ground of unmarked graves, many say, is a poignant juxtaposition next to Washington's grand tomb.

their lives are unforgettable."

BWUFA, led by Sheila Coates, organized this annual program in partnership with Mount Vernon. Coates told the crowd, "Others died for you to get here."

More Information: www.blackwomenunitedforaction.org and www.mountvernon.org



The bright dogwood berries seemed like a symbol of hope.



The graves of enslaved people at Mount Vernon are unmarked.



FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE

Fire in Lorton.

Fire in Lorton Results In Several Injuries

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

On Tuesday, Oct. 14, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue arrived at the scene of a two-alarm outside fire in the 9900 block of Richmond Highway in Lorton. Units arrived to find a large recycling pile on fire and a person trapped in a crane. Firefighters rescued the crane occupant and began suppression operations. Crews worked to bring the fire under control, FCFRD said. Units remained on the scene for an extended amount of time and Richmond Highway was shut

down in both directions between Gunston Road and Hassett Street in Lorton. The scene was still active throughout the day with HazMat crews on the scene conducting atmospheric monitoring. Just before 6 p.m., Route 1 remained closed in spots but fully opened at 8:40 p.m. At that time, the air quality readings were within normal levels. A total of six civilians were transported to nearby medical facilities, one with life-threatening injuries and five with non-life-threatening injuries. One firefighter was also transported with non-life-threatening injuries.



Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

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

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

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

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

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

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

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JOIN US for the 10th Annual Tour de Mount Vernon

BY SUPERVISOR
DAN STORCK
MOUNT VERNON
DISTRICT



Dan Storck

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

Here's what you need to know: The ride kicks off at 8:30 a.m., with cyclists choosing between a 40-mile or 20-mile route. Check-in

will begin at 7:45 a.m. Riders will explore the northern and central Mount Vernon District, featuring Potomac Banks' historical, ecological and cultural sites. Including George Washington's Mount Vernon, River Farm, Historic Gum Springs and the newly renovated Mount Vernon Rec Center!

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

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



Whether you're a seasoned cyclist or just looking for a fun and active Saturday morning, there's something for everyone at the Tour de Mount Vernon. Grab your

helmet, fill up your water bottle and register today to join the fun: fairfaxcounty.gov/mountvernon/tour-de-mount-vernon-2025 Let's ride!



Walk to Bust Cancer Postponed

Government shutdown forces delay of breast cancer walk.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Organizers of the annual Walk to Bust Cancer, scheduled for Oct. 18 in Fort Hunt Park, have announced the postponement of the walk due to the government shutdown.

A release by the Alexandria-based National Breast Center Foundation, organizers of the walk, said "We are extremely disappointed to share that we must officially postpone the 10th annual Walk to Bust Cancer due to the continued federal government shutdown. With Fort Hunt Park still closed and the National Park Service scheduling system offline we are currently unable to secure a backup date."

The release went on to say that

a new date will be scheduled as soon as one is available, likely sometime in November.

"This is not the news any of us hoped for," the statement continued. "We know how deeply meaningful this event is to honor loved ones, support survivors and rally together in hope. Postponing the walk is a difficult but necessary decision rooted in safety, logistics and respect for all participants, volunteers and supporters."

Organizers stressed that the walk is not canceled, just delayed.

"As soon as the National Park Service reopens the scheduling system we will work to secure a new date and announce it immediately," said a walk representative. "Here's what you can still do today: keep fundraising, registering and cheering on your team at www.walktobustcancer.org because our fight doesn't stop even when



PHOTO BY DELIA SULLIVAN PHOTO

Participants are shown in a previous Walk to Bust Cancer event in Fort Hunt Park. This year's walk, scheduled for Oct. 18, has been postponed due to the government shutdown. The walk raises funds to help and underinsured women in the fight against breast cancer. www.walktobustcancer.org

the schedule does. Thank you for your cooperation, your resilience and your unwavering belief in this cause. Together we will walk and together we will bust cancer."

www.walktobustcancer.org

www.MountVernonGazette.com

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The High Stakes of the 2025 Virginia General Election

The Fairfax County South House of Delegates Election.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE GAZETTE

Voters who are readers of the Mount Vernon Gazette, along with others in the surrounding areas and the commonwealth, face one of the most consequential general elections on Nov. 4, 2025. Ballot choices will help determine the statewide policy course over the next two years, from abortion and reproductive rights to fiscal policy and the cost of living, to public education, school funding, and more.

