

# Elizabeth Bennett-Parker

Delegate • Virginia House District 45

Dear Elizabeth,

A number of bills have died this week. [HB787](#), which would make it illegal for teachers to teach so-called “inherently divisive concepts,” was killed by the Senate Education and Health Committee on party lines.

A House Privileges and Election subcommittee killed Senator Ebbin’s bill, [SJ5](#), to remove the outdated constitutional provision defining marriage as only a union between one man and one woman. This provision was made irrelevant as a result of the US Supreme Court decision *Obergefell v. Hodges* in 2015, but its removal would protect everyone’s right to marry in Virginia should the Supreme Court decision be overturned. This bill had passed the Senate with bipartisan support, 25-14.

Another P& E subcommittee also killed on party lines [a bipartisan campaign finance reform bill](#) which would have prohibited the personal use of campaign funds, with some exceptions

including childcare. The bill had passed the Senate 37-3 and had passed the House unanimously last year.

[SJ1, a proposed constitutional amendment](#) to automatically restore voting rights, also died on a party line vote in subcommittee. I joined my Democratic colleagues for a rally this week with the NAACP, Black Caucus, ACLU, League of Women Voters, New Virginia Majority, and other advocacy groups to call on our colleagues to let Virginia vote on this amendment.



The speakers at the rally emphasized the disproportionate disenfranchisement of Black and Brown residents.

This happened just as we concluded Black History Month. It is important that we recognize this history not only during the month of February, but throughout the year, and that we connect the stories of our past to our present day conversations about race and equity. Many of my colleagues gave floor speeches; I am including links to a few below.

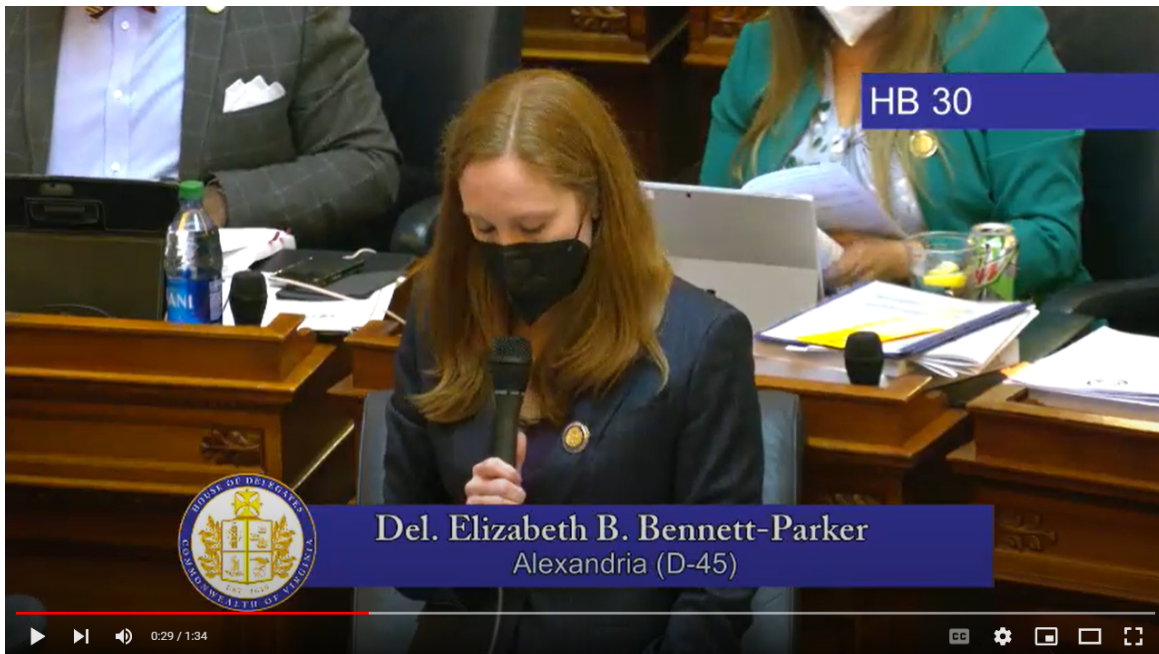
[Delegate Jackie Glass](#) told the true history behind wet nurses and shed light on the existing health disparities between Black and white communities to this day.

