



Dear {{FirstName or 'Friend'}},


Bills are starting to move out of the General Assembly to the Governor's Desk! LEGO visits the General Assembly, General Assembly Budget updates, community information, important VDOT bulletin, and honoring Rep. Jennifer Wexton.

Honoring Representative Jennifer Wexton



Rep. Wexton visited the Senate of Virginia this week and many of her former colleagues and friends spoke on the floor to share their favorite stories and how Rep. Wexton has inspired leaders during the years of her service in the Senate of Virginia and in Congress. I spoke on the floor honoring her commitment to public service. I am proud to have Rep. Wexton as my Congresswoman.

Legislation Moving to the House of Delegates for a vote



Stella
PEKARSKY
Senator

Legislation Heading to the Governor

SB 392
Mandates at least one doctor on duty in ERs

Legislation Passes the House of Delegates

<p>SB 391 Protects public employees using medicinal cannabis products</p>	<p>SB 393 MEI Project Approval Commission to consider diversity of boards</p>
--	--

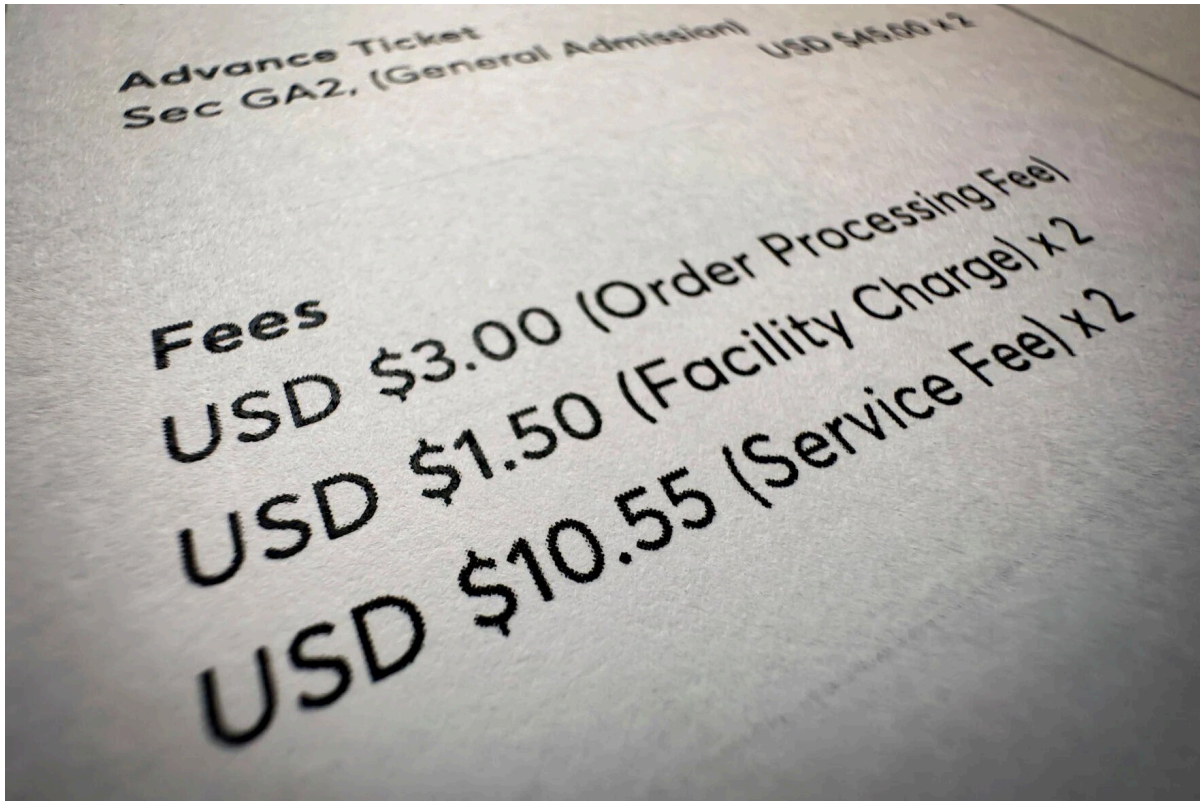
SB 388 Mandatory Disclosure of Junk Fees Bill Reported from House Subcommittee



On Thursday, my bill [SB 388](#), reported from the House Labor and Commerce Subcommittee 2. SB 388 protects consumers from surprise fees. These fees are incredibly harmful to hardworking Virginians and to our economy. Hidden fees can occur when booking a hotel room, renting a car, or even purchasing Taylor Swift Eras Tour tickets. This bill enhances the Virginia Consumer Protection Act and is good for business because it builds trust with consumers and trust is what builds a customer base. This levels the playing field for all business particularly smaller ones in our community.

