

Elizabeth Bennett-Parker

Delegate • Virginia House District 45

Dear Friend,

We adjourned sine die a month ago and a number of things have happened since.

On April 4th, the General Assembly convened for a Special Session at the request of Governor Youngkin. We learned that we were being called back courtesy of a television ad. Unfortunately, it appears the Governor released this ad without communicating with even the Republican budget conferees as a budget deal had not yet been reached. So, we gavelled in at the cost of \$46,000 to Virginia taxpayers and nothing was accomplished.

After we had already left for the day, the Governor released his bill to temporarily suspend the gas tax for three months with no comprehensive plan to make up for the lost revenue.

[Multiple experts](#) have already shown that more than half of the savings from a gas tax suspension would go to out-of-state drivers and the oil industry. The bill is written in such a way that it encourages the oil industry to engage in price-gouging in order to increase their

own profits. Reports are already coming in that [the oil industry has gained \\$8M in profit from the Maryland gas tax suspension](#), while the average Maryland driver has saved \$5.

[Governor Youngkin has since admitted](#) himself that there is no guarantee his proposal would end up saving Virginians any money at the pump.

While we may not see a positive return in our wallets from the suspension, we will all be negatively impacted by the loss of revenue and resulting cuts to transportation projects. The Governor estimates his plan would cost \$437 million from the Commonwealth Transportation Fund, which could cause irreparable damage to the Commonwealth's ability to maintain roads and bridges and fund transportation projects.

I prefer an approach that makes sure we are putting money back in the hands of Virginia residents and not oil companies, while also retaining transportation funding. The suspension of the gas tax *might* save the average Virginian \$11 per month - if all of the savings were passed on to consumers, which is unlikely, as discussed above. ("Average" is defined as driving 33 miles per day and getting 23.7 miles per gallon.) The House Democratic Caucus has proposed an alternative that would give residents with gas-powered cars \$50 rebates from the General Fund, leaving vital transportation funding untouched. The cost of this plan would be less than one third of the cost of the gas tax holiday while still providing almost twice as much relief directly to Virginians. We have also been asking the Governor for over a month to declare a state of emergency in order to trigger Virginia's Anti-Price Gouging Act.

I will return to Richmond next Tuesday, April 19th and join my colleagues on the House Finance Committee to consider this bill.

Legislative Update

Since my last newsletter, all three of my bills that passed the General Assembly have been acted upon by the Governor.

Electronic Meetings

HB444 allows state and local advisory bodies and regional bodies to hold some electronic meetings outside of an emergency while also ensuring and enhancing access and transparency for members of the public.

Status: Signed into law, takes effect September 1.

Ensuring Public Safety and Protections for Victims of Stalking

This bill will allow for Virginians to be protected against cyberstalking and other forms of stalking conduct 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: Signed into law, takes effect July 1.

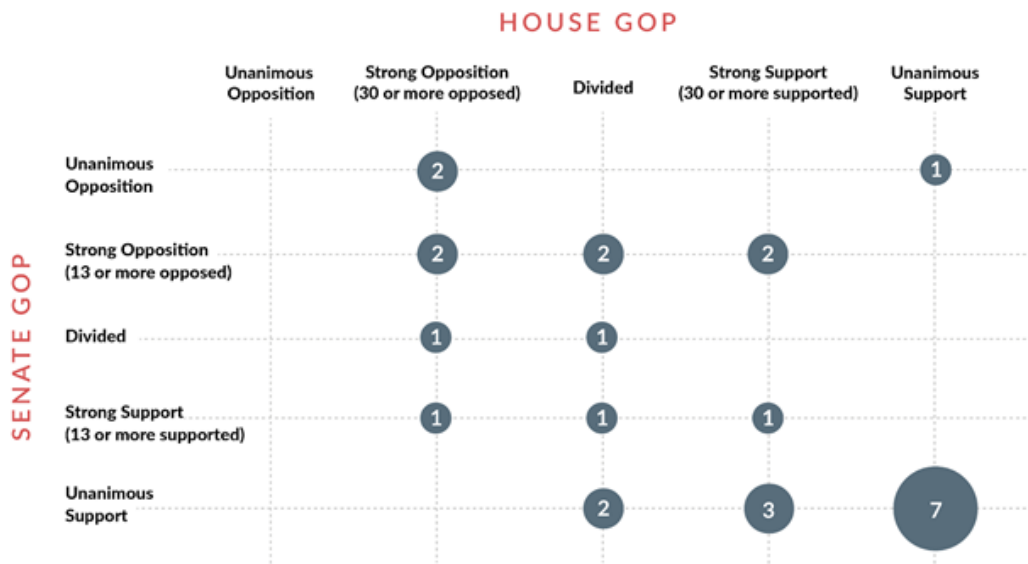
EV Parking

HB450 will allow localities to ticket a non-electric vehicle that is parked in a space reserved for charging electric vehicles.

Status: The Governor has offered amendments to lower the maximum fine to \$25 and to require that the EV must be actively charging, or it may also be ticketed.

Governor Younkin has offered amendments to more than 100 bills and vetoed 26 bills, more than any governor in his first year in office since Governor Gilmore in 1998, who vetoed 37. We will return to Richmond on April 27 for a reconvene session to consider these actions. Two-thirds of the members of each chamber would need to vote to override a veto in order for it to become law.

