(Still) Legislating in the Shadow of Washington’s Chaos

General Assembly
2018 Report

Delegate David Toscano
Democratic Leader of the Virginia House of Delegates
Representing the 57th District • Charlottesville & Albemarle
State of Play in Richmond: Divided Government

Governor
Ralph Northam

Lt. Governor
Justin Fairfax

Attorney General
Mark Herring

Democratic Leader of the Virginia House of Delegates
Representing the 57th District • Charlottesville & Albemarle
**A Changed General Assembly**

- **State Senate**
  - 19 Democrats, 21 Republicans

- **House of Delegates**
  - 34 Democrats, 66 Republicans

*Democratic Leader of the Virginia House of Delegates*

*Representing the 57th District • Charlottesville & Albemarle*
If things had gone just a little bit differently ...

... but after the tie-breaking drawing by the State Board of Elections, both houses of the General Assembly remain under Republican control by very slim margins.

Democratic Leader of the Virginia House of Delegates
Representing the 57th District • Charlottesville & Albemarle
We had our moments
HB 459 – Designated *Pseudotriton ruber* as the official state salamander

joining the following state animals:
bat
bird
dog
fish (fresh water) and fish (salt water)
insect and snake
But Raccoons Were Not So Lucky

HB 239/SB 375 – Removed the prohibition on hunting raccoons on Sundays after 2:00 am.
Wineries (And More) Going To The Dogs

HB 286 – Allows dogs “inside or on the premises of” a winery, brewery or distillery

Other companion animals must still drink at home
A New Kind of ABC License

HB 1602/SB 61 – Creates a confectionery license, to make & sell sweet treats with alcohol in them for consumption off-premises...

... as long as the alcohol is not in liquid form at the time of sale.
SB 769 added a special “museum license” to current law so that the Virginia Beer Museum can sell beer to patrons
2018: A New Budget

Democratic Leader of the Virginia House of Delegates
Representing the 57th District • Charlottesville & Albemarle
House Budget Highlights 2018

* Medicaid expansion: added health care access for 400,000 Virginians AND freed up state monies for:
  * Education funding increases
  * Education and economic opportunities in high-demand fields (such as cybersecurity)
  * Raises for teachers/school personnel, law enforcement, state mental health hospital nurses and staff

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Senate Budget 2018

- No Medicaid expansion
- Funding cuts to education, public safety, and more
- Funded some high-priority mental health initiatives, but others were cut
- Studies to evaluate safety of biosolid use funded
- Rainy Day Fund allocation was 2x larger than the House budget
The difference is Medicaid

- House committee members (both Rs and Ds) insisted on expansion
- But the Senate conferees were divided; Republican members would not agree to expand Medicaid
2018 Significant Legislation

- HB 1558/SB 966: Utility Rate Reviews (The Dominion Bill)
- HB 1600: Limiting length of school suspensions, to help address the school-to-prison “pipeline”
- HB 1249/SB 565: Additions to DNA database sample collections: specific misdemeanors linked to later violent crimes
- Felony larceny threshold increased to $500
- SB 698 & SB 699: DEQ stop-work orders authorized to protect against adverse impacts on water quality due to land-disturbing pipeline construction activities
2018: Still Left To Do
Medicaid Expansion

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Impact of Undermining the ACA
Obamacare marketplace survives but Virginia premium rates are increasing by double digits

Where are the most expensive ACA plans in America? Charlottesville.
Supporting Our Teachers?

Virginia’s average pay for teachers is $9,218 below the national average (34th out of the 50 states)

In 1989, Virginia was 18th out of 50

Virginia ranks in the 10 wealthiest states in the nation, yet between 2009 and 2018, teacher pay (in constant dollars) FELL by 8.5 percent

Since 2008, the state has removed approximately 5,000 support positions from our public schools via “adjustments” to the Standards of Quality, leaving teachers to do more with less

Our teachers deserve better
Even with changes in the House, some things stayed the same...

- No gun safety (except SB 669)
- No minimum wage increase
- No improvement of voter rights
- Couldn’t even get agreement on a distracted driving bill...
Safety Efforts Continue

- Select Committee on School Safety
  - Will not discuss gun violence in schools
  - Data shows that schools are safer than their surrounding communities – violence in schools is only a small part of the gun violence crisis in our country

- House Democratic Caucus: Safe Virginia Initiative
  - All delegates have been invited to participate, from both parties
  - Four regional public meetings will be held around Virginia
What do you see?

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Representing the 57th District • Charlottesville & Albemarle

PENNSYLVANIA’S 7TH
(“Goofy Kicking Donald Duck”)
Failure of Redistricting Reform

House of Delegates District 72

House of Delegates District 68

House of Delegates District 73

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Why States Matter - Chambers held by Party

Democrat: 60
Republican: 80

2017 Legislative Partisan Composition

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures

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What’s Next?

2018 Federal Elections

• June 12th Republican Primary for U.S. Senate nomination
• November 6th Election for U.S. Senate and U.S. House members

2019 Virginia Elections

• Entire General Assembly (140 seats)
• Last legislative election before decennial redistricting
# How To Contact Us

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