



"All laws enacted at a regular session, . . .
excluding a general appropriation law,
shall take effect on the first day of July
following the adjournment of the session of the
General Assembly at which it has been enacted."
Constitution of Virginia, Article IV, Section 13

In Due Course:

2026 Changes to Virginia's Laws

In Due Course is a selection of legislation passed by the 2026 Regular Session of the General Assembly that is likely to affect the daily lives of the citizens of Virginia. The following legislation has been signed by the Governor and for the most part will go into effect on July 1, 2026.

The summaries were prepared by the staff of the Division of Legislative Services. Complete information on actions of the 2026 Regular Session is available on the Legislative Information System website.

Topics

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Agriculture

HB 109. Board of Agriculture and Consumer Services; noxious weeds; commercial viability; report. The law amends the definition of noxious weed to remove the exclusion for living plants or parts thereof that are commercially viable or commercially propagated in Virginia and removes the requirement that the Noxious Weeds Advisory Committee include in its recommendations to the Board of Agriculture and Consumer Services an analysis of the current and potential in-state commercial viability of a plant species. The law requires a plant that is designated by the Board as a noxious weed and commercially propagated in Virginia to be subject to a phase-out period of two years for grasses, forbs, and vines; four years for shrubs; and seven years for trees. The law directs the Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services



to conduct a review of the legislative and regulatory authority of the Board pertaining to the control of noxious weeds and report his findings and recommendations to the Chairs of the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources by November 1, 2026.

HB 402. Cottage food laws; sale of certain food over phone and internet; work group; report. The law expands the exemption from state inspection requirements for private homes where the resident processes and prepares certain food products, including pickles and other acidified vegetables, to allow for such person to sell such products at any location, through the internet, or by telephone to an individual in the Commonwealth for his own consumption and deliver such products in person, by mail, or by delivery service subject to certain restrictions. Current law only allows for the sale to take place in person at the private home, a temporary event, or a farmer's market. The law also directs the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to convene a work group to examine the structural, equipment, and facility standards for private homes in the Commonwealth producing products that do not meet the cottage food law exemptions. The law requires the work group to complete its meetings by November 1, 2026, and report its findings and recommendations to the Chairs of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources and the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources by the first day of the 2027 Session of the General Assembly.

HB 1443/SB 386. Owners of sewage treatment works; land application, marketing, or distribution of sewage sludge; perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances; testing requirements; work group; report. The law directs any owner of a sewage treatment works land applying, marketing, or distributing sewage sludge in the Commonwealth, beginning January 1, 2027, to collect representative samples of the sewage sludge intended to be land applied, marketed, or distributed and have such samples analyzed by an accredited laboratory for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The law mandates certain outcomes for the land application of such sewage sludge depending on the concentration of PFAS in such sewage sludge. The law directs the Department of Environmental Quality to modify all Virginia Pollution Abatement permits for the land application of sewage sludge and Virginia Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits for sewage treatment works that include sewage sludge prepared for land application, marketing, or distribution as soon as practicable. The law requires the Department to utilize the PFAS Expert Advisory Committee (PEAC) or convene a work group to study and recommend approaches to reduce the occurrence of PFAS in sewage sludge intended for land application within the Commonwealth. The Department is required to report the recommendations of the PEAC or work group to the Governor and the Chairs of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources and the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources by November 1, 2027.

Alcoholic Beverage Control

HB 308/SB 620. Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority; permitting of retail tobacco product retailers; purchase, possession, and sale of retail tobacco products; penalties; report. The law transitions and provides a more comprehensive structure for the current licensing and enforcement responsibilities related to liquid nicotine and retail tobacco products from the Department of Taxation to a permitting system administered by the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority. The law requires the Board of Directors of the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority to conduct an unannounced buyer operation at least once every 24 months to verify that a permittee, defined in the law, is not selling retail tobacco



products to persons under 21 years of age. Portions of the law have a delayed effective date of October 1, 2026.

HB 975. Alcoholic beverage control; food-to-beverage ratio; report. The law reduces the current 45 percent food-to-beverage ratio for certain mixed beverage licensees and requires that a mixed beverage restaurant, caterer's, or limited caterer's licensee meet or exceed the following: (i) for such licensees with monthly food sales averaging at least \$48,000, the food-to-beverage ratio shall not apply; (ii) for such licensees with monthly food sales averaging at least \$25,000 but less than \$48,000, the food-to-beverage ratio shall meet or exceed 30 percent; and (iii) for such licensees with monthly food sales averaging at least \$4,000, but less than \$25,000, the food-to-beverage ratio shall meet or exceed 45 percent, except that for any licensee with monthly food sales averaging less than \$25,000 with a seating capacity of less than 30 seats and an occupancy permit for less than 60 people total, the food-to-beverage ratio shall meet or exceed 30 percent. The law also requires that restaurants have at least as many seats at tables as at counters.

The law requires the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority to collect data regarding the compliance of mixed beverage licensees with the provisions of the law and the impact of the change to the food-to-beverage ratio on the gross amount of food consumed on a licensee's premises. The law requires the Authority to report such data to the Chairs of the House Committee on General Laws and the Senate Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services by November 1, 2027.

SB 424. Alcoholic beverage control; government stores; distiller's licensees as agents of the Board; sale of alcoholic beverages. The law allows certain holders of a distiller's license appointed as agents of the Board of Directors of the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority to sell spirits, beer, wine, or cider for on-premises or off-premises consumption, provided that the spirits, beer, wine, or cider is manufactured within the same licensed premises or on contiguous premises of such agent licensed as a distillery, brewery, or winery. Under current law, such agents of the Board are permitted to give samples of such alcoholic beverages.