In the News

The Richmond Times Dispatch covered my legislation that mandates the full disclosure of all mandatory fees associated with the purchase of goods. Virginia families deserve to know the full upfront price of what they're purchasing, regardless of what they're buying. Our bill heads to the full commerce and labor committee in the House this week for another vote.



[Read More Here](#)

Virginia General Assembly Budget Information



This year members of the General Assembly are responsible for passing a biannual budget that will fund Virginia for the next 2 years. The Senate, the House and the Governors office have all submitted 3 different budget proposals that we will work to align in the coming weeks.

[I encourage everyone who is interested in understanding more about our budget to review the incredible resources that The Commonwealth Institute has created.](#) Coming from the School Board, one of my top priorities has been to ensure that our education is properly funded. The Senate budget reflects those commitments.

VIRGINIA'S BUDGET PROCESS



Senate Budget Highlights:

Increase Teacher Pay – \$525.2 million for the state portion of a 3% pay increase per year for teachers (localities asked provide at least 1.5% of pay increase). This will put Virginia as

close as it has been in a long time to being at the national average for teacher pay.

Remove Support Staff Cap – The Senate budget adds \$400 million to remove the support position cap. This cap was added in 2010 as a budget measure. It placed a cap on the number of support staff positions that the state would support through its Standards of Quality funding. This recommendation is a key part of the recent JLARC recommendations on Virginia’s education funding formula.

Support In-Need Schools – Increases the At-Risk Add On funding by \$200.6 million. This money is distributed to school districts with high concentrations of students on free and reduced lunch. It can be used for anything a school deems necessary. This funding is particularly important for Fairfax County Public Schools.

Increased Money For Fairfax Public Schools – The Senate budget provides the most money for Fairfax Public Schools out of all proposed budget, increasing the base budget by over \$226 million over two years. The Senate budget also includes over \$185 million more over two years than what the Governor proposed in his budget.

LEGO Visits the General Assembly



This week The LEGO Group brought a LEGO Education Learning Playground to the General Assembly. Members and staff got to race with LEGO Education builds, participate in building challenges, and get creative with LEGO bricks. LEGO is building a 1.7 million-square-foot precision production facility in Chesterfield, Virginia. We are so excited to welcome LEGO to Virginia!

Meeting with Constituents



I met with the Korean-American NextGen Council and Edu-Futuro to talk about their legislative priorities.



I met with Rise for Youth, an organization that promotes community-based alternatives to youth incarceration and the sustainment of healthy communities.



Finally, I met with representatives from the Fairfax Education Association! So happy to see old friends and discuss Fairfax County Public Schools.

Community Updates

GMU Stadium



I know that many in our community have shared concerns regarding a project at GMU that involves plans to build a temporary shared use stadium for their baseball team and a professional cricket team that will hold up to 10,000 people.

GMU is an important part of our NOVA community and I generally support their efforts to promote growth and innovation in our area. I am also 100% committed to ensuring that everyone who is a part of the community is prioritized, included, and has their concerns heard and addressed as that growth continues.

Since starting my term in January, I have been working to ensure that I am fully up to date with these plans that started last fall and winter.

I have been in close contact with GMU representatives, state agencies, county elected officials, and other members of the Richmond delegation in our area.

We are planning a townhall and listening session that will include both GMU and the connected sports teams. I plan on hosting this and have invited other local representatives. I will be sure to share more information as our planning process continues so that you are able to join.

GMU has created a website so that you can [track updates that they are sharing here](#)

After speaking directly with GMU it is our understanding that there have been no formal agreements signed.