At the state level, the battle centers on partisan control. Votes matter even in uncontested races. For Democratic voters, the election focuses on the opportunity to secure control of the governorship and the House of Delegates, since they already hold the state Senate, which is not contested this year. 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 Mount Vernon area. 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 Mount Vernon include the following:

HD-16: Paul E. Krizek (D); Shelly M. Arnoldi (I), Fairfax County: Mount Vernon, Lorton, Fort Belvoir, parts of Alexandria/Springfield

HD-17: Mark D. Sickles (D), and Fairfax County: Franconia, Kingstowne, Newington

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

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

Paul E. Krizek (D)

Professional:

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

Education:

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

Personal:

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

Public Service:

Delegate, HD-16 (since 2016). Serves on the Privileges and Elections, General Laws, Appropriations, and Agriculture, Chesapeake, and Natural Resources Committees. Chairs the Appropriations – Transportation and Public Safety Subcommittee, the General Laws – ABC/Gaming Subcommittee, and the Privileges and Elections – Gubernatorial Appointments Subcommittee.

Legislative Priorities:

Legislation is introduced directly in response to constituents' needs. A priority is protecting families in mobile home parks (e.g., Audubon Estates, Woodley Hills), which provide naturally occurring affordable housing. Worked for over five years in a bipartisan manner to increase tenant rights and preserve these. A top priority for the upcoming session is establishing a safe, well-regulated adult-use retail cannabis market in Virginia. Legalization must include a framework that prioritizes public health, ensures equity, and generates revenue for reinvestment in historically harmed communities.



Paul E. Krizek (D)

Data Centers:

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

State Underfunding Public Education:

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

Casinos:

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

What I Want District Members to Know:

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

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

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

Richard Hayden (R)

Professional:
Attorney

Education:
Juris Doctor

Personal/Activities:

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

Legislative Priorities:

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

Data Centers:

Data centers are an important part of the state economy, creating jobs and adding to



Richard Hayden (R)

the tax base. Better planning will mitigate community impact and disruption. Calls the Virginia Clean Energy Act (VCEA) a cause for energy crisis and advocates exiting the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). Proposes building more natural gas plants, stating wind and solar are not sustainable.

State Underfunding Public Education:

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

Casinos:

Casinos serve themselves and are a lazy fix to any revenue shortfall.

What I Want District Members to Know:

"Mount Vernon needs a fresh voice in Richmond. I will put money back into residents' pockets, not take it out, and be a good and faithful steward of our financial and environmental resources. I am not beholden to special interests and will better represent your needs and concerns. A vote for Hayden is a vote for a better future in Virginia."

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

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

Shelly Arnoldi (I)

Professional:
Licensed professional engineer; U.S. Navy veteran.

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



Shelly Arnoldi (I)

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

SEE SHELLY ARNOLDI, PAGE 11

MOUNT VERNON HOUSE OF DELEGATES ELECTION GUIDE

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

Shelly Arnoldi (I)

Public Service:
Lifelong law-abiding citizen and taxpayer.

Legislative Priorities:
Strengthen families, restore common sense and protect freedoms. Focus includes parental rights in education, cutting taxes, enforcing immigration law, and securing elections (photo ID, no early voting or drop boxes). Residents' Biggest Challenge: Residents feel unheard and misinformed, and are distracted by media narratives on issues such as school quality, the cost of living, and trust in government. The focus is on protect-

ing children's education and restoring common-sense leadership. Proposed Legislative Solution: Propose a Parents' Bill of Rights Act to protect the fundamental role of parents in their children's education and health care. Legislation mandates explicit parental consent for minors' medical, mental health, or gender counseling, and requires school transparency on curriculum and records. Policy requires no new funding, utilizing existing budgets by prioritizing parental engagement over bureaucracy.

Data Centers:
Require any company building a data

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

State Underfunding Public Education:
Advocate to ensure Fairfax County receives its "fair share of state funds" based on student needs.
Would refocus FCPS funding on academics by eliminating non-core programs and redirecting funds to instruction in reading,

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

What I Want District Members to Know:
"I filled out a detailed survey on Ballotpedia." <https://ballotpedia.org/ShellyArnoldi>

Mark Sickles (D)

Del. Mark Sickles did not reply by presstime.

<https://marksickles.com/>



Mark Sickles (D)

Naomi Mesfin (R)

Challenger Naomi Mesfin did not reply by presstime.

