

Elizabeth Bennett-Parker

Delegate • Virginia House District 45

Dear Elizabeth,

I am grateful to be working on behalf of the residents of Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax. This week's newsletter includes my subcommittee assignments, how bills are moving through the House of Delegates, and introduces some of the visitors I had the pleasure of meeting with this week.

Virtual Town Hall

This Saturday, January 29th at 10:00 AM, join Senator Adam Ebbin, Delegate Alfonso Lopez, and me for a virtual town hall!

Senator Adam Ebbin

Delegate Elizabeth Bennett Parker

Delegate Alfonzo Lopez

ALEXANDRIA & ARLINGTON

VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

Saturday, January 29 | 10 AM

Zoom Registration: <https://bit.ly/3551bcF>

>>>[Register here! https://buff.ly/32wsFak](https://buff.ly/32wsFak)<<<

Subcommittee Assignments

Last week I shared the great news that I had been assigned to the Finance Committee, which oversees general and special tax revenues, and the Committee on Counties, Cities, and Towns, which impacts legislation on localities. In the Finance Committee I was assigned to Subcommittee #2 which focus on local taxes, sales tax, and recordation tax. In the Counties, Cities and Towns Committee I was assigned to the Charters Subcommittee which oversees all legislation in the general Assembly seeking to change or amend localities' governing charters.

Last week I wrote about the bills I had introduced. This week I am happy to report all of my bills have been referred to committees (which can not be said for all bills) and two have not only passed out of Committee, but they have done so unanimously.

Updates on my Bills

Creating More Accessible, Diverse, & Equitable Government Bodies

HB 444 allows public bodies, like our many advisory boards and commissions comprised of volunteers, to hold some electronic meetings outside of a declared emergency while also ensuring and enhancing access and transparency for members of the public.

Status: Passed out of General Laws Subcommittee and Committee unanimously.

Flooding Mitigation

Flooding is a significant issue in our district that has caused devastating damage for families and business owners. To create more tools to fight flooding, HB448 would create a state work group to review and make recommendations concerning the existing limits on local authority to review certain land-disturbing activities for stormwater impacts.

Status: We expect this bill to be heard next week.

Facilitating Education Through In-School Instruction

Local school systems are facing staffing shortages, including those of school bus drivers; our children can not learn in-school if they cannot get to school. HB 452, supported by the Virginia Education Association, would give school divisions the ability to advertise school bus driver openings on the sides of buses, which is currently not permitted.

Status: The bill has been referred to the Education Committee.

Affordable Housing

We have an affordable housing crisis in our community. HB 465 would allow localities that have an affordable dwelling unit ordinance (like Alexandria) to require developers to contribute to the affordable housing trust fund for any new development. Currently, localities like Alexandria can only request, but not require, contributions on certain projects and we get nothing on projects that are built by-right.

Status: This bill was laid on the table, but it will be sent to the Housing Commission for a study on ways to incorporate affordable housing units within private development.

Helping Small Businesses

HB 460 was brought to me by independent restaurant owners in our district who have been struggling throughout the pandemic. Endorsed by the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging, & Travel Association, this bill would create price transparency for consumers when ordering food via food delivery apps by mandating that food delivery platforms must be transparent about the fees they charge.

Status: We expect this bill to be heard next week.

Fighting Climate Change Through Electric Vehicle Use

HB450 will prohibit a person from parking a non-electric vehicle in a space reserved for charging electric vehicles. It will better prepare our infrastructure to serve a society where more people will be driving electric vehicles and help fight the existential threat of climate change.

Status: Passed out of the Transportation Subcommittee and Committee unanimously.

Transportation

H.B. 450 (Bennett-Parker) - Parking of vehicles; electric vehicle charging spots, civil penalties.

REPORT WITH AMENDMENT(s)

Yea 19 Nay 0 Abs 1

Y Austin	Y McGuire	Y Anderson	Y Bagby	Y Herring
Y LaRock	Y Runion	Y Tata	Y Murphy	A Subramanyam
Y Bloxom	Y Wiley	X Ward	Y Delaney	
Y Wyatt	Y Taylor, Kim	Y McQuinn	Y Reid	
X Avoll	Y Durant	Y Carr	Y Watts	

Ensuring Public Safety and Protections for Victims of Stalking

HB 451 allows Virginia residents to be protected from out-of-state stalking threats that place the victim in reasonable fear of death, criminal sexual assault, or bodily injury to herself or a family or household member. Currently, such evidence is only admissible if the conduct occurs within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Status: The bill has been referred to the Committee on Courts of Justice.

Preventing Food Waste

HB1293 would decrease food waste by protecting food donors and receivers from penalty or liability for donating or receiving food past the best-by date or other non-safety labels under certain conditions. Current U.S. food dating practices are confusing and result in food that is safe to eat being thrown away, while members of our community go hungry.

Status: The bill has been referred to the Agriculture Committee

Transforming Rail in Virginia

The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority was created as part of the historic \$3.7 billion investment into passenger and freight rail systems in the Commonwealth. HB 465 would make sure that the Virginia Railway Express (VRE), which is currently the only commuter rail system in the Commonwealth, is well-represented on this Authority.

