



Dear **{{FirstName or 'Friend'}}**,

Happy Independence Day! Today, we celebrate our nation's founding and ideals that formed our guiding principles, that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." Virginia played an important part in declaring our independence from Britain, and I hope you will take the time to visit loved ones and learn more about our important history.

June was a busy month with Special Session revisiting the VMSDEP program, receiving updates from across the district, and celebrating community members who have positively impacted the 36th District. I hope you and your family have a fun and safe holiday.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'E. L.', written in a cursive style.

Session Recognition



Virginia League of Conservation Voters released its 2024 Conservation Scorecard, which ranks all 140 members of the legislature based on their votes on key environmental legislation during this year's General Assembly session. I am honored to be recognized as a **2024 Legislative Hero** with a 100% scorecard record for voting for environmental conservation priorities.

I am committed to protecting Virginia's natural beauty, keeping our air and waterways clean, and advancing renewable energy solutions.

Enactment Day

New Virginia state laws take effect on Monday, July 1. Some highlights of new laws include:

- HB 1071 will allow localities, including Fairfax County, to reduce speed limits to as low as 15 miles per hour in business or residential districts.
- HB 282 creates a traffic infraction for any moving violation in a highway work zone.
- SB 363 prohibits the removal or alteration of serial numbers on any firearm outside of antique ones.
- HB 22/SB 210 bans “auto sears,” which are devices that can convert a semiautomatic firearm into a fully automatic weapon that is able to rapidly fire a full magazine of bullets.
- HB 106/SB 253 expands Virginia’s shared solar program by raising the program capacity by up to 150 megawatts.

Summary information on other new laws enacted is available via the [Fairfax County NewsCenter article](#).

Special Session

The House of Delegates and Senate will return to Richmond on July 18th to consider legislation to address the changes made to the VMSDEP program. I am relieved to have the opportunity to vote for a repeal of the VMSDEP changes and to continue working to ensure this program is strong for years to come. Thank you to the families and advocates who told their stories and participated in this legislative process. More information on the new identical bills can be found in the press release below:

SENATE OF VIRGINIA

L. LOUISE LUCAS
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COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
FINANCE AND APPROPRIATIONS, CHAIR
COMMERCE AND LABOR
EDUCATION AND HEALTH
RULES

Senator L. Louise Lucas and Delegate Luke E. Torian

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE · July 2, 2024

House and Senate Leadership Reach Agreement on the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Program (VMSDEP)

RICHMOND, VA – House and Senate Democratic majority leadership reached an agreement and Chairs Torian and Lucas will introduce identical legislation concerning tuition waivers and the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Program (VMSDEP).

The legislation will fully repeal the changes to VMSDEP and related tuition waivers and will provide an additional \$90 million from the FY 2024 surplus to offset costs of the program. When added to the amounts appropriated in Chapter 2, this will provide \$65 million in each year of the 2024-2026 biennium.

“House and Senate leadership previously agreed to a Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) study, and JLARC committed to the study on Monday. This study and the allocation of what will now be \$65 million per year for the program provides me with the comfort that we will not place the burden of the escalating costs of the program on other students through their tuition charges. Making education affordable for all students is a priority for us all. The JLARC study and our select workgroup on VMSDEP will provide us with the answers we need to ensure this program will be sustainable long-term to serve veterans and their families,” **said L. Louise Lucas, Chair of the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee.**

Luke E. Torian, Chair of the House Appropriations Committee stated, “This agreement ensures that there is a full repeal of the changes adopted in May to the VMSDEP and related tuition waivers and provides financial certainty for military families attending college as I had hoped for. Both bodies have listened to our constituents and we look forward to working together in the interim on this and other issues.”

The House and Senate have jointly agreed to return at 2:00 pm on July 18th to consider the legislation. The two identical bills will be available on LIS tomorrow, July 3, 2024.

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District Highlights



I was honored to present Rachel Grover, the 2023 Virginia School Librarian of the Year, with my resolution recognizing her contributions to academic excellence at Rocky Run Middle School. Rachel created two makerspaces in the library, the Inspiration Studio and the Tech Den, in the Rocky Run Middle School library to enhance the learning process and give students opportunities to explore passion projects. **[Follow the link to read the full resolution.](#)**



I had the opportunity to tour **Volunteer Fairfax's** headquarters with Del. Irene Shin. We learned more about their RSVP (Retired & Senior Volunteer Program), part of AmeriCorps Seniors which connects volunteers aged 55+ with community volunteer opportunities.