<https://fairfaxgop.org/naomi-mesfin-for-delegate/>



Naomi Mesfin (R)

BULLETIN BOARD

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

VOLUNTEERS WANTED
Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org.
STEM Professionals Needed. Help assist K-12 STEM teachers as part of the American Association for the Advancement of

Science's STEM Volunteer Program, stemvolunteers.org, during the 2018-19 school year. In the 2017-18 school year, there are 85 volunteers in 6 Northern Virginia school districts. Contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488, or donaldrea@aol.com.
Volunteer Drivers Needed. Drivers needed by the American Cancer Society to take cancer patients to treatment in Northern Virginia. To volunteer, call 1-800-227-2345 or go to cancer.org/drive.
RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403-

5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org.
Mentors Wanted. Two creative programs that help transform the lives of Alexandria's preteens are seeking volunteer mentors. SOHO, which stands for "Space of Her Own," and "Space of His Own," serves vulnerable fifth graders in Alexandria. The programs pair men and women with youth in need of positive adult role models, to help support and guide youth in making healthy choices and succeeding in school and in life. Visit www.spaceofherown.org and www.spaceofhisown.org. For more information on how to become a SOHO mentor, contact Sarah Maroney at sarah.maroney@alexandriava.gov or phone at 703-746-4687.
Farmer's Market Volunteers Needed. To volunteer for the Farmer's Markets, email Brian Morreale, brianmorreale@gmail.com

SUPPORT GROUPS
Postpartum Support Virginia sponsors a free, bi-monthly support group for women suffering depression

and/or anxiety during pregnancy or in the first year following childbirth. Meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at Inova Alexandria Hospital, Health Education Center, rooms 1-2, 4320 Seminary Road. Contact co-moderator Susan Doyle at suzjdoyle@gmail.com or 571-403-0673.
The Parkinson's Disease Support Group of Alexandria meets the 1st Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m. At the Hollin Hall Senior Center, Room 109, 1500 Shenandoah Road. All Parkinson's patients and caregivers are welcome.
The Caregiver Support Group is facilitated by the Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services Division of Aging and Adult Services. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month at the Adult Day Services Center, 1108 Jefferson St., 4-5:30 p.m. Participants are full- or part-time caregivers providing care locally or long distance to a family member or friend. Participants share their experiences, provide support for each other and receive resources

to assist them with caregiving. The next Caregiver Support Group meeting is June 7. For more information or to register, contact Jennifer Sarisky at 703-746-9999 or email DAAS@alexandriava.gov.
FACE Center Support Groups provide parents with a space to share their daily parenting frustrations and triumphs while offering new strategies for helping parents to cope, build positive parent-child relationships and best support their children's learning.
❖ Support Group in English, every Monday, 6-7:30 p.m. at ARHA Main Building, 401 Wythe St.
❖ Support Group in Spanish, every Wednesday, 6-7:30 p.m. at Community Lodgings Brookside Center, 614 Four Mile Road.
Registration not necessary. A light dinner and childcare services provided free. Contact Krishna Leyva at 703-619-8055 or krishna.leyva@acps.k12.va.us

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 14

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NOVEMBER 27**

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www.CanTheBird.com



ENTERTAINMENT

MEETS EVERY SUNDAY

Bird Walks. 8 a.m. At 6401 George Washington Memorial Parkway, Alexandria. Friends of Dyke Marsh organizers lead bird walks every Sunday morning. Meet at 8 a.m. in the south parking lot of the Belle Haven picnic area. Walks are led by experienced birders and everyone is welcome to join us.

MEETS EVERY MONDAY

Monday Morning Bird Walk. 7 a.m. Meets at 3701 Lockheed Boulevard Alexandria. The Monday Morning Bird Walk is sponsored by the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park and takes place every Monday at 7 a.m. April-September and 8 a.m. October-March. Following the walk, members of the group gather at the nearby Denny's for breakfast and to compile the morning's bird list. Call (703) 768-2525.

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

Wednesday Night Bingo. 7 p.m. At Atlas Brew Works, 2429 Mandeville Lane, Alexandria. The Capital City Showcase, the company that brings you some of the DC area's best events, is hosting an amazing night of everyone's favorite game at Atlas Brew Works Alexandria. Win prizes on every round, and the winner of the final round gets a \$50 Atlas Brew Works gift card for your next visit! There's also \$6 select Atlas drafts! Plus pizza served from the world famous Andy's Pizza! Email at capitalcityshowcase@gmail.com

NOW THRU NOV. 2

Women Artists of the DMV. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Artist's Reception: Sunday, September 28, 4 — 6 p.m. Local artist, curator, and advocate for the arts, F Lenny Campello, has assembled a survey exhibition of women artists spanning the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia that features over 400 artists in 18 different galleries across the region. Women artists of the DMV presenting at The Athenaeum include: Cathy Abramson, Suzi Balamaci, Sara Bardin, Jennifer Barlow, Jennifer Lynn Beaudet, Julia Bloom, Lisa Brotman, Carol Brown Goldberg, Shante Bullock, Anne Cherubim, Amanda Coelho, Andrea Cybyk, Anna U. Davis, Cynthia Farrell Johnson, Sharon Fishel, Cianne Fragione, Marilyn Horrom, M. Jane Johnson, Jessica Kallista, P D Klein, Kara Lin, Anne Marchand, Amy Marx, Ann Meagher-Cook, Carol Newmyer, Tea Okropiridze, Madeleine Sargent, Adi Segal, Susan Shalowitz, Pritha Srinivasan, Jenny Walton, Suzanne Yurdin, and Helen Zughaib.