The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will hold a hybrid “pardon our dust” meeting Wednesday night, Feb. 28 at the [VDOT Northern Virginia District Building, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030](#) on the work underway at Fairfax County Parkway (Route 286) and Popes Head Road (Route 654) to replace the traffic signal with an interchange.

A presentation on the interchange project’s construction will begin at 7 p.m. and the construction team will answer questions after the presentation. Those unable to attend in person are encouraged to join the meeting virtually or by phone toll-free (please note that dialing in by phone will be in listen-only mode) at 7 p.m.:

[WebEx Meeting Link](#)

Phone Number: 866-692-4530 (use access code 2420-566-0809)

The interchange will feature triple roundabouts that will allow traffic to flow freely via two new bridges over Fairfax County Parkway.

The project also includes:

- Building a short segment of the future Shirley Gate Road extension that will provide pedestrian and vehicle access to the future Patriot Park ([Fairfax County is designing the rest of the Shirley Gate extension](#))
- Constructing a shared-use path linking the Fairfax County Parkway Trail to the future Patriot Park
- Reconstructing the Fairfax County Parkway Trail
- Installing a sidewalk along the north side of Popes Head Road
- Extending Ladues End Lane to the new roundabout at Popes Head Road
- Adding an acceleration lane for drivers turning from Nomes Court onto northbound Fairfax County Parkway

At the intersection, Fairfax County Parkway averages about 68,000 vehicles a day and Popes Head Road averages about 3,400.

The \$82.8 million project is financed with federal, state (including [Smart Scale](#)), [Northern Virginia Transportation Authority](#) and local funding.

Branch Civil, Inc. of Roanoke is the construction contractor for the project scheduled for completion in late 2026.

For more information, [view the project webpage](#).

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT Civil Rights at 703-259-1775 or TTY/TDD 711.

Drivers, cyclists and pedestrians are reminded to use caution when traveling in active work zones. Be alert to new traffic patterns and limit distractions.

You can get traffic, work zone and incident information online at [511virginia.org](#), via the free mobile [511Virginia app](#), or by calling 511 in Virginia anywhere anytime.

Follow VDOT Northern Virginia on Twitter: [@vadotnova](#)

Metro Invites Local Students to Submit Earth Day Artwork



In honor of Earth Day, [Metro's Art in Transit program](#) is inviting K-6 students from Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia to submit artworks that highlight and celebrate the

significant role of public transportation in fostering a sustainable environment and healthy communities.

The art will be prominently featured on three specially-themed Earth Day Metrobuses that will travel the region.

Students are asked to illustrate Metrorail, Metrobus, and MetroAccess' role in [protecting our environment](#), combatting climate change, and supporting sustainable and livable communities. Let your creativity shine as you showcase why these eco-friendly transportation options are truly remarkable.

The deadline for submission is Feb. 29. [Learn more here](#).

A graphic for SD 36 Resolution Nominations. It features a white background with a blue border. At the top left is a blue megaphone icon. The text "SD 36 Resolution Nominations" is centered in a large, bold, blue font. Below this, in a smaller blue font, it says "Please send nominations for Commending and Memorial Resolutions to info@stellapekarsky.com". At the bottom right is another blue megaphone icon. The background has a subtle pattern of light blue and white geometric shapes.

Nominations can include: A new business that has opened in the community, a local group that has started a new project, an individual that has received an award, or, at the family's request, a memorial resolution honoring the life of a constituent in the district, and more!

Please send all nominations to:
info@stellapekarsky.com

While a resolution cannot be guaranteed for all nominations due to the volume we receive, I am looking forward to honoring some of the incredible constituents I will soon represent.

Schedule a meeting with me in Richmond and reach out to our office about legislation that is important to you!

Email: senatorpekarsky@senate.virginia.gov
Phone: (804) 698-7536

Richmond Office
201 North 9th Street Room, 621
Richmond, VA 23219

Richmond Direct Mail

P.O. Box 396
Richmond, VA 23218

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

*Paid and Authorized by Friends of Stella G Pekarsky
Copyright © 2023, Stella Pekarsky, All rights reserved.*

*Friends of Stella G Pekarsky
PO BOX 231191 CENTREVILLE, VA 20120*

If you believe you received this message in error or wish to no longer receive email from us, please
(Unsubscribing is not supported in previews).