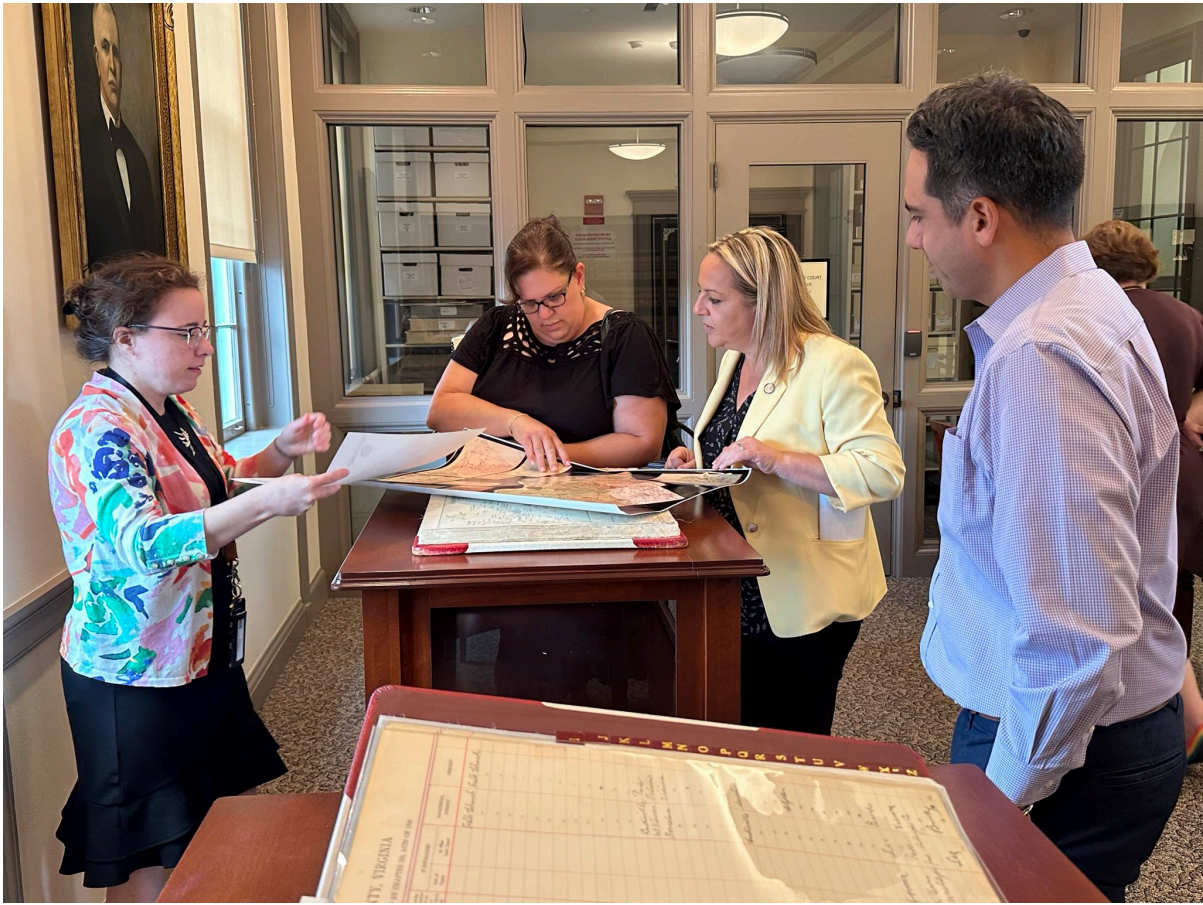


RSVP Northern Virginia connects volunteers with non-profits across the community. RSVP serves as a gathering place for older adults to