The law also increases the amount of spirits such distiller's licensees may give or sell to any person per day from three ounces to six ounces and requires such distiller's licensees to have food reasonably available at all times when spirits are served. The law provides that such food may be provided by food trucks, patrons providing their own food, or the agent of the Board and specifies that failure of such distiller's licensees to have food reasonably available may result in the Board's reconsideration of the agency agreement appointing such holder of a distiller's license or its officers and employees as agents of the Board.

The law requires the Authority to collect data regarding the compliance of distiller's licensees with the provisions of this law and report such data to the Chairs of the House Committee on General Laws and the Senate Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services by November 1, 2026, and again by November 1, 2027. The law also requires the Authority to convene a stakeholders group to review the manufacturer event licenses and off-site sales privileges granted to manufacturing licensees and report its findings and any recommendations for statutory or regulatory changes to the Chairs of the House Committee on General Laws and the Senate



Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services no later than December 1, 2026. The law sunsets on July 1, 2028.

Cannabis Control

SB 543. Marijuana and hemp products; enforcement; civil penalties; work group; report.

The law amends various provisions of law to increase enforcement and penalties related to the illegal sale of marijuana or marijuana products by persons licensed or permitted by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority, and the Virginia Cannabis Control Authority (CCA). The law requires the Board of Directors of the CCA (the Board) to create and require a decal for retail marijuana stores, microbusinesses, pharmaceutical processors, and cannabis dispensing facilities to prominently display on the premises of such establishments where marijuana, marijuana products, marijuana paraphernalia, immature marijuana plants, or marijuana seeds are sold to consumers that allows consumers to electronically verify the validity of such establishment's license or permit from the Board. The law requires such decal to be displayed with a civil penalty of \$10,000 for each day that such decal is not displayed in the establishment. The law also creates a \$10,000 civil penalty for creating or falsifying such decal.

The law allows the Board to issue a notice of violation and order to cease unlicensed activity to any person who is engaged in the cultivation, processing, distribution, or selling of marijuana or marijuana products in violation of current law, and if the Board issues such notice and order, it may also order the seizure of such marijuana or marijuana products. Any person who intentionally removes such notice and order or sticker without authorization of the Board is subject to a civil penalty prescribed by the Board, not to exceed \$5,000. The law specifies that the Chief Executive Officer of the Board or investigators appointed by him shall be sworn to enforce the provisions of the Cannabis Control Act and Board regulations and have the authority to investigate violations of the statutes and regulations the CCA is required to enforce. The law also requires the Board to establish, advertise, and administer a tip line, which may be accessed by phone and by internet, for members of the public to anonymously report concerns about, or suspected instances of, illicit retail marijuana practices.

The law revises certain provisions related to the assessment of civil penalties against manufacturers and sellers of certain industrial hemp extracts and foods containing industrial hemp extracts. Effective November 1, 2026, the law also creates a civil action pursuant to the Virginia Fraud Against Taxpayers Act and makes it a prohibited practice under the Virginia Consumer Protection Act to sell or offer for sale a substance intended for human consumption, orally or by inhalation, that (i) contains more than 0.3 percent total tetrahydrocannabinol or (ii) contains more than two milligrams of total tetrahydrocannabinol per package.

The law requires the Department of Criminal Justice Services to establish compulsory minimum and in-service training standards for law-enforcement officers on the enforcement of the Cannabis Control Act and certain provisions of law related to hemp by January 1, 2027.

Additionally, the law requires the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security and the Secretary of Health and Human Resources to convene a work group to analyze the current efforts in the Commonwealth to combat the sale of illicit cannabis products and submit a report of its



findings and recommendations to the Chairs of the House Committees on Appropriations, on General Laws, and for Courts of Justice and the Senate Committees on Finance and Appropriations, on General Laws and Technology, on Rehabilitation and Social Services, and for Courts of Justice by October 1, 2026.

Civil Procedure

HB 671. Jurors; exemptions from jury service upon request; competency to perform jury duty. The law provides that no person shall be deemed incompetent to serve on any jury on the basis of disability if the person would otherwise be competent to serve if provided with reasonable accommodation. The law also provides that any person under a disability that substantially impairs the person's ability to perform jury duty shall be exempt from jury duty upon such person's request.

HB 1426. Limitations on enforcement of judgments; docketing of general district court judgments in the circuit court. The law provides that, for judgments entered in a general district court on or after July 1, 2026, where enforcement of such judgments is sought by a debt buyer, the docketing of an abstract of such judgment in the circuit court shall not affect the 10-year limitation period to enforce such judgment. Under current law, such docketing allows a general district court judgment to be treated as a judgment entered by the circuit court and may be extended in the same manner as a judgment entered by the circuit court.

Commerce

HB 69/SB 240. Retail franchise agreements; governing law; competition restrictions. The law provides that retail franchise agreements shall be governed by the laws of the Commonwealth and prohibits any person from offering or entering into a franchise agreement that includes competition restrictions that extend beyond termination or expiration of the franchise agreement, except as a term of sale in the event that a franchisee sells a franchise to a third party or back to the franchisor.

HB 665/SB 489. Financial institutions and services; virtual currency kiosk operators; license required; civil penalties. The law establishes requirements effective July 1, 2027, for the operation of virtual currency kiosks, as defined in the law, including a requirement that a virtual currency kiosk operator obtain licensure with the State Corporation Commission. The law requires operators to file annual and quarterly reports, provide certain disclosures, and take reasonable steps to detect and prevent fraud and money laundering. The law prohibits operators from accepting transactions above specified daily and monthly limits and establishes a maximum transaction charge of 18 percent of the value of such transaction. A person who violates the law's provisions is subject to a fine of up to \$1,000 per violation as well as the existing enforcement provisions of the Virginia Consumer Protection Act. The law directs the State Corporation Commission to begin accepting applications for virtual currency kiosk operators on or before March 1, 2027, for licenses that will be effective beginning July 1, 2027.