[Delegate Candi Mundon King](#) spoke about how we cannot sacrifice the truth just because it makes us uncomfortable and how there have been hundreds of years of legal and strategic efforts to make Black Americans feel inferior.

[Delegate Jeffrey Bourne](#) wrapped up the month with a powerful speech about having uncomfortable conversations about how Black and Brown people are treated in Virginia every

day of the year, not just in February, and gave a personal account about the conversations he has to have with his son about how he is perceived in this world.

During budget negotiations, I spoke against the removal of \$500,000 from the House budget that was intended to fund preservation and restoration of the Douglass Memorial Cemetery in Old Town. It has been in use since 1827, and was officially established in 1895 as a segregated, non-denominational African-American cemetery named in memory of Frederick Douglass. The cemetery has experienced the typical ravages of time and weather as well as extensive and severe flooding (possibly connected to a 1902 sewer pipe) that have caused the ground level to sink, headstones to topple, and made the site both inaccessible to the public and indecent to the memory of those buried there. You can watch my speech below:



As always, I am grateful to be working on behalf of the residents of Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax. Continue reading below for updates on my bills, other bills of interest, and some of the visitors I've had the pleasure of meeting.

## Legislative Update

Last week, my bill on EV parking passed the Senate and was sent to the Governor's desk. This week, another bill headed to the Governor and two more passed out of Senate Committees and are headed to the floor next week.

### **Preventing Food Waste**

HB1249, which became the vehicle for my bill on the same topic, 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.

**Status: Passed the General Assembly and is on its way to the Governor's desk.**

## Ensuring Public Safety and Protections for Victims of Stalking

HB 451 allows Virginians to be protected from stalking that places them in reasonable fear of death, criminal sexual assault, or bodily injury to themselves or a family or household member. Currently, a perpetrator can only be prosecuted if the conduct occurs at least once within the jurisdiction where the person is tried.

**Status: Passed Senate Finance 15-0**

## Electronic Meetings

HB444 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 Senate General Laws 12-3**

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## Updates on Other Bills

Below are a few updates on the progress of some of the House bills I've included in previous newsletters as well as some Senate bills that are making their way through the House.

Bill	Description	House Status	Senate Status
<a href="#">HB79</a>	Repeals the prohibition on pretextual police stops.	Passed 52-45	Died in Committee 9-6
<a href="#">HB118</a>	Repeals key provisions of the Virginia Clean Economy Act.	Passed 52-48	Died in Committee 12-3
<a href="#">HB139</a>	Extends the expiration of the Commission to Study Slavery and Subsequent De Jure and De Facto Racial and Economic Discrimination Against African Americans.	Passed 99-0	Passed 40-0
<a href="#">HB141</a>	Establishes the Virginia Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Historic Preservation Fund for the purpose of awarding grants for the eligible costs of acquiring land or undertaking preservation activities that is of cultural or historic significance to Black, indigenous, or people of color communities.	Passed 100-0	Passed 40-0
<a href="#">HB142</a>	Changes from a maximum of 25 percent to a minimum of 25 percent the amount of Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP) funds that must be used to support programs to reduce the impact of transit fares on low-income individuals.	Passed 92-8	Passed 30-10
<a href="#">HB319</a>	Improves the state-wide strategy for early student literacy by requiring educator preparation programs and school divisions to revise and align their literacy methodologies to the latest, evidence-based reading instruction, intervention, and	Passed 97-0	Passed 39-0

