

Elizabeth Bennett-Parker

Delegate • Virginia House District 45

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

We adjourned our regular session a little after 5pm on Saturday and more than 800 bills are now on their way to the Governor. The Governor may sign a bill into law, send the bill back to the General Assembly with amendments, or veto a bill. Any bill that is sent to the Governor that he does not sign or act upon will become law by default and in most cases will go into effect on July 1st. (All new laws become effective on July 1 unless they specify a delayed date, or have an emergency clause - in which case they go into effect immediately upon the Governor's signature.)

Update on the Budget

My last newsletter outlined just how far apart the House and Senate budgets started in the process. 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 to corporations and top earners. Conferees were unsurprisingly unable to reach an agreement on the budget before we adjourned.

We passed a stopgap measure on Saturday to fix the Youngkin Administration's calculation error that would have cost our school divisions more than \$200 million that they had been promised. Given that school

systems are undergoing their own budget processes, it was critical to give them the assurance they would have this funding to avoid harmful cuts.

The General Assembly will reconvene on April 12th to consider the Governor's amendments to bills and vetoes. We may also have a special session to consider any budget compromise that is reached.

Legislative Update

Below is an update on the status of my bills, as well as some of the other bills that are being sent to the Governor.

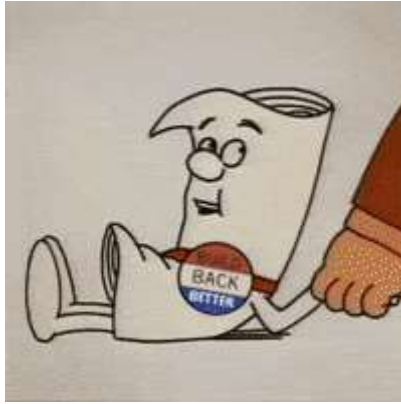
I'm pleased to share that all four of my bills that passed the House also passed the Senate and are on their way to the Governor. This was not something I took for granted; I learned last year that you can get a bill out of the House unanimously and then have to fight to keep it alive in the Senate.

Two of my bills passed the House and Senate in identical formats and went straight to the Governor. These were:

- **Consumer Protection for Deceptive Event Websites** [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** [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.

The other two bills were less straightforward, as they passed the Senate differently than they had passed the House.

Bill Journeys Post-Crossover



Once a bill passes its original chamber and heads to the other chamber, three things can happen:

1. It can die
2. It can pass as-is (and head to the Governor)
3. It can pass with changes

If it passes the other chamber with changes, it must come back to the original chamber for approval. At that time, the patron can ask for those changes to be accepted or rejected. If the patron asks to accept the changes, the vote at that time is on final passage. If the vote is successful, the bill then heads to the Governor. If the patron asks to reject the changes, the bill then heads to a conference committee.

Conference committees are made up of six legislators - three from each chamber and generally two from the majority party and one from the minority party in each chamber. The patron will work with the other members to try to find an agreement on how to resolve the differences between the two versions. Two members from each chamber must sign the conference report in order for the bill to move forward.

Provided those signatures happen, (bills sometimes die in conference due to an inability to find a compromise), the conference report then goes back to both chambers for a vote. If both votes are successful, the bill then heads to the Governor. It is worth noting that all of this may happen within a span of a few days - the deadline for bills to go into conference was last Thursday and we had to vote on any outstanding reports by Saturday. Also, there are no scheduled conference committee meetings - the bill patron has to track down the other members (in between floor votes and business) to discuss

the conference report with them - and the two chambers are not necessarily on the same schedule.

Two of my bills passed the Senate with changes.

Supporting Food Banks and Farmers [HB2445](#) will reinstate and expand a food donation tax credit to support farmers, reduce food waste, and get more local food to our food banks. The Senate Finance committee transformed this bill into something completely different, which then passed the Senate. I asked to reject these changes in the House and was able to get the conferees to agree to the original bill. Thankfully, both chambers also voted to approve the conference report.



I want to again thank and highlight the hard work of incredible high school students from the Virginia Beach chapter of Food Rescue US, who advocated for this bill. You can watch their testimony below:



Criminal Justice Reform and Supporting Small Businesses

Virginia does not allow restaurants or alcohol wholesalers to hire anyone who has ever had a felony conviction to work with alcohol without going through a bureaucratic waiver process. [HB 1730](#) would allow ABC licensees to automatically hire individuals with felony convictions after two years and the completion of probation.

This bill initially died in subcommittee along partisan lines, but I was able to work across the aisle on some amendments and have it reconsidered. However, a late-breaking change to those amendments threatened to gut the intent of the bill and its impact. Fortunately, we were able to amend the bill in the Senate and asked the House to accept the changes which resolved the issue. I didn't know if the bill was going to pass until the vote happened, but it did.

Below is a list of some of the other bills that have been sent to the Governor.

