

Elizabeth Bennett-Parker

Delegate • Virginia House District 45

Dear {{ FirstName | default: 'Friend' }},

Last week, both the House and Senate passed their respective budgets. With session theoretically adjourning at the end of next week, the two budgets are currently far apart on many important issues.

Chief among these differences is funding for education versus funding tax cuts for corporations and the wealthiest Virginians. The Senate dedicated \$1 billion to school funding to give our teachers raises, hire additional instructional positions, remove the cap on state funding of school support positions, and more. The House budget instead dedicated \$1 billion to tax cuts. Corporations would get over \$350 million in tax breaks and pay a lower tax rate than hard-working Virginians, with the majority of households getting less than \$50 from these changes. These tax cuts would not only result in less money this year for vital services like schools, roads, and healthcare, but the costs of these tax cuts would balloon next year, resulting in even less funding for services. Our tax system should be fair – and it should reward hard work, with everyone paying their fair share.

Below is a table that compares some of the items in the budgets, followed by updates on bills that have been moving through the General Assembly.

Item	House	Senate
Education		
Additional funding for Pre-K	\$20 million limited to Lenowisco and Crater Planning Districts	\$40 million available statewide
Teacher Pay Increase	Provides state share of 7%	Provides state share of 7%
Teacher Retention Bonus	\$1.7 million for certain regional programs	\$140.4 million (\$1,000 for each instructional and support position)
Salary Increase for Board Certified Teachers	\$0	\$8.9 million
Funding for Lab Schools	\$50 million	-\$95 million (and reallocates to school divisions)
Direct Aid to cover Governor's Miscalculation	\$4.9 million	\$58.1 million
Instructors for English Language Learners	\$0	\$24.3 million
Reading Specialists	\$30.8 million	\$51.1 million
Additional Instructional Assistants	\$3 million	\$38.6 million
Funding for Additional Support Staff (eliminating the state funding cap)	\$0	\$270.6 million
Funding for Additional Mental and Physical Health Staff in Schools	\$0	\$56.9 million
School-Based Mental Health Pilot	\$15 million	\$15 million
At-Risk Add on	\$0	\$37.1 million
School Security Grants	\$13.5 million	\$50 million
Higher Ed Affordability	\$75.6 million	\$224.8 million
Funding to Recruit/Retain Pell Grant Students	\$0	\$25 million
Health/Human Services/Housing		
Paid Family/Medical Leave	Not included	Includes language authorizing a treasury loan to fund start-up costs
Prescription Affordability Board	\$0	\$0.3 million
Health Care for Income-Eligible Uninsured Children	\$0	\$7.3 million
Medicaid Reimbursement Rate Increases	\$53.8 million	\$210 million
Salary Adjustments for Community Services Boards Staff	\$36.5 million	\$58.7 million
Developmental Disability Waivers	\$15.2 million (500 spots)	\$15.2 million (500 spots) + adds an additional 500 spots contingent on balances
Status of Allowing Abortions for Pregnant Medicaid Recipients who receive a severe fetal diagnosis (approx 20 per year)	Eliminates funding	Keeps funding
Mental Health Workforce Pilot Program (supports the costs of required supervision for graduates of Masters of Social Work and Masters of Counseling Programs seeking licensure)	Eliminates program (- \$500,000)	Keeps program (\$500,000)
Additional Funding for Crisis Receiving Centers and Stabilization Units	\$83.3 million	\$88.3 million
Virginia Mental Health Access Program Expansion to Early Childhood and Perinatal Providers	\$0	\$7.9 million
Increased funding for supervised residential care for people with serious mental illness	\$8 million	\$58 million

Funding for Affordable Manufactured Home Park Pilot Program	\$0	\$3 million
Increases the Auxiliary Grant rate for low-income individuals residing in assisted living facilities and the reimbursement rate for the facilities who serve them	\$4.9 million	\$30.2 million
Other Items of Note		
State Aid for Local Libraries	\$2 million	\$5 million
Creates a Virginia Football Stadium Authority	Includes Language	Not included
Funding to study the relocation of the Washington Commanders to Virginia	\$500,000	\$0
Resilient Revolving Loan Fund	\$100 million	\$200 million
Stormwater Local Assistance Fund	\$10 million	\$20 million
Cannabis Control Authority	-\$13.4 million	\$6 million
Operation Ceasefire	\$20 million	\$0
Firearm Violence Intervention & Prevention Center	\$0	\$20 million
Safer Communities Program (community-based violence prevention programs)	\$0	\$10 million

The House and Senate must now attempt to reconcile their respective budgets for a final vote before we are scheduled to adjourn on February 25th.