	assessment practices, consistent with the science of reading, among other provisions.		
<a href="#">HB349</a>	Directs local departments of social services to provide housing support to any person between 18-21 who is aging out of the foster care system.	Passed 99-0	Passed 39-0
<a href="#">HB404</a>	Strengthens the ability to prosecute sexual assaults by allowing forensic medical examination reports to be admitted into evidence by video testimony.	Passed 100-0	Passed 40-0
<a href="#">HB414</a>	Directs Dominion Energy to provide local reliability data within 30 days upon request by a locality.	Passed 99-0	Passed 40-0
<a href="#">HB509</a>	Repeals the red flag law, which is the ability of any attorney for the Commonwealth or law-enforcement officer to apply for an emergency substantial risk order to prohibit a person who poses a substantial risk of injury to himself or others from purchasing, possessing, or transporting a firearm.	Passed 52-47	Died in Committee 9-6
<a href="#">HB525</a>	Establishes mandates at colleges and universities related to preventing hazing.	Passed 98-2, Senate Substitute rejected, Heads to conference	Passed 40-0
<a href="#">HB526</a>	Designates survivors of human trafficking eligible for in-state tuition.	Passed 99-0	Passed 40-0
<a href="#">HB551</a>	Exempts 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.	Passed 97-2	Passed 40-0
<a href="#">HB573</a>	Provides that the statute of limitations for the collection of medical debt is three years.	Passed 88-11-1	Passed 40-0
<a href="#">HB582</a>	Provides notice to college students about their eligibility for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP benefits).	Passed 79-18	Passed 40-0
<a href="#">HB717</a>	Provides that an unaccompanied homeless youth shall be deemed an adult for the purpose of consenting to housing, including emergency shelter.	Passed 99-0	Passed 39-0
<a href="#">HB719</a>	Provides that sexual assault evidence kits in certain circumstances shall be stored for a period of at least 10 years.	Passed 100-0	Passed 40-0
<a href="#">HB802</a>	Allows localities to enforce the health and safety provisions of the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act, subject to certain conditions.	Passed 59-41	Passed 26-14
<a href="#">HB827</a>	Removes the authority of localities to prohibit firearms from public buildings, parks, and events. Alexandria was the first jurisdiction in the Commonwealth to take advantage of this authority	Passed 52-48	Died in Committee 9-6

	when it passed; it has overwhelming support in our community and it is now up to the Senate if we will.		
<a href="#">HB1053</a>	Studies the fees charged to individuals in local jails, including commissary rates, telephone rates, and fees associated with work release employment or participation in an educational or rehabilitative program.	Passed 99-0, Senate Substitute rejected, Heads to conference	Passed 28-12
<a href="#">HB1187</a>	Allows certain health care practitioners licensed out-of-state temporary authorization to practice in Virginia.	Passed 100-0	Passed 40-0
<a href="#">HB1267</a>	Pushes back the effective date by five years of the new clean car standards, which set more stringent tailpipe emissions limits for light- and medium-duty cars and trucks and set targets for electric vehicle sales, and leaves their adoption to the discretion of the state's air board.	Passed 52-48	Died in Committee 8-7
<a href="#">HB1270</a>	Allows individuals in jail to submit an application to participate in SNAP within 45 days of their expected release date and enables eligible individuals to receive benefits immediately upon release.	Passed 86-14	Passed 33-5
<a href="#">SB24</a>	Extends from July 1, 2023, to July 1, 2024 the expiration date of the Eviction Diversion Pilot Program.	Passed Committee 22-0	Passed 28-12
<a href="#">SB108</a>	As introduced and passed the Senate, would have ended solitary confinement. The substitute amendment creates a workgroup to review restorative housing in correctional facilities.	Passed 100-0	Passed 21-18
<a href="#">SB156</a>	Requires state funding to be provided to support 22 full-time equivalent instructional positions for each 1,000 students identified as having limited English proficiency.	Continued to 2023 5-3	Passed 22-18
<a href="#">SB273</a>	Gives absentee voters the option to provide the last four digits of the voter's social security number and birthdate in lieu of a witness signature.	Passed Subcommittee 8-2	Passed 40-0
<a href="#">SB280</a>	Directs Dominion Energy to provide local reliability data within 30 days upon request by a locality.	Passed 100-0	Passed 40-0
<a href="#">SB352</a>	Requires employers to provide paid sick leave to health care providers and grocery store workers.	Died in Subcommittee 4-2	Passed 21-19
<a href="#">SB378</a>	Would allow someone who has been incarcerated for at least 10 years and met certain criteria to return to the original sentencing judge for a "second look" at their sentence.	Died in Subcommittee 5-3	Passed 25-15
<a href="#">SB441</a>	Creates a work group to make recommendations regarding the reduction or elimination of costs and fees charged to inmates in state correctional facilities	Passed Committee 22-0	Passed 31-9