MGNV PLANT CLINICS ARE OPEN

The Alexandria Old Town Farmer's Market Plant Clinic at 301 King St., Alexandria operates on Saturdays from 7 - 9:30 a.m. Del Ray Farmers Market Plant Clinic at Oxford & Mt. Vernon Avenues, Alexandria operates on Saturdays from 8:30 - 11 a.m. The Arlington Farmers' Market at N. 14th and N. Courthouse Roads, Arlington operates on Saturdays from 8 - 11 a.m. The Fairlington Farmers' Market Plant Clinic at 3308 S. Stafford St., Arlington, operates on Sundays from 9 - 11 a.m.

YEAR ROUND ON SUNDAYS

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

ONGOING

Revolutionary War Exhibit. At the National Museum of the U.S. Army, Alexandria. The National Museum of the United States Army has opened a special exhibition, Call To Arms: The Soldier and the Revolutionary War. The two-year exhibition commemorates this year's 250th Birthday of the U.S. Army and next year's 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. This 5,000 square-foot



The ALX Pink Weekend takes place Oct. 17-19, 2025 in Old Town Alexandria.

exhibition features a rare collection, specially curated by the Museum, that includes Revolutionary War artifacts from the original colonies, England, France and Canada. Among the exhibit's highlights are a pair of General George Washington's pistols, the original flag of the 1st Rhode Island Regiment carried by

the Army's first African American Soldiers, and a complete Loyalist uniform—one of the rarest items in the collection. The sword of British General Charles Lord Cornwallis, presented to Washington at the surrender at Yorktown, Virginia, will also be displayed for a limited time.



The 10th Annual Tour de Mount Vernon Community Bike Ride takes place on Saturday, Oct. 18, 2025 in Mount Vernon.

OCT. 3 TO NOV. 1

The "Bump in the Night" art exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. This show explores those unsettling moments when you hear something strange and unexplained in the dark. Prepare for the shadows to take shape and for the mysterious bumps in the night come to life. Opening Reception: Friday, October 3, 7-9 p.m. Gallery hours are Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. Details at DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

FRIDAY/OCT. 17

The Thirteen Performs. 7:30 p.m. At Immanuel Chapel at Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria. The Thirteen performs works of remembrance and celebration with Duruflé's poignant Requiem and, in honor of the 500th anniversary of Palestrina's birth, the composer's most renowned work, the Missa Papae Marcelli. Palestrina's mass represents the high point of Renaissance polyphony, with a purity of counterpoint, deeply affecting dissonance, and clear text setting—qualities that formed the basis of an enduring myth that through this work, Palestrina saved Church music. Duruflé's 1941 Requiem, also based on Gregorian chant, was begun under the Vichy occupation but completed after the liberation of France.

OCT. 17-19

ALX Pink Weekend. Old Town Alexandria ALX Community and the National Breast Center Foundation are teaming up for the inaugural Pink Weekend—a 10th-anniversary celebration of lifesaving breast-cancer care. The weekend features two marquee events: the ALX Pink Gala on Friday, Oct. 17 at 7 PM (ALX Community "The Atrium") and the 10th Annual Walk to Bust Cancer on Sunday, Oct. 19 at 7:30 AM (Fort Hunt Park). With a fundraising goal of \$400,000, proceeds directly support mammograms, diagnostics, and

ENTERTAINMENT

treatment access for neighbors in need—because missing even one annual mammogram can be life-altering. Tickets are \$100 (the cost of a mammogram) at alxpinkgala.org; walk registration is open at pinkweekend.org. Join us to walk and dance with purpose—early detection saves lives. Visit www.pinkweekend.org.

SATURDAY/OCT. 18

10th Annual Tour de Mount Vernon (TdMV) Community Bike Ride. 8:30 a.m. Starting and ending at Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, Alexandria. The TdMV takes cyclists on a scenic 40- or 20-mile ride through the northern and central parts of the Mount Vernon District, and ends with music, La Prima's famous sweet potato chili, beverages from Bunnyman Brewing (for purchase) and camaraderie. This is the perfect event for those of you who love biking and fun socks! Riders will receive a pair of limited-edition tie-dye TdMV socks (while supplies last).