Legislative Updates

Given Virginia's divided government, bills that pass one chamber on partisan lines or with very narrow bipartisan support face an uphill, and likely impossible, path forward. With crossover behind us, this is now an accurate description of the majority of bills that were introduced this year:



Some of the good news - these dead bills include:

- All 12 anti-transgender bills
- Bills to restrict voting rights and access
- All the bills that would have repealed the Clean Car Standards.
- Bills to repeal limits on pretextual stops that are disproportionately used against Black and Brown drivers.
- All of the anti-abortion bills

Some of the bad news - these dead bills include:

- All of the campaign finance reform bills, including [a bill](#) that passed the Senate unanimously and would have prohibited the personal use of campaign contributions (with exceptions for childcare).
- The [bill](#) to establish a paid family and medical leave
- All but [one](#) of the gun violence prevention bills
- A bipartisan [bill](#) to shield menstrual data from law enforcement, [thanks to the Governor's opposition](#).

For some more good news, here are some bills that are still alive.

Bill No.	Description	House Status	Senate Status
HB1403	Requires public colleges and universities to allow foster care students to stay on campus during school breaks at no cost.	Passed House 100-0	Passed Senate 40-0
HB1423	Establishes the Commission on Early Childhood Care and Education for the purpose of providing recommendations for and tracking progress on the financing of a comprehensive birth-to-five early childhood care and education system as established that provides stable, high-quality early childhood care and education services for families who need them the most, empowers parents with choices that meet their needs and preferences, and supports both school readiness and workforce participation.	Passed House 98-0	Passed Senate 40-0
HB1426	Requires medical professionals to receive human trafficking awareness training.	Passed House 100-0	Passed Committee 14-0
HB1433	Authorizes Virginia to become a part of the counseling compact to allow mental health counselors licensed in other compact states to practice in Virginia.	Passed House 100-0	Passed Senate 34-6
HB1446	Requires minimum staffing standards for nursing facilities.	Passed House 95-2	Passed Senate 40-0
HB1510	Authorizes localities to establish programs to grant tax incentives or provide regulatory flexibility to encourage the preservation, restoration, or development of urban green space.	Passed House 72-27	Awaiting Action
HB1511	Allows for licensed midwives to obtain and administer drugs within the scope of their practice.	Passed House 98-0	Passed Senate 40-0
HB1525	Removes the prohibition on individuals who have been convicted of barrier crimes from serving as	Passed House 99-0	Passed Committee 14-0

	peer recovery specialists.		
HB1526	Expands the Virginia Literacy Act to include students in grades four through eight.	Passed House 100-0	Passed Committee 14-0
HB1555	Requires public institutions of higher education to provide trauma-informed human trafficking awareness and prevention training programs to all first-year students.	Passed House 99-0	Passed Senate 40-0
HB1567	Requires the Virginia Department of Health to convene a workgroup to evaluate strategies to reduce maternal & infant mortality rates.	Passed House 100-0	Passed Senate 40-0
HB1592	Requires school personnel to notify parents of an alleged bullying incident within 24 hours.	Passed House 100-0	Passed Senate 40-0
HB1702	Requires landlords with more than four units whose leases have an automatic renewal provision or the option to renew to provide written notice of any rent increase at least 60 days before the lease ends.	Passed House 58-42	Passed Senate 24-16
HB1762	Establishes the Teacher Reengagement Program for the purpose of addressing instructional personnel shortages and COVID-19 pandemic-related student learning loss.	Passed House 99-0	Passed Committee 14-0
HB1895	Prohibits employers from requiring employees or prospective employees from signing an NDA that states they may not disclose a sexual assault. (Senate substitute adds additional language and a \$10,000 penalty for employers.)	Passed House 98-1	Passed Senate 22-18
HB1924	Prohibits employers from paying sub-minimum wages to individuals with disabilities.	Passed House 100-0	Passed Committee 12-2-1
HB1951	Designates the Chincoteague Pony as the official pony of the Commonwealth.	Passed House 93-7	Passed Committee 15-0
HB1968	Directs state agencies to approve signs for historical sites relating to the "Green Book," published by Victor Hugo Green, which provided a list of hotels, guest houses, service stations, drug stores, taverns, barber shops, and restaurants known to be safe for traveling Black Americans during the Jim Crow era.	Passed House 100-0	Passed Committee 15-0
HB1996	Requires the summons for Unlawful Detainer/Civil Claim for Eviction form to be modified to be understandable to persons whose literacy level matches the Virginia literacy level for fourth grade; explain that failure to appear in court may result in eviction from the defendant's household; and provide the statewide Legal Aid and Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot program websites and phone numbers, directing defendants to contact those programs for more information and assistance.	Passed House 99-0	Passed Senate 40-0
HB2021	Requires parents to receive notification about free and reduced meal applications at back to school nights.	Passed House 66-33	Passed Committee 15-0
HB2025	Requires notification on SNAP benefits and a free or reduced price meals application to be sent home with each public school student at the beginning of the year (or as soon as practicable after enrollment).	Passed House 78-22	Awaiting Action
HB2046	Requires the Department of Housing and Community Development to: conduct a comprehensive statewide housing needs assessment at least every five years; develop a statewide housing plan and update it at least every five years; provide annual updates regarding meeting the goals of such plan; and to collect and publish certain zoning information collected from Virginia localities.	Passed House 99-0	Passed Committee 15-0
HB2096	Requires the Department of Conservation and Recreation to create an invasive plant species list and update it quadrennially. Prohibits any agency from planting, selling, or propagating any plant on the list except if necessary for scientific, educational, or bona fide agricultural purposes.	Passed House 99-0	Passed Committee 15-0
HB2099	Expands tax credit to update, build, or redevelop structures into livable homes.	Passed House 97-2	Passed Senate 40-0
HB2187	Requires school counselors to spend 80% of their time counseling students.	Passed House 94-5	Passed Senate 39-1
HB2208	Establishes antisemitic animosity as a hate crime.	Passed House 98-1	Passed Committee 16-0
HB2224	Prohibits fees from being charged to parent(s) of newborns for required newborn screening tests.	Passed House 95-3	Awaiting Action
HB2317	Increases payment for jury duty from \$30 to \$50 per day.	Passed House 99-0	Passed Committee 14-0