Bill No.	Description
HB1403	Requires public colleges and universities to allow foster care students to stay on campus during school breaks at no cost.
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.
HB1426	Requires medical professionals to receive human trafficking awareness training.
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.
HB1446	Requires minimum staffing standards for nursing facilities.
HB1450	Updates disability terminology in Virginia Code.
HB1504	Directs the Joint Commission on Technology and Science to make recommendations on how to dissuade spam calls/texts.
HB1510	Authorizes localities to establish programs to provide incentives for green space.
HB1511	Allows licensed midwives to obtain and administer drugs within the scope of their practice.
HB1517	Requires organizations offering free trials with automatic renewals to alert consumers before the end of the free trial.
HB1525	Removes the prohibition on individuals who have been convicted of barrier crimes from serving as peer recovery specialists.
HB1526	Expands the Virginia Literacy Act to include students in grades four through eight.
HB1555	Requires public institutions of higher education to provide trauma-informed human trafficking awareness and prevention training programs to all first-year students.
HB1567	Requires the Virginia Department of Health to convene a workgroup to evaluate strategies to reduce maternal & infant mortality rates.
HB1592	Requires school personnel to notify parents of an alleged bullying incident within 24 hours.
HB1604	Gives the State Corporation Commission authority to order reductions or increases in utility base rates to ensure that rates are just and reasonable.
HB1635	Allows for tenants to break their lease and receive a full refund of deposits and rent if the unit is uninhabitable at the

	beginning of the tenancy. (This includes an infestation of rodents or a lack of heat, hot or cold running water, or electricity.)
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.
HB1762	Establishes the Teacher Reengagement Program for the purpose of addressing instructional personnel shortages and COVID-19 pandemic-related student learning loss.
HB1895	Prohibits employers from requiring employees or prospective employees from signing an NDA that states they may not disclose a sexual assault.
HB1924	Prohibits employers from paying sub-minimum wages to individuals with disabilities.
HB1951	Designates the Chincoteague Pony as the official pony of the Commonwealth.
HB1963	Provides greater financial flexibility for assistive technology and electronic home-based support services for people with developmental disabilities who are receiving waiver services.
HB1968	Directs state agencies to approve signs for historical sites relating to the "Green Book," which provided a list of hotels, service stations, restaurants, and other businesses known to be safe for traveling Black Americans during the Jim Crow era.
HB1996	Requires the summons for Unlawful Detainer/Civil Claim for Eviction form to be modified to be understandable at a fourth grade reading level and provide the statewide Legal Aid and Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot program websites and phone numbers.
HB1998	Requires agencies to prioritize the use of native plant species on state properties.
HB2021	Requires schools to notify parents about free and reduced meal applications at back to school nights.

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).
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.
HB2096	Requires the Department of Conservation and Recreation to create an invasive plant species list and update it quadrennially. Prohibits any agency from planting any plant on the list except if necessary for scientific, educational, or bona fide agricultural purposes.
HB2099	Increases the maximum amount of livable home tax credits an individual may claim each year for retrofitting an existing residence to improve accessibility or purchasing a new residence from \$5,000 to \$6,500. Also increases the aggregate cap of tax credits allowed from \$1 million to \$2 million.
HB2187	Requires school counselors to spend 80% of their time counseling students.
HB2224	Prohibits fees from being charged to parent(s) of newborns for required newborn screening tests.
HB2317	Increases payment for jury duty from \$30 to \$50 per day.
HB2338	Requires the use of up to 30 percent of 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.
HB2348	Provides penalties for animal testing facilities that are noncompliant with federal laws and regulations.
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.
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.
HB2387	Establishes a tax credit of up to \$300 for purchasing a firearm storage safety device.
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.
HB2424	Allows courts to appoint certified interpreters for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing if the Department for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing cannot procure a qualified interpreter.
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.
SB1085	Requires the Department of Transportation to study the issue of vehicle noise and report its findings.
SB1091	Expands the allowable uses of grants from a local stormwater management fund to include joint flooding mitigation projects of condominium owners.
SB1427	Increases certain contribution reporting requirements for political action committees.



Senate Center Aisle Presentation for Joan Trumpauer Mulholland

It was inspiring to join the rest of the Arlington delegation for a Center Aisle presentation honoring civil rights activist and Freedom Rider Joan Mulholland. Read the commending resolution sponsored by Senator Barbara Favola and Delegate Patrick Hope [here](#) and learn about the work of the foundation named in her honor at: <https://joantrumpauermulholland.org/>



Equality VA

It was great to join Equality Virginia for a rally on Capitol Square to send the message that trans youth are welcome in our communities and celebrate the defeat of bills that would have harmed LGBTQ+ students.



Virginia Young Democrats

It was wonderful to speak with members of the Virginia Young Democrats on their lobby day. Their priorities include protecting reproductive rights, investing in clean energy initiatives, and creating a strong economy for all Virginians.

Contact Me

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 or call our office at 703-239-3155.

Warmly,
Elizabeth

Elizabeth Bennett-Parker

Delegate

Virginia's 45th District

www.ElizabethforDelegate.com

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