SATURDAY/OCT. 18

10th Annual Science Expo. 3 to 7 p.m. At Patrick Henry Recreation Center, Alexandria. Join the 10th Annual Spooky Mad Science Expo at Patrick Henry Recreation Center in Alexandria. This event is a free, youth-powered STEAM festival with a high-energy, Halloween-themed event features over 100 hands-on STEAM stations led by universities, nonprofits, federal and local agencies, and teen STEM teams. Highlights include a STEM costume parade, walk-in planetarium, teen-led podcast studio and Science Café, food trucks, live music with the Alexandria Sympatico Orchestra, and more. The Expo serves thousands of families, especially students from under-resourced schools, and celebrates creativity, discovery, and community engagement. Visit <https://chrysalisdg.org/spooky-mad-science-expo/>

SATURDAY/OCT. 18

AWARE! 1-3 p.m. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Great Publishing LLC in conjunction with The Athenaeum presents the 9th Annual AWARE! Event orchestrated by Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association's Poet in Residence, KaNikki Jakarta. AWARE is a community-based collaboration with a mission to entertain and inform the community. Ten pre-selected poets, musicians, and storytellers will provide an artistic awareness that focuses on important topics bringing forth their knowledge, personal experiences, and perspectives using the Power of Words and Voice to focus on their chosen topic.

SATURDAY/OCT. 18

FocusMusic and WFMA present Ali Tod. 7 p.m. At Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church, 8531 Riverside Rd., Alexandria. Tickets \$25 in advance (members \$22.50) / \$30 at door (members \$25), \$15 virtual. Scottish guitarist and singer Ali Tod fuses classical training with percussive fingerstyle guitar, loop-pedal wizardry, and raw, soul-stirring vocals—drawing comparisons to Rodrigo y Gabriela and KT Tunstall. Info and tickets at <https://focusmusic.org/shows#sat-10-18-ali-tod-alexandria-virtual>

SUNDAY/OCT. 19

The Carpenter's Cook-off. 12 to 3 p.m. At The Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Carpenter's Shelter is hosting their signature fundraising event, Carpenter's Cook-Off 2025. Top-rated local restaurants, caterers and bakeries will showcase their delicacies, which visitors get to taste and judge. There will be live music from DJ Infinite Sounds, live and silent auctions, raffles and fun for the whole family. Board Alum Jennifer Poersch will receive the Val Hawkins award which recognizes dedicated champions who work to further the mission and vision of Carpenter's Shelter. Buy Tickets: CarpentersShelter.org/CookOffTickets

WEDNESDAY/OCT. 22

What's New in Alexandria History? AHS Gold-

en Grantees Tell What They Found. 7 p.m. At The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington Street, Old Town Alexandria. Last year, as part of the 50th Anniversary celebration, Alexandria Historical Society awarded a series of Golden Grants to support new local history research. This special event brings several of those grantees together to share what they uncovered about Alexandria's past — from 18th-century archives to the stories of Civil War hospitals and the city's LGBTQ+ community.

Speakers include:

Hannah Lecomte, Out and About in Northern Virginia Project
Dr. Benjamin Skolnik, Office of Historic Alexandria – Douglas Cemetery Records Project
Madeline Feierstein, Historian and Author – Confine & Fortify: The Military Government of Civil War Alexandria

SATURDAY/OCT. 25

Oktoberfest. At The Royal Restaurant, Alexandria. The Royal will host its inaugural Oktoberfest celebration, further marking its transformation into a dinner and drinks destination. The menu will feature German staples including bratwurst from Stachowsky's, Oktoberfest roast chicken, pretzels with beer cheese, potato salad, sauerkraut, and apple strudel cakes. Beers on tap will include Port City Oktoberfest and Hofbräu. The event will take place on the open-air, weatherized patio, with plenty of space for guests and fun!

SATURDAY/NOV. 1

First Saturday Used Book Sale: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Selection of over 20,000 gently used children's books, fiction, history, biography, home and garden, cooking, crafts, sports, religion, travel, CDs, DVDs, and more. Unless specially priced, \$1 for hard backs and large paperbacks, and 25 cents for mass market paperbacks. Visit <https://www.fairfax-county.gov/library/branches/friends-of-sherwood-regional> for information on other days and times for the library's ongoing book sale.

NOV. 7-30

"The Mini World: Small Works of Art" showcases tiny creations by Del Ray Artisans members in a variety of media and styles. Step into this miniature world and discover the joy of life's little things. View at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria VA. Join in the Opening Reception on Friday, November 7, 7-9pm. Gallery hours are Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. Details at DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

THE BIRCHMERE

At 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. All shows are at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Tickets available at Ticketmaster.com. Contact The Birchmere at 703-549-7500 or www.Birchmere.com.