Consumer Protections

HB 122. Manufacturing or sale of cosmetic products with certain ingredients prohibited; civil penalties. The law prohibits any person from manufacturing, selling, delivering, offering for sale, or using in connection with a consumer transaction any cosmetic product that contains certain ingredients that are listed in the law. The law exempts retailers that do not (i)



manufacture cosmetics containing prohibited ingredients or (ii) knowingly sell or offer for sale cosmetics containing prohibited ingredients. The law provides that a violation of its provisions constitutes a prohibited practice under the Virginia Consumer Protection Act and specifies that its provisions do not apply to or restrict the continued sale by a retailer of cosmetics in existing inventory before July 1, 2026.

HB 322/SB 186. Misbranded food; manufactured-protein food products; civil penalty. The law provides that a food is misbranded if it purports to be or is represented as a meat food product or poultry product and such food product (i) bears or contains a manufactured-protein food product, as defined in the law; (ii) is offered for sale; and (iii) has a label that is part of or placed on the food product package or other container storing such product that identifies the food as a meat food product or poultry product, unless such label bears a conspicuous and prominent qualifying term and is in close proximity to an identifying meat term, as such terms are defined in the law. The law exempts a meat food product that the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services determines contains a trace amount of a manufactured-protein food product, prohibits the sale or offering for sale of a food product that is misbranded pursuant to the provisions of the law, and makes doing so a violation of the Virginia Consumer Protection Act. The law provides that a person who violates the provisions of the law is subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$500 and allows the Board of Agriculture and Consumer Services to adopt increased civil penalties not to exceed \$500 for first, second, and subsequent violations of the law.

HB 360. Virginia Consumer Protection Act; prohibited practices; kratom products; civil penalties. The law prohibits selling or offering for sale (i) any kratom product to a person younger than 21 years of age; (ii) any kratom product that does not include a label listing all ingredients and the required disclosure as amended by the law; (iii) any kratom product not stored in an area that is not directly accessible to consumers, including behind a retail counter or in a locked display case, except for kratom products required to be refrigerated which may be stored, in accordance with relevant Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority regulations, in the same beverage cooler or refrigerator as wine and beer; (iv) any kratom product containing any synthesized material, semi-synthetic alkaloid, or synthetic kratom-like compound; (v) any kratom product containing 7-hydroxymitragynine in an alkaloid fraction exceeding one percent of total alkaloids in the container or providing more than one milligram of 7-hydroxymitragynine per serving; (vi) any kratom product adulterated with any dangerous, poisonous, or otherwise deleterious non-kratom ingredient, including any substance listed as a controlled substance under state or federal law; (vii) any kratom product that is combustible or intended for vaporization or injection; (viii) any kratom product that is manufactured, packaged, or marketed in a manner attractive to children; or (ix) any kratom extract product containing residual solvent levels exceeding applicable statutory or pharmacopeial limits.

HB 398/SB 315. Safeguarding American Veteran Empowerment Act; prohibited practices; civil penalties. The law creates the Safeguarding American Veteran Empowerment Act to regulate the practices of persons seeking to receive compensation for preparing, presenting, prosecuting, advising, consulting, or assisting any individual regarding any veterans' benefits matter, as defined in the law. The law provides that a violation of its provisions constitutes a prohibited practice under the Virginia Consumer Protection Act.

HB 1022/SB 493. Consumer protection; automatic renewal or continuous service offers; disclosure and cancellation. The law amends certain definitions related to automatic renewal or



continuous service offers, including the definition of "clear and conspicuous" as it relates to seller disclosures and requirements to provide a simple cancellation mechanism. The law replaces the term "supplier" in current provisions with "seller" and provides a definition for such term. The law requires sellers to provide a cancellation mechanism that is at least as easy to use as the mechanism used to initiate the automatic renewal or continuous service offer, and includes additional requirements for providing such cancellation mechanism. Under the law, certain businesses are no longer exempt from disclosure and cancellation requirements for automatic renewal or continuous service offers, and a violation of the provision constitutes a prohibited practice under the Virginia Consumer Protection Act.

Corrections

HB 173/SB 276. State correctional facilities; visitation policies; work group; report. The law sets additional visitation standards for visitors to state correctional facilities. The law requires the Department of Corrections (the Department) to provide extended or additional visitation access for long-distance visitors. The law provides that each in-person visit shall last a minimum of two hours unless shortened at the request of either the visitor or the incarcerated individual, or in response to an active security event. The law also provides that visitation privileges may be suspended only for conduct occurring during visitation that presents a direct and substantial threat to the physical safety of participants or the security of the correctional facility. The law provides a timeline and process for appealing any suspension of visitation rights. Finally, the law directs the Department to convene a work group to consider and develop practical policy and legislative recommendations regarding visitation. The work group is required to report its findings and specific legislative and policy recommendations to the General Assembly by October 1, 2026.

HB 296. State correctional facilities; visitation policies; work group; report. The law requires the Department of Corrections to establish and publicly post on its website and in the lobby of each state correctional facility an objective dress code for individuals visiting a state correctional facility and specifies certain requirements for and limitations on what such dress code may include. The law prohibits any state correctional facility from enforcing a dress code that is more restrictive than the dress code posted by the Department.

The law also prohibits any individual from being denied in-person visitation unless such individual is in clear violation of visitation rules or policies. Prior to denying entry to a visitor, the law requires the reasoning to be (i) reviewed in person by the facility administrative duty officer and (ii) approved by a regional administrator or superior. The law requires the Department to submit a report annually on or before November 1 to the General Assembly and the Governor with information on visitors denied entry to state correctional facilities, including the following information disaggregated by facility and by month: (a) the number of visitors denied entry and (b) the reasoning for such denials, including the specific rules or policies such visitors were alleged to have violated.