<a href="#">SB447</a>	Addresses gender and racial wage gaps by prohibiting employers from seeking the salary history of a prospective employee; refusing to interview, hire, employ, or promote someone for not providing wage or salary history; and refusing to provide a prospective employee the wage or salary range for the position prior to discussing compensation.	Died 6-4	Passed 20-19
<a href="#">SB453</a>	Provides that any person charged with a simple assault and battery offense who has been diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder, an intellectual disability, or serious mental illness shall not be subject to mandatory minimum punishment, provided the violation was related to their disability.	Died 7-0	Passed 27-13
<a href="#">SB463</a>	Prohibits the personal use of campaign funds.	Died in Subcommittee 5-3	Passed 37-3
<a href="#">SB471</a>	Establishes an annual open application process for Literary Fund loans to finance the construction and renovation of public elementary and secondary school buildings and increases from \$7.5 million to \$25 million the maximum loan amount.	Passed Committee 21-1	Passed 40-0
<a href="#">SB490</a>	Requires each school board to provide at least four specialized student support positions per 1,000 students. Under current law, each school board is required to provide at least three such positions per 1,000 students.	Passed Appropriations 21-0	Passed 27-13
<a href="#">SB493</a>	Provides that any adult who knowingly transmits an intimate image by electronic means to another adult when such other person has not consented to the receipt of such material shall be considered a trespass and shall be liable for actual damages or \$500, whichever is greater, in addition to reasonable attorney fees and costs.	Passed 100-0	Passed 40-0
<a href="#">SB494</a>	Requires employers of five or more employees to comply with the Virginia Humans Rights Act (current law is 15 employees or more.)	Died 10-12	Passed 21-19
<a href="#">SB524</a>	Addresses wage theft by requiring employers that are subject to prevailing wage provisions for work done on public contracts to furnish the Commissioner of Labor and Industry certified payrolls each month accompanied by a signed statement that the records are accurate, the hourly rate paid is not less than what is required by law, and an acknowledgment that filing a certified payroll known to be false is a Class 6 felony.	Died 6-4	Passed 21-18
<a href="#">SB624</a>	Requires employers to provide paid sick leave to home health workers who provide agency-directed services.	Died in Committee 12-10	Passed 22-18

<a href="#">SB625</a>	Modifies the existing Low-to-Moderate Income Solar Loan and Rebate Fund Program to allow for the issuance of grants (in addition to loans and rebates) to residents receiving public benefits for solar installations and energy efficiency projects.	Died in Subcommittee 3-3	Passed 40-0
<a href="#">SB664</a>	Prevents minors (any child under 18) from being prosecuted for prostitution and directs juvenile sex trafficking victims to non-punitive specialized services in Virginia.	Died in Subcommittee 5-3	Passed 34-6
<a href="#">SB674</a>	Authorizes Commonwealth's attorneys to create and administer a Pretrial Intervention and Diversion Program for the purpose of providing an alternative to prosecuting offenders in the criminal justice system.	Died 6-2	Passed 39-1
<a href="#">SB746</a>	Provides that any communication made by a minor as a result of a custodial interrogation shall be presumed to be inadmissible as evidence against such minor if a law-enforcement officer knowingly engages in deception during the interrogation.	Died 5-3	Passed 26-14
<a href="#">SJ1</a>	Constitutional amendment for the restoration of voting rights.	Died 6-4	Passed 24-16
<a href="#">SJ5</a>	Repeals the constitutional provision defining marriage as only a union between one man and one woman	Died 6-4	Passed 25-14

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## Visitors

### *Women In Government*

I had the pleasure of meeting Meredith Martino, the Executive Director of Women in Government (WIG). WIG brings Democratic and Republican women state legislators from across the country together to work on policy solutions. I look forward to attending their conference in June.

### *Arts Caucus and Legislative Black Caucus Joint Meeting*

This week I joined the Arts Caucus and the Legislative Black Caucus for a special presentation on Black History. I enjoyed presentations by the Virginia Commission for the Arts, Virginia Repertory Theatre, Riddick Dance, Charlottesville Ballet, and Teens with a Purpose.

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## Thank you

If you'd like to share your feedback on legislation during this session or need anything, please email me at [DelEBennett-Parker@house.virginia.gov](mailto:DelEBennett-Parker@house.virginia.gov) or call our office at 804-698-1045.

Warmly,

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Bennett-Parker

Delegate

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