OCTOBER

Wed. 15: Joshua Radin and his band, with Brendan James \$45.00
Thu. 16: Young Gun Silver Fox w/ Gordon Sterling & The People (Acoustic Trio) \$35.00
Fri. 17: Shaun Cassidy "The Road To Us" \$69.50 SOLD OUT!
Sat. 18: The SteelDrivers - 20th Anniversary Tour \$55.00 SOLD OUT!
Sun. 19: The SteelDrivers - 20th Anniversary Tour \$55.00
Tue. 21: Squirrel Nut Zippers \$45.00
Wed. 22: Noah Reid: Live Again w/ Sarah Grace White \$45.00
Thu. 23: Thomas Dolby "The Iconic 80's" w/ Gail Ann Dorsey \$45.00
Fri. 24: Jeffrey Osborne \$99.50 SOLD OUT!
Sat. 25: Jeffrey Osborne \$99.50 SOLD OUT!
Sun. 26: Phil Vassar (Band) – 25 Years of Paradise w/ Crawford & Power \$59.50
Tue. 28: CAM – The Slow Down Tour \$35.00
Thu. 30: Kathy Mattea \$49.50
Fri. 31: Tom Paxton & Friends with The Don-Juans \$45.00

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BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 11

for more.

Divorce Workshop for Women. Second Saturday of each month, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at Hilton Alexandria Old Town, 1767 King St. The workshops are designed to provide education on the legal, financial, family and personal issues of divorce in a logical, yet compassionate way. The workshop fee is \$25. Visit www.novasecondsaturday.com for more.

ONGOING

Backflow Preventer (BFP) Assistance Program. The City of Alexandria has reinstated its sewer Backflow Preventer (BFP) Assistance Program for homeowners in designated areas that historically experience basement back-ups or flooding. The program reimburses homeowners for up to 50 percent of the cost of installing a BFP device by a licensed plumbing contractor, up to a maximum of \$2,000. The current program period is through Dec. 31, 2019. Alexandria homeowners should call the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services at 703-746-4014 or visit www.alexandriava.gov/tes.

Robust Walking. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 9 a.m. at Mount Vernon Recreation Center, 2701 Commonwealth Ave. Free 55+ robust walking 1-hour exercise class (with chair exercise option). No class on holidays. Contact jjkingconsulting@yahoo.com.

Seeking Donations. Computer CORE, which is dedicated to helping low-income adults become computer literate is seeking donations. Visit www.computercore.org/contribute.

Senior and Job Programs. 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Queen of Apostles Church, 4650 Taney Avenue, Alexandria. St. Martin de Porres Center offers senior and job placement programming Monday through Friday at the parish. Email Kathryn Toohey, ktoohey@ccda.net.

Be Heard at the City's Monthly Public Hearings. A schedule of the meetings can be found at www.alexandriava.gov. Voice opinions, speak about something on the docket or just speak about something you are concerned about. Sign up in advance to speak through the city's website. Anyone is welcome at any of the public hearings.

Public Space Recycling. Alexandria has placed more than 80 bright blue recycling containers next to public trash cans in the commercial districts along Mount Vernon Avenue and King Street, as well as other public spaces, including parks, recreation fields, and other high-traffic pedestrian areas. Visit alexandriava.gov/Recycling.

Composting and Food Waste. Alexandria now has Resource Recovery Stations, located at the City's Farmers' Markets (Old Town, Del Ray) to collect food waste. More than 270 people have participated in the food waste program over the last several months. Participants drop off items weekly, over eight tons of waste has been collected, to be composted to make a natural fertilizer. To learn more about composting visit alexandriava.gov/YardWaste.

Digital Magazines. Patrons of Alexandria Library will have unlimited access to read digital magazines, which can be viewed on most Internet-enabled devices inside or outside of the library. Accessible through www.rbdigital.com/alexandriava/zinio.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Hidden in Plain Swipe: Detectives Dismantle Credit Card Skimming Operation

Detectives from FCPD Financial Crimes Unit uncovered a credit card skimming operation that targeted ATMs and payment devices inside stores across the Richmond Highway corridor, leading to one arrest.

In September, the Financial Crimes Unit partnered with the United States Secret Service to conduct an operation targeting credit card skimming activity along the Richmond Highway corridor. The initiative was prompted by the discovery of two skimming devices earlier that month, raising concerns about potential widespread fraud.

During the operation on Sept. 11, detectives uncovered seven skimming devices, six of which were advanced models equipped with miniature camera systems strategically placed at ATMs. These sophisticated devices were designed to capture both card data and PIN entries from unsuspecting victims.

Through their investigation, detectives identified Marko Puskas, 40, of no fixed address, as the suspect responsible for placing the skimming devices.

As the investigation continued, the Calvert County Sheriff's Office in Maryland contacted our detectives regarding similar cases in their jurisdiction and assisted in determining that Puskas was in Fairfax County.

On Oct. 2, detectives, with the assistance of our Violent Crime Suppression Unit, located Puskas in the 7100 block of Lee Highway in Falls Church and took him into custody.