The law requires the Department to convene a work group consisting of relevant stakeholders to consider goals and develop practical policy and legislative recommendations related to facilitating visitation within state correctional facilities and report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly no later than November 1, 2026.



HB 361. Earned sentence credits; incarceration while awaiting trial or pending an appeal.

Effective July 1, 2028, the law provides that a person's eligibility for earned sentence credits includes any period of time actually spent in any state or local correctional facility, state hospital, or juvenile detention facility awaiting trial or pending an appeal that was deducted from such person's term of incarceration or detention. The law provides that the provisions apply retroactively to any person who is confined in any state or local correctional facility on July 1, 2028.

Criminal Offenses

HB 250. Sex offenses prohibiting proximity to children; Park Authorities Act; penalty. The law provides that every adult who is convicted of an offense prohibiting proximity to children, when the offense occurred on or after July 1, 2026, shall as part of his sentence be forever prohibited from going, for the purpose of having any contact whatsoever with children who are not in his custody, within 100 feet of the premises of any place owned or operated by an authority created pursuant to the Park Authorities Act that he knows or should know is a playground, athletic field or facility, or gymnasium.

The law also provides that any person convicted of an offense under the laws of any foreign country or any political subdivision thereof, or the United States or any political subdivision thereof, similar to any offense set forth in current law shall be forever prohibited from going, for the purpose of having any contact whatsoever with children who are not in his custody, within 100 feet of the premises of any place owned or operated by an authority created pursuant to the Park Authorities Act that he knows or has reason to know is a playground, athletic field or facility, or gymnasium.

A violation of the law's provisions is punishable as a Class 6 felony.

HB 317/SB 743. Damage or trespass to public services or utilities or critical infrastructure; penalties. The law adds the intentional destruction of or damage to any fixture, equipment, or information technology system that is used to provide, process, transmit, or maintain public services, public utilities, cable television, broadband, or other critical infrastructure, as defined in relevant law, to the existing offense of damage or trespass to public services or utilities.

HB 629. Certain sex offenses; sexual extortion; unlawful creation of image of another; penalties. The law provides that any person who, with the intent to cause the complaining witness to engage in certain sexual acts, maliciously (i) threatens in writing, including electronically, (a) to disseminate, sell, or publish a videographic or still image, created by any means whatsoever, or (b) to not delete, remove, or take back a previously disseminated, sold, or published videographic or still image, created by any means whatsoever, that depicts the complaining witness or such complaining witness's family or household member, as defined in relevant law, as totally nude or in a state of undress so as to expose the genitals, pubic area, buttocks, or female breast or (ii) threatens eviction, loss of housing, property damage, or any financial loss, but such complaining witness does not thereby engage in such sexual acts is guilty of attempted sexual extortion and shall be punished as prescribed by relevant law.

The law also adds to the existing offense of unlawfully creating an image of another a prohibition on any person knowingly and intentionally creating any videographic or still image



by any means whatsoever of any nonconsenting person if that person is not exposed to show the genitals, pubic area, buttocks, or female breast but such videographic or still image is obscene, as defined in relevant law, when such nonconsenting person is in a restroom, dressing room, locker room, hotel room, motel room, tanning bed, tanning booth, bedroom, or other location. A violation of such prohibition is a Class 1 misdemeanor unless such nonconsenting person is younger than 18 years of age, in which case it is elevated to a Class 6 felony.

HB 662/SB 444. Offenses relating to gift cards; penalties. The law adds the offenses of gift card theft, gift card forgery, gift card fraud, and criminally receiving goods and services fraudulently obtained to the existing provisions of law related to credit cards.

HB 933/SB 283. Penalties for failure to appear; contempt. The law provides that a court shall consider certain mitigating factors to determine whether the failure of any person to appear before any court or judicial officer as required was willful. Under current law, no mitigating factors are specified for a court or judicial officer to consider in determining whether a person willfully failed to appear.

SB 55. Sex offenses prohibiting proximity to children; state parks; penalty. The law provides that every adult who is convicted of an offense prohibiting proximity to children, when the offense occurred on or after July 1, 2026, shall as a part of his sentence be forever prohibited from going, for the purpose of having any contact whatsoever with children who are not in his custody, within 100 feet of a playground, athletic field or facility, or gymnasium he knows or has reason to know is located on the premises of a state park. A violation is a Class 6 felony.

SB 137. Obstructing reproductive health care facility; penalties. The law creates a Class 1 misdemeanor for any person who (i) by force or threat of force, or by physical obstruction, intentionally injures, intimidates, or interferes with, or attempts to injure, intimidate, or interfere with, another person because such other person is or has been, or in order to intimidate such person or any other person or any class of persons from, obtaining or providing reproductive health services, defined in the law, or (ii) intentionally damages or destroys, or attempts to damage or destroy, a reproductive health care facility, defined in the law, because such facility provides reproductive health services. The law also provides that the provisions of the law shall not be construed to place any restriction on the content of any message that anyone may wish to communicate to anyone else, either inside or outside a reproductive health care facility.

Criminal Procedure

HB 26/SB 62. Modification of sentence for marijuana-related offenses. The law creates a process by which a person adjudicated delinquent or convicted of certain felony offenses involving, or violations of probation or community supervision related to, the possession, manufacture, selling, giving, distribution, transportation, or delivery of marijuana committed prior to July 1, 2021, who remains incarcerated or on probation or community supervision on July 1, 2026, may receive an automatic hearing to consider modification of such person's sentence. The law sunsets on July 1, 2029.