Status: The Administration opposed the bill and it died in Subcommittee along partisan lines.

Updates on other Bills

Today was the first day we had more than a few bills on the House calendar. It took awhile for bills to get referred to Committees, so the pace is now ramping up.

Next week, we expect to hear the following bills, among others, on the floor:

- HB 58, which would prohibit local governments from requiring contractors to provide compensation or benefits beyond those required under state or federal law. This bill passed out of Committee along partisan lines, 12-10.
- HB 291, which creates a tax deduction for family caregivers. This bill passed out of Committee with bipartisan support 20-2.
- HB 320, which repeals the planned future increases in the minimum wage, leaving it at the current rate of \$11/hour. This bill passed out of Committee along partisan lines, 12-9. The Senate has killed their version of this bill.
- HB 526, which would make survivors of human trafficking eligible for in-state tuition. This bill passed out of Committee unanimously.
- HB 551, which would exempt medicine purchased from veterinarians from sales and use tax. Currently, if you take a prescription to a pharmacy (for your dog or cat - or yourself), you will not be charged tax, but if you fill it at your veterinarian's office, you will have to pay tax. This bill passed out of Committee unanimously.
- HB 582, which would provide notice to college students about their eligibility for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. This bill passed out of Committee with bipartisan support 17-5.

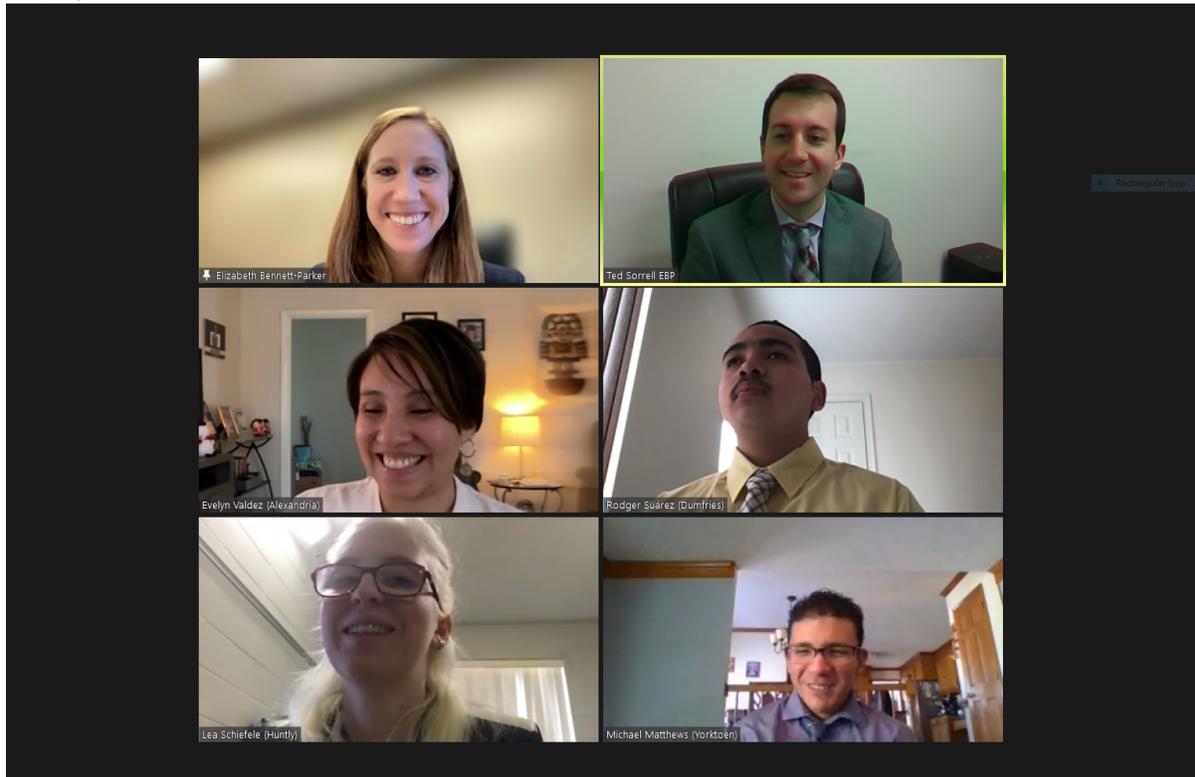
- HB 1168, which would create a property tax exemption for disabled veterans and surviving spouses. This bill passed out of Committee unanimously.

Visitors

Last week, I met virtually and in-person with a number of constituents and organizations.



The Arlington Young Democrats shared their legislative priorities, including affordable housing bills, defending reproductive rights, and continuing to support the yearly minimum wage increase.



I also had the opportunity to meet with a team from the National Federation of the Blind of Virginia. We discussed hiring authority for individuals with disabilities for state government employment. They also shared their concerns about low employment rates for people with disabilities and eliminating the subminimum wage.

Contact Me

I truly value feedback from my constituents and consider that feedback during my decision making process, so please feel free to reach out to me with any questions, concerns, or ideas.

Please email me at DeleBennett-Parker@house.virginia.gov or call our office at 804-698-1045.

Warmly,

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Bennett-Parker

Delegate

Virginia's 45th District

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