Puskas was charged with Identity Theft, Possession of Fictitious Identification, Possession of Burglary Tools, Conspiracy to Commit a Felony, and was served with six outstanding Fairfax County warrants for Unlawful Use of Payment Card Scanning Devices and Re-Encoders. He was transported to the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center, where he was held on no bond.

How to Protect Yourself from Skimming Devices

Credit card skimming devices are often small, discreet, and designed to blend in seamlessly with legitimate card readers. They can be found at ATMs, gas pumps, and even self-checkout machines. Here are some tips from the police to help protect you from becoming a victim:

- ❖ Inspect before you insert. Before using an ATM or gas pump, look closely at the card reader and keypad. If the card slot looks loose, bulky, or mismatched in color or material compared to the rest of the machine, it could be a skimmer.

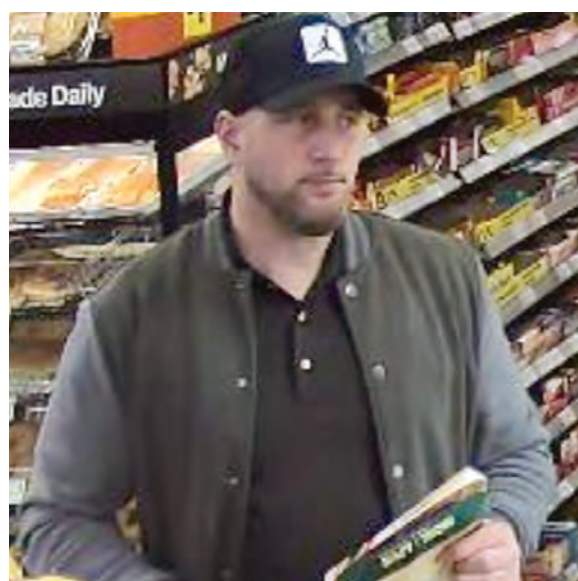
- ❖ Check for hidden cameras. Skimmers are often paired with tiny cameras aimed at capturing your PIN. Look for any unusual attachments, pinholes or objects positioned near the keypad.

- ❖ Do not accept assistance from anyone you don't know while using an ATM or payment device. Scammers sometimes pose as helpful bystanders to distract you or capture your information.

- ❖ Cover your PIN. Always use your hand to shield the keypad while entering your PIN, even if you don't see anything suspi-



Photos of skimming devices recovered



Marko Puskas

Surveillance Photo of Puskas

cious.

- ❖ Use familiar or well-lit locations. Whenever possible, use ATMs inside banks or high-traffic areas where criminals are less likely to install devices unnoticed.

- ❖ Monitor your accounts regularly. Review your bank and credit card statements frequently for unauthorized transactions, even small ones, which can signal a compromised card.

- ❖ Use contactless payment methods. Tap-to-pay cards or mobile wallets provide

an extra layer of protection, as they don't transmit your physical card data.

If you believe you've been a victim of skimming or notice a suspicious device, do not attempt to remove it. Instead, call our non-emergency number at 703-691-2131.

Anyone with information regarding this incident is encouraged to call our Financial Crimes Unit at 703-246-3533. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone – 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477)

Skimming devices were located at the following stores:

Store:	Address:
Dollar Tree	6711 Richmond Hwy
7-Eleven	8226 Russell Rd, Woodlawn
7-Eleven	5638 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy, Mount Vernon
7-Eleven	5638 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy, Mount Vernon
7-Eleven	2901 Arlington Dr, Groveton
7-Eleven	3100 Lockheed Blvd, Groveton
7-Eleven	2800 Beacon Hill Rd, Groveton

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.



CHRIS WHITE
FAMILY REAL ESTATE
OF LONG & FOSTER



75 Homes SOLD in 2024 & 65 Homes SOLD in 2025 so far!

As we approach the fourth quarter of 2025, the Chris White Family Real Estate Group thanks our Mt. Vernon neighbors for another overwhelming vote of confidence resulting in 65 homes sold to date in 2025. Hear directly from two recent clients:



"We had an outstanding experience working with Chris White and his entire team. From start to finish, they demonstrated exceptional professionalism, deep local knowledge, and a level of responsiveness that truly set them apart. We've bought and sold several homes - this was the best experience we've had to date! Chris knows this market inside

and out. Whether it was pricing strategy, neighborhood insights, or identifying the right time to list, his guidance was spot-on every step of the way. Thanks to his expertise and honest advice, we always felt like we were one step ahead. What really impressed us was the team's communication. Any time we had a question or needed an update, someone was there with a quick, clear answer. We never felt as though we were "in the dark." Their attention to detail—from staging and marketing to navigating offers and closing—was flawless. Chris and his team didn't just help us buy/sell a house—they helped us make a smart move, both financially and personally. We look forward to working with them again and highly recommend them to anyone looking for a knowledgeable, responsive, and trustworthy real estate team. Thank you, Chris and team! You're the best." -The Chretien Family