HB 149/SB 136. Decreasing probation period. The law establishes criteria for which a defendant's supervised probation period shall be reduced, including completing educational activities, maintaining employment, completing treatment, or obtaining housing. The law provides that a court may decrease a defendant's probation period if warranted by the defendant's conduct upon receipt of a request from the Department of Corrections and requires the



Department of Corrections to request termination of a defendant's supervised probation period after 12 months in certain situations.

HB 247/SB 416. Deferred disposition in a criminal case; persons with autism, intellectual disabilities, or developmental disabilities; expungement. The law adds developmental disabilities to the autism and intellectual disability deferred disposition statute. The law also provides that when a court defers and dismisses a charge pursuant to the autism, intellectual disability, or developmental disability deferred disposition statute, such charge may be considered as otherwise dismissed for purposes of expungement of police and court records. The law also (i) clarifies that the defendant may request a hearing to determine the appropriateness of a deferred disposition at any time before or after any plea and (ii) provides that no statement made by the defendant at such a hearing is admissible in any criminal proceeding, except that any such statement made under oath may be admissible in a criminal proceeding for perjury or for purposes of impeachment in a criminal matter.

HB 1298/SB 748. Issuance of vacatur for victims of human trafficking. The law expands the current process for the issuance of writs of vacatur for victims of human trafficking to include ancillary matters, defined in the law, and any charge or arrest related to a qualifying offense as defined in current law. The law also expands the list of qualifying offenses eligible for such writ.

SB 230. Expungement of police and court records. Effective December 1, 2026, the law permits the expungement of police and court records relating to an initial charge when a person is arrested, charged, summonsed, or indicted for the commission of an infraction, a crime, or a civil offense and such person is not ultimately convicted, provided that no stipulation of facts sufficient to find guilt was entered or the court did not determine the facts sufficient to find guilt but deferred adjudication or disposition to a later date. The law also permits that a petition may request expungement of the police and court records for multiple charges arising out of separate transactions or occurrences. The law also provides that if a person was the subject of a delinquency or traffic proceeding and was not ultimately adjudicated delinquent or convicted, provided that no stipulation of facts sufficient to find guilt was entered or the court did not determine facts sufficient to find guilt but deferred adjudication or disposition to a later date, such matter is eligible for expungement. Lastly, the law (i) allows certain deferred dispositions to be eligible for expungement; (ii) requires the attorney for the Commonwealth, if he files an objection to the petition for expungement, to include the basis for such objection; (iii) provides that the unavailability of certain information shall not be a basis for refusing expungement; (iv) requires the court, if it finds potential manifest injustice to the petitioner, to order expungement; (v) provides that the existence of a prior conviction alone shall not be a sufficient basis to deny an expungement; (vi) allows any person whose petition for relief is the subject of an appeal to proceed under a pseudonym pursuant to relevant law; and (vii) allows specifically identified emergency or preliminary protective orders to be expunged.

Domestic Relations

HB 303. Divorce; adultery; filing; parties living separate and apart; work group; report. The law specifies that a divorce may be decreed on the grounds of adultery, provided that such adultery occurred prior to the final separation of the parties. The law further allows for a divorce from bed and board to be decreed on the application of either party upon the parties living separate and apart; under current law, a divorce from bed and board may only be decreed for cruelty, reasonable apprehension of bodily hurt, willful desertion, or abandonment. The law



specifies that no waiting period is required for the filing for such a divorce, but the decree of such a divorce may only be decreed pursuant to certain requirements otherwise specified in the law. The law further directs the Virginia Family Law Coalition, in conjunction with the Virginia State Bar Family Law Section, to convene a work group to consider whether to eliminate fault-based grounds for divorce in the Commonwealth and to submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and to the Chairs of the House and Senate Committees for Courts of Justice no later than December 1, 2026.

HB 905. Persons other than ministers who may perform rites of marriage; clerk; issuance of order; bond requirement. The law provides that a clerk of a circuit court may issue an order authorizing one or more persons to celebrate the rites of marriage in the Commonwealth. Under current law, only a circuit court judge may issue such an order. The law further makes discretionary the entrance into a bond in the penalty of \$500 prior to performing the rites of marriage for a person authorized to celebrate the rites of marriage; under current law, such entry is mandatory. Finally, the law civilly immunizes the clerk of any circuit court from a cause of action arising from the issuance or rescinding of such order, absent gross negligence or willful misconduct.

Freedom of Information

SB 699. Virginia Freedom of Information Act; public bodies to post meeting agendas. The law requires public bodies subject to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to post the proposed agenda on the public body's official government website, if any, prior to the meeting. The law provides that no final action may be taken on any items added to an agenda after a meeting commences unless the matter is time-sensitive or is the subject of a closed meeting properly identified in a motion in accordance with FOIA requirements and defines "final action." This law is a recommendation of the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council.

SB 701. Virginia Lottery; disclosure of identity of winners. The law prohibits the Virginia Lottery (the Department) from disclosing information about any individual winner and exempts such information from disclosure under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act unless the winner consents to such disclosure. Under current law, the Department is prohibited from disclosing information about any individual winner whose prize exceeds \$1 million unless the winner consents to such disclosure.

Gaming

HB 145/SB 129. Fantasy contests; regulation and taxation. The law imposes (i) a 10 percent tax on a fantasy contest operator's fantasy contest revenue, with 2.5 percent of the tax revenue being allocated to the Problem Gambling Treatment and Support Fund and the remaining 97.5 percent being allocated to the general fund, and (ii) a 2.6 percent fee on a fantasy contests operator's fantasy contest revenue to be utilized by the Virginia Lottery to cover the costs of administration and regulation of fantasy contests in the Commonwealth. The law also limits the definition of "fantasy contest" and requires fantasy contest operators to apply to the Virginia Lottery for a permit before offering any fantasy contest in the Commonwealth.

