

Dear {{FirstName or 'Friend'}},

The holidays are fast approaching! I have been busy this past month attending various legislative briefings from various organizations including the Virginia Conservation Network's Utility University. I have also been meeting with many stakeholders, constituents, administration officials and experts about our proposed legislation to ensure it's ready to go.

**I am excited to share that applications are now open for high school students to apply for the 1st annual Youth Leadership Program,** which will give students the opportunity to join our office during the legislative session in Richmond this January. We have extended the deadline to apply to December 27th.

I was pleased to honor the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department for 75 years of service to our community.

I hope you and your family have a wonderful and happy holiday season.



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## **Sen. Pekarsky to Introduce Bill on Cell Phone Policy in Public Schools**

Sen. Pekarsky is introducing [SB 738](#), which bans cell phones in public schools schools. My bill adds guardrails not found in Gov. Youngkin's Executive Order by ensuring students are not suspended for violations and remain in class, as well as

protecting students who use their devices for special accommodations.

In contrast to the Governor's policy, this legislation includes the following:

- Specifically prioritizes SPED students, IEP, or 504 plans and includes protections for students who use their devices for accommodations for which cell phone usage is necessary.
- Clarifies that no violation of these policies alone shall constitute suspension or expulsion of a student, and ensures enforcement does not result in expulsion that leads to a loss of academic time that would defeat the purpose of cell phone free classroom learning.
- Ensures the responsibility of enforcement is on the administration, not teachers who are already overburdened in the classroom.

Recently, Sen. Pekarsky's [bill was highlighted on Radio IQ](#).

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## FTC Announces Bipartisan Rule Banning Junk Ticket and Hotel Fees

Yesterday, the Federal Trade Commission announced a final **Junk Fees Rule** to prohibit bait-and-switch pricing and other tactics used to hide total prices and bury junk fees in the live-event ticketing and short-term lodging industries.

This means hardworking families across Virginia and the country will be protected from unfair and deceptive pricing practices.

Sen. Pekarsky will continue this work in Virginia this legislative session when she introduces her bill to curb junk fees.

FACT SHEET

# The FTC's Bipartisan Junk Fees Rule

This rule will help the FTC get money back to people misled by bait-and-switch pricing and hidden fees for live-event tickets and short-term lodging.



## Under the FTC's Junk Fees Rule:

- ✓ You'll know the costs of live-event tickets and short-term lodging upfront.
- ✓ Advertised prices will include all mandatory fees, with few exceptions.
- ✓ Businesses must tell the truth about:
  - The total price of live-event tickets and short-term lodging.
  - Fees: How much? What for? Are they refundable?
- ✓ Violators can be held liable for consumer redress and civil penalties.



## 1st Annual High School Youth Leadership Program

*Applications Now Open  
for Juniors + Seniors*

# High School Youth Leadership Program

*Students are invited to apply to  
Senator Pekarsky's 1st Annual  
Youth Leadership Program & join  
the office for 2 days during the  
legislative session to learn about  
the legislative process*

**Apply by 12/27/2024**

Reach out to [kthames@senate.virginia.gov](mailto:kthames@senate.virginia.gov) for more information

High School students within the 36th Senate District are invited to apply to the 1st annual Leadership Youth Program my office is hosting. **The program will bring high school students to Richmond Virginia during the legislative session to give them a firsthand experience of the legislative process.** The 2 night trip will come at no cost to students and allow them to join committee meetings, floor voting sessions, hear directly from issue experts + advocates, meet with members and their staff, and tour the Capitol.

**APPLY HERE**

# Honoring 75 Years of the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department



Sen. Pekarsky presented the Senate Joint Resolution commending the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department for the 75 years of excellent service to the Fairfax County community. The Department has safeguards the residents and property of the Fairfax County community while also providing critical services such as swift water rescue, hazardous materials remediation, and emergency medical services, including basic and advanced life support and emergency medical transportation.



Assistant Chief John L. Walser accepted the resolution on behalf of the Department.

[Read the full resolution.](#)

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## **Pekarsky Honored by IAFF Local 2068**



Sen. Pekarsky and Sen. Saddam Salim were honored by the Fairfax County Professional Firefighters & Paramedics IAFF Local 2068 for their work in the General Assembly for passing bills that positively impact the lives of firefighters. Last session, Sen. Pekarsky introduced legislation that expanded worker protections for public employees, including firefighters, for the employee's lawful use of cannabis oil.

[Read the full bill, SB 391.](#)

## Local News

# Fairfax Connector's Christmas & New Year's Day Service Schedule



The Fairfax Connector will operate on a modified schedule due to the Christmas Day and New Year's Day holidays.

On Wednesday, Dec. 25, 2024, and Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2025, Connector buses will run on a Sunday service schedule. Connector buses on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve will operate regular weekday service.

- Tuesday, Dec. 24, 2024 (Christmas Eve): Regular Service
- Wednesday, Dec. 25, 2024 (Christmas Day): Sunday Service
- Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 (New Year's Eve): Regular Service
- Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2025 (New Year's Day): Sunday Service

### Christmas & New Year's Day Schedule

Routes that operate on Sundays:

[101](#), [109](#), [151](#), [152](#), [161](#), [162](#), [171](#), [310](#), [321](#), [322](#), [371](#), [401](#), [402](#),  
[423](#), [463](#), [467](#), [558](#), [559](#), [574](#), [605](#),  
[615](#), [630](#), [642](#), [651](#), [662](#), [672](#), [721](#), [803](#), [901](#), [921](#), [924](#), [937](#), [950](#),  
[952](#), [954](#), [983](#), [RIBS 1](#), [RIBS 2](#),  
[RIBS 3](#), [RIBS 4](#) and [RIBS 5](#).

If a route is not listed above, it does not operate Sunday service.

Find information about all Fairfax Connector holiday schedules [here](#).

Additionally, all [Connector Transit stores](#), and the Customer Service Call Center will be closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. However, the call center will be available to assist customers on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. The Connector stores will also operate normal service hours on Dec. 24 and Dec. 31.

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## Community Resources



**COVID-19**  
**TESTING**



**Flu + COVID-19 Resources**



It is flu and COVID-19 season again. Everyone ages 6 months and older should get a 2024–2025 COVID-19 vaccine. People who are up to date with their COVID-19 vaccine have lower risk of severe illness. The Fairfax County Health Department offers [recourses for finding COVID-19 vaccine locations and information.](#)

Need to find resources on COVID-19 testing? The Fairfax County Health Department has [additional information on testing and best practices.](#) You can also visit the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) tool to [search for a testing site in Virginia near you.](#)



## [Subscribe to my Newsletter!](#)

[Stay informed about what is happening in Richmond and around the 36th District.](#)



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## **It is a pleasure to serve you in the 36th District**

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**Cheers,**  
**Stella Pekarsky**  
**Senator, District 36**

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