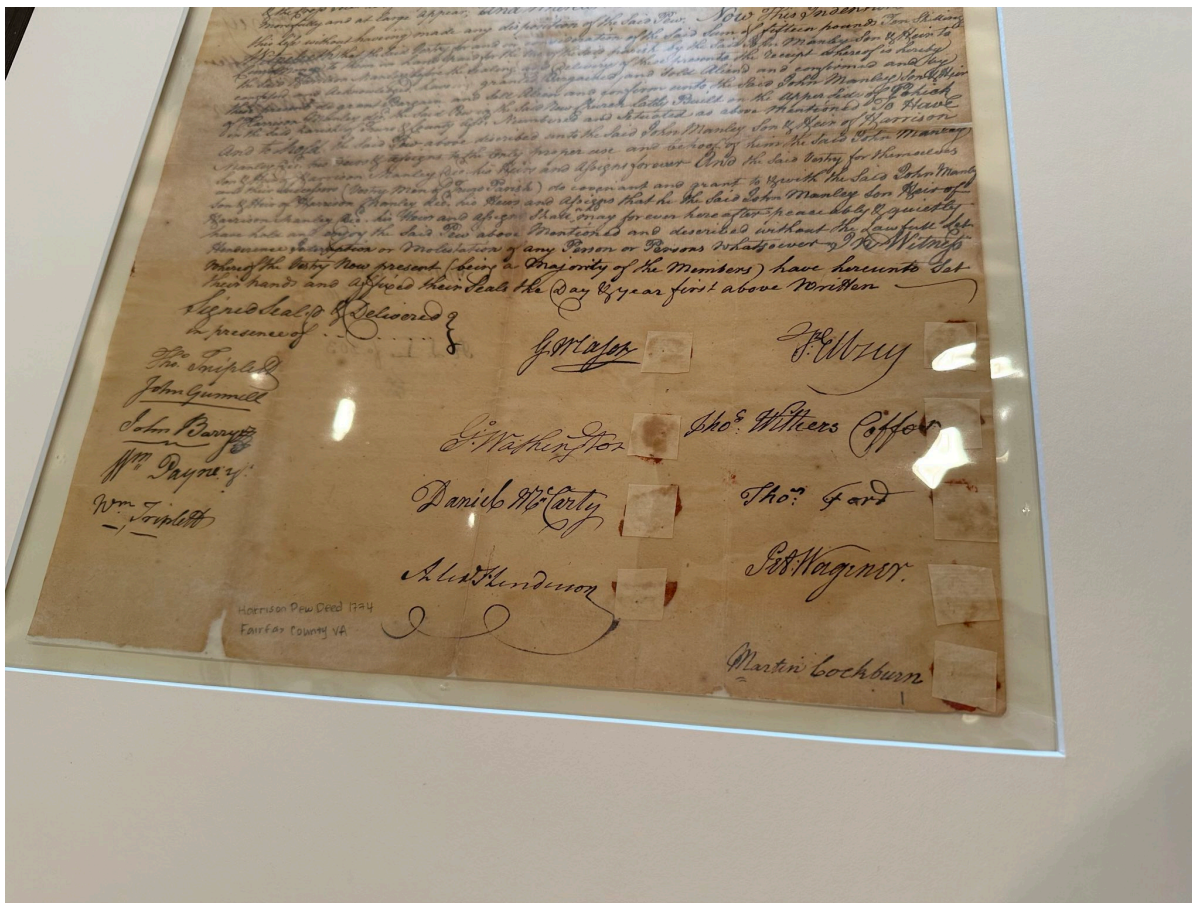
socialize, participate in group service projects, and work toward the common goal of making Northern Virginia stronger, more resilient, and empowered.



Del. Holly Seibold and I met with the Clerk of the Fairfax Circuit Court, Chris Falcon to receive updates on the Clerk office's initiatives and tour the Fairfax County Judicial Center.



While visiting the the Judicial Center, we had the opportunity to tour the Historic Fairfax Courthouse and Historic Records Center. We viewed some of the primary sources housed at the Center, including a ledger with Civil War era graffiti inside. The Historic Records Center is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.



A original 1774 Pew Deed with George Washington's signature.

Transportation Updates

Monument Drive Commuter Parking Garage Now Open

The Monument Drive Commuter Parking Garage and Transit Center is a new facility located at 12113 Government Center Pkwy, near Fairfax Corner and Fair Oaks Mall. The facility is designed to improve daily commutes and reduce traffic congestion by serving as a convenient hub for accessing public transit options.

The Monument Drive garage features over 800 parking spaces, pickup and drop off for ride-sharing (slug lanes), indoor / outdoor bicycle storage, and electric vehicle charging spaces. Roof-mounted solar panels are expected to be installed later this summer to help supply the facility's electrical needs.



Contact My Office

Have a constituent issue or you need to reach my office? Please contact:

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Stay informed about what is happening in Richmond and around the 36th District.



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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