HB 396. Charitable gaming; Texas Hold'em poker tournaments. The law increases from 18 years of age to 21 years of age the minimum age an individual must be to participate in Texas Hold'em poker tournaments. The law provides that no qualified organization may conduct Texas Hold'em poker tournaments (i) at a location outside of the county, city, or town in which its



principal office, as registered with the State Corporation Commission, is located or in an adjoining county, city, or town or (ii) at an establishment that has been granted a retail alcoholic beverage control license unless such license is held by the qualified organization. The law also allows unlimited rebuys during the first two hours of tournament play or until the first break, whichever occurs first, and permits one add-on at the end of the rebuy period before play resumes at the end of the first break.

HB 515. Sports betting; prohibition on use of credit cards. The law prohibits the Director of the Virginia Lottery from approving the use of credit cards as a method for sports bettors to fund sports betting accounts. The law also requires a permit holder to take reasonable measures to prohibit the acceptance of credit cards to fund sports betting accounts on its sports betting platform.

General Government

SB 637. Virginia Human Rights Act; procedures for a charge of unlawful discrimination. The law provides that, for the purposes of nondiscrimination in places of public accommodation, "place of public accommodation" includes educational institutions. The law reduces from 15 to five the number of employees in the definition of "employer" for purposes of nondiscrimination in employment. The law also amends from 300 days to two years the timeframe for filing a complaint alleging unlawful discrimination with the Office of the Attorney General.

Health & Health Professions

HB 6/SB 596. Contraception; right to contraception; applicability; enforcement. The law establishes a right to obtain contraceptives and engage in contraception, as such terms are defined in the law. The law clarifies that none of its provisions shall be construed to permit or sanction the performance of any sterilization procedure without a patient's voluntary and informed consent. The law creates a cause of action that may be instituted against anyone who infringes on such right.

HB 656/SB 524. Mental health and substance abuse disorders; network adequacy standards; comparative analyses; report; emergency regulations. The law directs the Department of Health to issue regulations that include quantitative network adequacy standards for timely access to care, travel time, and geographical distance that are at least as stringent as those imposed for qualified health plans and qualified dental plans. The law amends the definitions of "mental health services" and "substance abuse services" for the purposes of health insurance coverage.

The law requires health carriers to submit all comparative analyses prepared pursuant to federal law to the Bureau of Insurance on the date and frequency as specified by the Bureau and includes additional information to include in such submission. Under the law, the Bureau may impose a penalty not to exceed \$100,000 for a noncompliant or insufficient comparative analysis or require a carrier to remove, revise, or remedy noncompliant treatment limitations. The law also amends the contents of the annual report submitted by the Bureau to the General Assembly to cover enforcement efforts with respect to the federal Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008.

The law authorizes the Bureau to promulgate regulations as necessary to implement the provisions of the law and directs the Department of Health to adopt emergency regulations to implement the provisions of the law. The law directs the Department of Human Resource



Management to evaluate the impact of the proposed changes to the provisions of the law related to health insurance. The provisions of the law related to health insurance have a delayed effective date of July 1, 2027.

HB 1391/SB 813. Sickle Cell Coordinated Access Network established. Effective July 1, 2027, the law directs the State Health Commissioner, in coordination with the Virginia Commonwealth University Health Systems Authority, to establish and maintain the Sickle Cell Coordinated Access Network to provide health care providers in the Commonwealth with real-time consultation and support from sickle cell specialists.

SB 418. Therapeutic interchange and adaptation. The law authorizes pharmacists to perform therapeutic interchanges by substituting a drug with another drug in the same therapeutic class when such substitution lowers the cost or is cost-neutral to the patient or the prescribed drug is in a drug shortage and the substitution conforms to Board of Pharmacy regulations. The law directs the Board of Pharmacy to determine which therapeutic classes of drugs shall be eligible for therapeutic interchange and which classes shall be prohibited. The law also authorizes pharmacists to adapt prescriptions by changing the dosage form or quantity of a medication or by completing missing information on a prescription when there is evidence to support such change.

SB 429. Department of Health; State Health Commissioner; nursing homes; periodic medical visits and resident assessments; oversight and accountability. The law requires all nursing homes to notify the resident of a nursing home, the resident's family, and the Department of Health if a federally required physician visit does not take place. The law also requires each nursing home to conduct a comprehensive assessment on an annual basis to determine each resident's needs and describe each resident's capability to perform daily life functions. Such assessments must be reviewed at least once every 92 days, and more frequently in the event of a significant change in the resident's physical or mental condition.

The law directs the Department of Health and State Health Commissioner to take steps to improve care quality, protect residents, and strengthen oversight and accountability of nursing homes in the Commonwealth. The law directs the Department to enhance recruitment efforts and expand workforce capacity in the Office of Licensure and Certification, accelerate training and onboarding initiatives, and explore measures to reduce administrative burdens. The law requires the Commissioner to submit an annual report with recommendations for continuing improvement of nursing home quality and oversight.

Higher Education

HB 131. Public institutions of higher education; reasonable accommodations for the religious beliefs and practices of individual students. The law requires each public institution of higher education to provide reasonable accommodations, as defined in the law, for the religious beliefs and practices of individual students with regard to admissions, class attendance, and the scheduling of examinations and work assignments and to provide and describe in the institution's student handbook or an equivalent document and in the institution's faculty handbook or an equivalent document a grievance procedure for any student to seek redress when the student believes that he has been unreasonably denied such reasonable accommodations for his religious beliefs and practices.