All of the bills vetoed by the Governor were introduced by Democrats and garnered bipartisan support in the General Assembly. Seven of these bills had passed both chambers unanimously. Nine of them were sponsored by Senator Adam Ebbin, who represents the entirety of the 45th District in the Senate and leads the Committee that rejected Former Trump EPA administrator Andrew Wheeler from becoming our Secretary of Natural Resources. Six of Senator Ebbin’s vetoed bills had identical House bills, which the Governor signed. Signing one version of a bill and vetoing the other is not a practice that anyone can recall a Governor using before.



Vetoed Bills:

Bill	Description
<u>HB573</u>	Provides that the statute of limitations for the collection of medical debt is three years.
<u>HB669</u>	Creates a work group to study whether swimming pools and other water facilities for public use or use in conjunction with a tourist facility or health spa should be regulated by the Department of Health.
<u>HB670</u>	Allows the governing body of any county with the county manager plan of government (Arlington County) to appoint an independent policing auditor. Arlington has a unique form of government requiring it to get approval from the General Assembly when its governing board wants to hire an employee. Alexandria is able to hire an auditor that will report to the City Council, as is every other jurisdiction in Virginia if they so choose. Arlington will still be able to hire an independent policing auditor, but the position will have to report to the County Manager, rather than the County Board.
<u>HB675</u>	Eliminates the authority of a health carrier to vary its premium rates based on tobacco use. Under current law, a health carrier may charge premium rates up to 1.5 times higher for a tobacco user than for a nonuser. This bill is a recommendation of the Joint Commission on Health Care, as it was discovered that this policy results in tobacco users forgoing health care and ultimately driving up health care costs.
<u>HB802</u>	Allows localities to enforce the health and safety provisions of the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act, subject to certain conditions.
<u>HB820</u>	Requires the Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity to conduct a disparity study every five years, next due no later than January 1, 2026.
<u>HB1004</u>	Removes the requirement that individuals register for the Selective Service in compliance with federal law in order to be eligible for the Two-Year College Transfer Grant and the Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant Program.
<u>HB1197</u>	Creates a work group to determine the feasibility and benefits of transferring responsibility for the Department of Juvenile Justice from the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security to the Secretary of Health and Human Resources.
<u>HB1270</u>	Creates a workgroup to develop a proposal to allow people imprisoned in state and local facilities to apply for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits prior to reentering society.
<u>HB1298</u>	Prohibits any high school student-athlete who participates in an athletic competition from entering into any contract to receive compensation in relation to such student's athletic participation in exchange for the use of such student's name, image, or likeness.
<u>SB250</u>	Increases the annual fees for nonhazardous solid waste management facilities and indexes the fees annually based on the change in the Consumer Price Index.
<u>SB271</u>	Prohibits any person from refusing to insure, refusing to continue to insure, or limiting the amount or extent of life insurance, disability insurance, or long-term care insurance coverage available to an individual or to charge an individual a different rate for the same coverage based solely and without any additional actuarial risks upon the status of such individual as a living organ donor. The identical house bill was signed.
<u>SB278</u>	The companion to my bill, HB450, regarding EV parking.

<u>SB280</u>	Directs Dominion Energy to provide local reliability data within 30 days upon request by a locality. (The identical bill HB414 was signed.)
<u>SB286</u>	Adds a survey of the property to the list of materials that a purchaser of the property can review as part of exercising whatever due diligence the particular purchaser deems necessary with respect to a historic district designated by the locality.
<u>SB288</u>	Increases from 20 percent to 30 percent the Virginia individual and corporate income tax deduction for business interest disallowed as a deduction for taxable years beginning on and after January 1, 2022. The identical house bill was signed.
<u>SB297</u>	Provides that any health care provider that undertakes any debt collection activities prior to an award from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund is issued or determined to be noncompensable has committed a prohibited practice under the Virginia Consumer Protection Act.
<u>SB311</u>	Provides that a real estate licensee must disclose in writing to the purchaser that they are a licensee. The identical house bill was signed.
<u>SB347</u>	Requires the State Corporation Commission to establish for Dominion Energy Virginia annual energy efficiency savings targets for customers who are low-income, elderly, disabled, or veterans of military service.
<u>SB389</u>	Repeals the provision of the Code of Virginia requiring an adult child to assist in providing for the support and maintenance of his or her parent, when such parent requires assistance.
<u>SB393</u>	Provides specific ways that a controller that has obtained personal data about a consumer from a third party shall be deemed in compliance with a consumer's request to delete such data. The identical house bill, HB381, was signed.
<u>SB422</u>	Identical to HB675 related to premium rates based on tobacco use.
<u>SB464</u>	Requires the attorney for the Commonwealth to file with the clerk of the court a copy of any witness subpoena and to provide a copy of such subpoena to any defendant or attorney for the defendant in the pending criminal matter.
<u>SB655</u>	Requires employers to electronically submit claim-related forms and separation information, as well as other information and electronic tax payments, upon the Virginia Employment Commission's request, unless the employer has received a waiver by the Commission. Creates a pilot program with a sample group of employers to proactively provide separation information electronically within seven days.
<u>SB706</u>	Prohibits operators of heavy trucks, as defined in the bill, from using cruise control or compression release engine brakes when driving in active snow, sleet, or freezing rain.
<u>SB722</u>	Authorizes localities in Planning District 8 (NoVA) to prohibit parking a motor vehicle with its wheels fully on the curb or with its wheels straddling the curb.

Thank you

If you'd like to share your feedback on legislation during this session or need anything, please feel free to email me at DelEBennett-Parker@house.virginia.gov or call our office at 703-239-

3155.

Warmly,
Elizabeth

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Paid for and Authorized By Elect Elizabeth Bennett-Parker
