

GEARY HIGGINS



VIRGINIA DELEGATE, DISTRICT 30

Dear Friend,

The first full week of the General Assembly Session has finished, and we are hard at work. I am excited to share with you some important news, progress updates on continued work, as well as summaries of the bills I have introduced.



COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Health and Human Services Counties, Cities, and Towns

I have been placed on the Health and Human Services Committee as well as the Counties, Cities, and Towns Committee. I have been meeting with stakeholders relevant to legislation in each Committee and will continue to do so to ensure that I have all relevant information on each side of every issue before I cast my votes.

If you have a question or concern about a bill before one of those committees, or about any bill that may come before me on the floor, please email me at delhiggins@house.virginia.gov so that I can take your input into consideration. My staff organizes constituent input on each bill and brings it to me before votes to ensure that I see and take into consideration everything you send and ask of me.

I cannot promise we will always find agreement on every bill, but I am always happy to listen and explain my position. I will do my best to explain as many of my most consequential votes as possible here and on social media throughout the session.

PROGRESS UPDATE

The Speaker is still in the process of referring proposed bills to committees and I should have all of my bills referred to committees by Monday. Then I will be speaking before subcommittees and committees on my bills in effort to advance them.

I will keep you abreast of these opportunities to speak whenever possible so that you may also speak to these bills if you wish to support them.

MY BILLS

I would like to inform you of the bills I have introduced this session in hopes of improving our great district and Commonwealth. As promised, I am tackling the education issues that are so important to our district with six bills regarding these issues.

In addition, I have introduced legislation to help better preserve our rural lands and legislation to support expecting mothers and fathers to promote life and the well-being of their children. Finally, I have a few bills to fix problems brought to my attention, both in the district and throughout the Commonwealth.

Education, Parental Involvement, and Protecting Women

HB 1218: Codifies the Governor's Executive order and requires School Districts to notify parents of opioid overdoses or other dangerous

activities within 24 hours.

- Ensures parents find out in a timely manner if their children are at risk or in the presence of deathly drugs.

HB 1219: Requires school boards to accept school resource officers if they are made available by law enforcement as well as incorporate them into their annual school safety audit.

- Prevents school boards from turning down school resource officers, as they are important to keep our kids safe.

HB 1260: Establishes a parents' bill of rights to ensure parental involvement in their children's education.

- This bill would make sure that school districts allow parents in the classroom and don't expose children to any graphic content that their parents have not approved.
- Includes the right to review any books, curricula, or other materials available to their child, the right to know of any situation affecting their child's safety, the right to know about their child receiving counseling, and the right to opt out of sexually explicit content or any surveys/data collection.

HB 1229: Protects women's sports, bathrooms, and locker rooms.

- This bill requires interscholastic, intercollegiate, intramural, and club sports teams sponsored by public institutions to be expressly designated based on biological sex to one of three categories: males, females, or coed.
- Additionally, it limits access to multiple occupancy bathrooms and changing rooms in all public education institutions to members of one biological sex.
- This bill protects the integrity of women's sports by ensuring men cannot unfairly compete in them, as well as the safety of women in vulnerable areas such as bathrooms and locker rooms by preventing biological men from entering.
- This bill would not prohibit an additional single-stall bathroom from being created for those who feel it is necessary, it simply protects women in private spaces where they deserve to feel safe.

HB 1231: Allows for homeschooled and private school students to be eligible for JROTC in any public school in their local school division.

- This bill brings Virginia into agreement with Federal regulations, which state that public schools must permit membership in JROTC to qualified homeschooled students.
- At a time where military recruitment is down, this bill is not just fair, but necessary.

HB 1275: Creates a homeschool and private school tax credit of \$2,500.

- Helps to ease the burden of parents homeschooling or sending their

children to private school, as they pay taxes for schooling services they are not receiving.

- This is similar to the TAG grants that are available to students attending in-state private universities.

Land Preservation, Parks, and Road Improvement

HB 1223: Increases the amount of Land preservation tax credits available from \$75 million to \$100 million.