HB 971. College student-athletes; biometric data; protections and limitations. The law prohibits any private institution of higher education, associate-degree-granting public institution



of higher education, or baccalaureate public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth from disclosing to any individual or entity outside of the institution any enrolled student-athlete's biometric data, as defined in the law, without the prior written consent of the student-athlete. The law also prohibits any individual or entity from making the possession, use, or ownership of or the rights to any student-athlete's biometric data a condition of any contract with the student-athlete for the use of the student-athlete's name, image, or likeness without the prior written consent of the student-athlete in a writing that is separate and apart from such contract.

HB 1040/SB 431. Virginia Commonwealth University Health System Authority; board of directors; chief executive officer. The law makes several changes relating to the board of directors and the chief executive officer of the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System Authority (the Authority), including (i) reducing from 19 to 13 the number of appointed members on the boards of directors and adding the chief executive officer of the Authority as an ex officio member with voting privileges, thereby reducing from 21 to 16 the total number of board members; (ii) changing from voting to nonvoting the nature of the membership of the President of Virginia Commonwealth University (the University) on the board of directors and prohibiting rather than requiring, as under current law, the President of the University from serving as chairman of the board of directors; (iii) lengthening the terms of all members of the board of directors from three years to four years; (iv) requiring the biennial election of a chairman and vice-chairman of the board of directors, requiring such chairman and vice-chairman to have served for at least two years on the board of directors, and prohibiting any employee of the University, employee of the Authority, member of the board of visitors of the University, or legislative member from serving as chairman; (v) providing that no further action shall be taken if a majority of each of the three-member committees appointed by the board of directors of the Authority and the board of visitors of the University do not agree on the removal of the chief executive officer of the Authority within 30 days of the appointment of the committees by each board; and (vi) providing that in the event that a majority of the members of each committee do not agree on the selection or conditions of appointment of the chief executive officer within 30 days of the appointment of the committees by each board, then the process set forth in statute shall be repeated until such selection has been made or such conditions of appointment have been determined. Current law requires the President of the University to make a binding decision in the event of any such disagreement.

Housing

HB 164/SB 328. Housing for local employees; grants for homeownership and workforce housing alternatives. The law eliminates the maximum amount a locality may provide (i) to employees of the locality, employees of the school board, and employees of constitutional officers for homeownership grants to purchase primary residences in the locality and (ii) to school division personnel for residential housing assistance grants to provide affordable workforce housing alternatives. The law also eliminates the requirement that such grants adhere to the Virginia Housing and Development Authority regional sales price and household income limitation guidelines. Current law imposes a maximum grant amount of \$25,000 for individual grants per employee, as well as a maximum lifetime cumulative amount of \$25,000 per employee.

HB 1279/SB 388. Affordable housing; religious organizations and other nonprofit tax-exempt properties. Effective January 1, 2027, the law allows for the administrative approval of



development and construction of housing on land owned by property tax-exempt religious organizations or certain property tax-exempt nonprofit organizations and provides that zoning ordinances shall allow the by-right development and construction of housing on real property owned by such organizations, subject to various conditions and limitations. The law provides that the review of such developments be completed pursuant to general law and states that localities shall not require a special exception, special use permit, conditional use permit, rezoning, or any discretionary review or approval process. The law requires that at least 60 percent of the housing development's total units be for affordable housing and that the housing development remain affordable for at least 30 years. The law also provides that all such housing is subject to local real property taxation following completion, unless explicitly exempted by the locality. The law expires on January 1, 2031.

Insurance

HB 220/SB 630. Health insurance; tobacco surcharge. The law eliminates the authority of a health carrier to vary its premium rates based on tobacco use. Under current law, a health carrier may charge premium rates up to 1.5 times higher for a tobacco user than for a nonuser. The provisions of the law apply to health benefit plans providing individual or small group health insurance coverage entered into, amended, extended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2027.

HB 328. Health insurance; essential health benefits benchmark plan. The law requires the Bureau of Insurance to select a new essential health benefits benchmark plan for the 2028 plan year, or the soonest plan year thereafter as permitted by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, that includes, in addition to the essential health benefits package included in the existing benchmark plan, coverage for (i) doula care services; (ii) the treatment of iatrogenic infertility; (iii) fertility treatment and diagnosis, including a maximum of three cycles per lifetime of assisted reproductive technology; (iv) hearing aids for individuals of all ages; (v) pasteurized donor human breast milk; (vi) the prophylaxis, diagnosis, and treatment of pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders associated with streptococcal infections and pediatric acute-onset neuropsychiatric syndrome; and (vii) the treatment of polycystic ovary syndrome. Such mandate for coverage does not apply to the individual or small group markets. Certain provisions of the law have a delayed effective date pursuant to approval by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services of certain coverage as outlined in the law, and the law contains an emergency clause applicable to certain other provisions. As introduced, this law was a recommendation of the Health Insurance Reform Commission.

HB 1182/SB 361. Health insurance; coverage for contraceptive drugs and devices. The law requires health insurance carriers to provide coverage, under any health insurance contract, policy, or plan that includes coverage for prescription drugs on an outpatient basis, for contraceptive drugs and contraceptive devices approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, including those available over-the-counter. The law prohibits a health insurance carrier from imposing upon any person receiving prescription contraceptive benefits pursuant to the provisions of the law any copayment, coinsurance payment, or fee, except in certain circumstances. Additionally, the law requires any health benefit plan that provides coverage for hormonal contraceptives to provide point-of-sale coverage without cost-sharing at in-network pharmacies for hormonal contraceptives available over-the-counter. The law also requires each insurer to provide information about contraceptive coverage on its website and by mail upon request.