"Chris and his family were outstanding to work with selling our home. Not one question went unanswered, and within a very short amount of time. The process of scheduling showings and the Open House was laid out perfectly. They were so helpful in not only identifying what repairs/upgrades were needed to best show our house but also took on

the task of making the arrangements for those repairs to be made. They really are the "Mt. Vernon Specialists". 10/10 recommend The White Family " -The Ohagan

Mortgage rates are falling and we are seeing new buyers coming into the market. If you're considering selling in 2025 or even 2026, now is the time to call the area's proven leaders for a consultation!



4412 Tarpon Ln | \$949,000



4112 Ferry Landing Rd | \$1,275,000



3608 Center Dr | \$1,565,000

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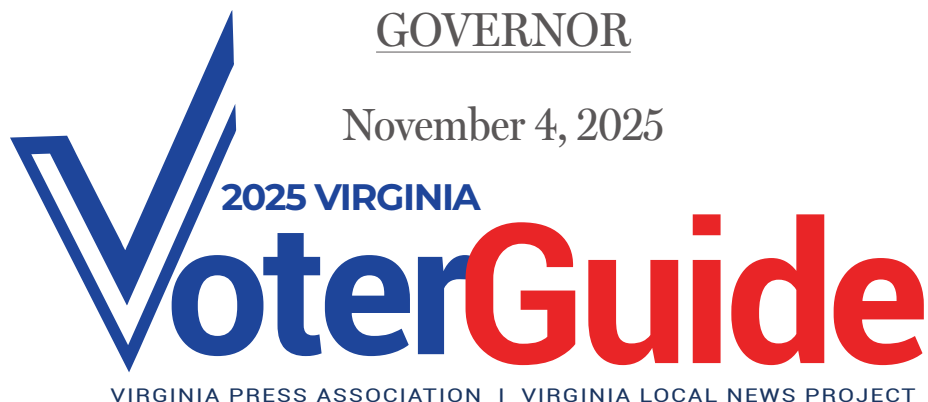


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GOVERNOR

November 4, 2025



VIRGINIA PRESS ASSOCIATION | VIRGINIA LOCAL NEWS PROJECT

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

DEMOCRAT



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THE ISSUES

MINIMUM WAGE

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

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

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

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

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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THE ISSUES

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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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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>

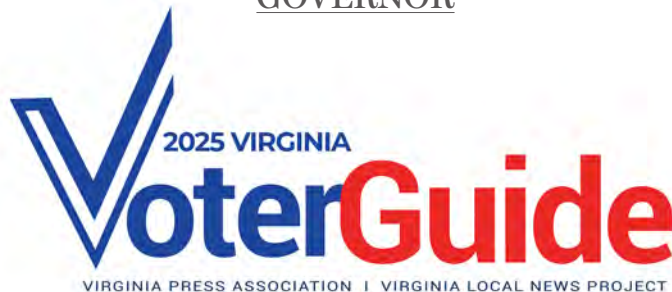
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THE ISSUES

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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johnreidforvirginia.com



LT. GOVERNOR



DEMOCRAT

GHAZALAH
HASHMI

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THE ISSUES

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

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

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

TIE-BREAKING VOTES AND PRESIDING OVER THE SENATE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EDUCATION POLICY: SCHOOL CHOICE and SOL REFORM

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

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

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

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

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

FEDERAL INTERVENTION in PUBLIC UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

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

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

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

REPUBLICAN



JOHN
REID

johnreidforvirginia.com



LT. GOVERNOR

DEMOCRAT

GHAZALAH
HASHMI

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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

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DEMOCRAT

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

THE ISSUES

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

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

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

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

HOUSING
AFFORDABILITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LEADERSHIP WITHOUT A
LEGISLATIVE VOTE

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

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

REPUBLICAN



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



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DEMOCRAT

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

ABORTION and STATE vs. FEDERAL LAW

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

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

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

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

MIYARES: No response.

USE of NATIONAL GUARD in IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

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

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

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

MIYARES: No response.

PROTECTING PUBLIC OFFICIALS from THREATS

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

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

MIYARES: No response.

CONSUMER PROTECTION and ONLINE SCAMS

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

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

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

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

MIYARES: No response.

PARTISANSHIP and the AG'S OFFICE

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

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

MIYARES: No response.

GUN VIOLENCE and PUBLIC SAFETY

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

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

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

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

MIYARES: No response.

CIVIL RIGHTS and DISCRIMINATION

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

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

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

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

MIYARES: No response.