HB2338	Directs the Commonwealth Transportation Board to use up to 30 percent of available funds in the Transit Ridership Incentive Program to improve the accessibility of transit bus passenger facilities and transition public transit bus fleets and infrastructure to zero-emission bus fleets and infrastructure.	Passed House 64-35	Passed Senate 24-15
HB2348	Provides penalties for animal testing facilities that are noncompliant with federal laws and regulations.	Passed House 97-2	Awaiting Action
HB2375	Requires the Board of Education to extend for at least one additional year the provisional license of a teacher upon receiving (i) a recommendation for such extension and (ii) satisfactory performance evaluations for such teacher for each year of the provisional license.	Passed House 99-0	Passed Senate 40-0
HB2380	Directs the Department of Social Services to provide information, resources, and education to food banks regarding providing assistance to individuals completing a SNAP application, including the process for organizations to enter into a contract with the Department to provide this service.	Passed House 74-26	Awaiting Action
HB2387	Establishes a tax credit of up to \$300 for purchasing a firearm storage safety device.	Passed House 98-1	Passed Senate 40-0
HB2414	Allows a disabled veteran or surviving spouse to apply for a real property tax exemption and receive a decision prior to purchasing a qualifying property.	Passed House 99-0	Passed Senate 40-0
HB2424	Allows courts to appoint certified interpreters for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.	Passed House 100-0	Passed Senate 40-0
HB2441	Requires large landlords that terminate 20 or more month-to-month leases within 30 days in the same building to give at least 60 days' notice to tenants.	Passed House 68-31	Passed Committee 11-4

Here is an update on some of my legislation:

Reducing Food Insecurity

[Passed Senate unanimously with a substitute and is in Conference Committee.](#)

[HB2445](#) revives the Food Crop Donation Tax Credit to support farmers, reduce food waste, and get more local food to our food banks.

Consumer Protection for Deceptive Event Ticketing Practices

[Passed Senate General Laws Committee 15-0.](#)

[HB 1857](#) is a consumer protection bill to prohibit deceptive websites that mimic official box office ticketing websites. These websites lead consumers to think they are buying tickets at face value when they are really paying a substantial premium.

Supporting the Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission

[Passed Senate General Laws Committee 15-0.](#)

[HB2371](#) removes the requirement that the volunteer members of the Commission secure a \$10,000 surety bond in order to serve. This requirement is a barrier to service on an advisory body without compensation.

Criminal Justice Reform and Supporting Small Businesses

[Will be heard in Senate Rehabilitation and Social Services Committee this morning.](#)

Virginia Code does not allow restaurants or alcohol wholesalers to hire anyone who has ever had a felony conviction to work with alcohol. [HB 1730](#) would allow ABC licensees to hire individuals with felony convictions after two years and the completion of probation.

Electronic Meeting Flexibility for Local Advisory Boards and Commissions

[Failed in House Subcommittee on a party line vote.](#)

Unfortunately, despite members of the subcommittee saying in advance that they would support Senator Marsden's [amended version](#) of our bill, which had passed the Senate on a bipartisan basis, this bill was defeated on a party line vote in a House subcommittee.

Commending Melwood



Earlier this week, I had the honor of introducing representatives from [Melwood](#) on the House Floor and we passed a Commending Resolution to celebrate their 60th Anniversary. Thank you Melwood for breaking down barriers for people with disabilities through strategic partnerships, advocacy, job training and employment opportunities!

Contact Me

If you'd like to share your feedback on legislation during this session or hear anything, please email me at DelEBennett-Parker@delaware.gov or call our office at 302-698-1045.

Warmly,
Elizabeth

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Virginia's 45th District

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