- Allows for the preservation of more rural land each year, something very important to our rural residents.

HB 1523: Exempt State Parks from the procurement process for retail sales so that they can sell their own merchandise to raise their own funds.

- National Parks can already do this, and this will help to raise more funds for our State Parks without burdening taxpayers.

HB 1233: Clarifies existing code that improvements to gravel roads can include changes other than paving and directs the Department of Transportation to review and consider other methods of improving gravel roads.

- VDOT currently interprets that their maintenance funds can only be used to pave roads, but this bill will clarify that those funds can be used for other improvements to, and maintenance of, our gravel roads.

Promoting Life and Fighting for the Developmentally Disabled

HB 1232: Directs the Virginia Department of Health to seek all available federal funding for services for expecting mothers and fathers.

- This bill would ensure that Virginia is getting its share of federal funding to help our expecting mothers and fathers without raising our taxes.
- This is important because the more resources we can provide to expecting mothers and fathers in need, the more lives we can save.

HB 1222: Adds developmental disabilities to the list of reasons for curbside voting.

- Currently, individuals with developmental disabilities such as autism are unable to curbside vote in handicap spaces.
- Curbside voting is secure and individuals with developmental disabilities should be afforded the same accommodations as individuals with any other disability.

Fixing Problems

HB 1522: Further prevents the establishment of large group homes (halfway house, rehabilitation facility, etc.) in residential neighborhoods by closing a loophole where they could purchase multiple adjacent properties.

- This bill would prevent the establishment of a group home within one mile of another group home and would address the Newport Academy situation in Loudoun County, where multiple properties were purchased next to one another in order to get around the current occupancy law.

HB 1521: Jurors in all civil cases shall be paid by one or both of the parties at the discretion of the presiding judge.

- Currently, taxpayers foot the bill for jurors in civil cases, so this is intended to save taxpayers money throughout the Commonwealth.
- Even in criminal cases, defendants found guilty pay for juror fees.

HB 1215: Fixes a code section regarding the use of licensing fees for asbestos and lead project permits within the Department of Labor and Industry.

- Due to an error in the code, fees collected for this permitting process are not able to be used for the administration of the permit itself, this bill fixes that.

UPDATE ON THE PJM/NEXTERA 500kV LINE PROPOSAL



My staff and I met with NextEra last week in my office and we were able to ask them questions about their proposed route that was selected by the PJM, as well as the upcoming process to determine the final route.

I made it very clear that the proposed route is not acceptable and that any alternative route through Western Loudoun would not be any more acceptable

or appropriate. I urged them to utilize the existing right of way east of Leesburg to minimize impact to our residents, protected rural lands, and preserved historical sites.

NextEra's team assured me that the proposed route is NOT final, and they are just now commissioning studies with their engineering team to determine the feasibility of different routes. They assured me that the route east of Leesburg down the existing right of way is on the table.

I also asked them how members of our district can make their voices heard on this issue, and they let me know that this link here is the place to do that for now, but that they are building a better site for public comment and stakeholder input.

I can assure you that I hear (and share) your concerns. My staff and I are working diligently to make sure we represent your voice to NextEra and we want to keep these power lines away from conservation easements, historical sites, out of protected views, and in existing right of ways. I will not rest in these efforts.

CONTACT US

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INTERN APPLICATION

We are still looking for motivated interns to dedicate 15-20+ hours per week to serving the people of District 30 during session in our Richmond office. Interns will have a hands-on opportunity to learn about the legislative process and will be able to participate and assist with nearly all functions of the office. This is a tremendous opportunity for someone looking to strengthen their resume or get their start in politics. If you or someone you know would like to apply, please click or send them this link.

[Intern Application](#)

Thank you for your support, and if you filled out the survey in the last newsletter, thank you for your input. I am still going through all the responses and ensuring that I have your responses close over the coming weeks as these issues come to the floor for votes.

Please let me know if there is anything I can do for you,

Geary M Higgins

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Virginia House of Delegates
30th District



Paid for and Authorized by Friends of Geary Higgins

Delegate Geary Higgins, Virginia's 30th District

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