HB 1214. Health insurance; cost-sharing payments for insulin and diabetes equipment and supplies; limit. The law decreases the cap on the cost-sharing payment that a covered person is required to pay for a covered prescription insulin drug from \$50 to \$35 for a 30-day supply of the prescription insulin drug and provides such cap is an aggregate cap that applies in situations where the covered person is prescribed more than one insulin drug. The law also establishes such an aggregate cap of \$35 for a 30-day supply of diabetes equipment and supplies.

Juveniles

HB 123/SB 146. Delinquent children; loss of driving privileges for alcohol, firearm, and drug offenses; truancy. The law allows the court discretion in ordering the denial of a child's driving privileges in instances when the child has failed to comply with school attendance and meeting requirements as provided in relevant law. Under current law, the court is required to order the denial of such child's driving privileges. The law also provides that if the court has ordered the denial of a child's driving privileges, the court shall order such child to surrender his driver's license, which shall be held in the physical custody of the court during any period of license denial. This law is a recommendation of the Committee on District Courts.

HB 438/SB 70. Delinquency petition; referral to court service unit. The law provides that at any point prior to the commencement of an adjudication hearing on a petition alleging that a child is delinquent, the court, upon request of the child with consent of the attorney for the Commonwealth, if a party to the case, may refer the delinquency charge back to the court service unit in writing and the intake officer shall proceed informally pursuant to relevant law. Additionally, the law provides that upon such referral, the court shall dismiss the petition and order that the court records pertaining to the petition be expunged pursuant to relevant law. Lastly, the law allows an intake officer to proceed informally on a complaint alleging a child is in need of services, in need of supervision, or delinquent if the juvenile has previously been proceeded against informally.

Current law does not permit proceeding informally when a juvenile (i) commits a violent juvenile felony or (ii) is alleged delinquent for an offense that would be a felony if committed by an adult if such juvenile had previously been (a) proceeded against informally by intake or (b) adjudicated delinquent for a prior offense that would be a felony if committed by an adult.

SB 18. Children; adjudication of delinquency. The law specifies that "delinquent child" means a child 11 years of age or older who has committed a delinquent act. Currently, there is no minimum age for a child to be adjudicated delinquent. The law provides that if a child younger than 11 years of age is found to have committed an act that would be delinquent if committed by a child 11 years of age or older, the child shall not be proceeded upon as delinquent and the court shall (i) dismiss any petition alleging such child has committed an act that would be delinquent if committed by a child 11 years of age or older and (ii) order that the court records pertaining to such petition be expunged pursuant to relevant law. The law allows the attorney for the Commonwealth to file a petition alleging that such child is in need of services and if such child is found to be in need of services, the court may make any orders of disposition authorized under relevant law. The law also provides that any funding that is available to provide services to a child 11 years of age or older who is proceeded upon as delinquent shall also be made available to a child younger than 11 years of age who is found to have committed an act that would be delinquent if committed by a child 11 years of age or older in order to provide such child with the same services. The law includes in the definition of "child in need of services" a child



younger than 11 years of age who has committed an act that would be delinquent if committed by a child 11 years of age or older.

The law adds that a child may be taken into immediate custody when such child is alleged to be in need of services or supervision and there is a clear and substantial danger to the safety of the child's family or the safety of the public. Currently, a child may be taken into immediate custody when such child is alleged to be in need of services or supervision and there is a clear and substantial danger to the child's life or health. Finally, the law includes in the offense of causing or encouraging acts rendering children delinquent, abused, etc., any person 18 years of age or older, including the parent of any child, who willfully contributes to, encourages, or causes any act, omission, or condition that (a) causes a child younger than 11 years of age to commit an act that would be delinquent if committed by a child 11 years of age or older or (b) causes any child to participate in or become a member of a criminal street gang in violation of existing law. Under the law, any person who commits such offense is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

Labor & Employment

HB 1/SB 1. Minimum wage. The law increases the minimum wage incrementally to \$15.00 per hour by January 1, 2028. The law codifies the adjusted state hourly minimum wage of \$12.77 per hour that is effective January 1, 2026, and increases the minimum wage to \$13.75 per hour effective January 1, 2027, and to \$15.00 per hour effective January 1, 2028. Effective January 1, 2029, and annually thereafter, the law requires the minimum wage to be adjusted to reflect increases in the consumer price index.

HB 5/SB 199. Employment; paid sick leave; civil penalties; civil actions. The law requires one hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked for all employees of private employers and state and local governments, with certain exceptions. The law requires that employees who are employed and compensated on a fee-for-service basis accrue paid sick leave in accordance with regulations adopted by the Commissioner of Labor and Industry. The law provides that employees transferred to a separate division or location remain entitled to previously accrued paid sick leave and that employees retain their accrued paid sick leave under any successor employer. The law allows employers to provide a more generous paid sick leave policy than prescribed by its provisions and specifies that employees, in addition to using paid sick leave for their physical or mental illness or to care for a family member, may use paid sick leave to seek or obtain certain services or to relocate or secure an existing home due to domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking. The law requires the Commissioner to promulgate regulations for the implementation and enforcement of the law's provisions by July 1, 2027.

The law authorizes the Commissioner, in the case of a knowing violation, to subject an employer to a civil penalty not to exceed \$150 for the first violation, \$300 for the second violation, and \$500 for each successive violation. The Commissioner or Attorney General may commence administrative proceedings or bring a civil action to enforce the law's provisions. Additionally, the law authorizes an aggrieved employee to bring a civil action against the employer in which he may recover double the amount of any unpaid sick leave and the amount of any actual damages suffered as the result of the employer's violation. Certain provisions of the law have a delayed effective date of July 1, 2027.

HB 636/SB 215. Prohibiting employer seeking wage or salary history of prospective employees; wage or salary range transparency; cause of action. The law prohibits a prospective employer from (i) seeking the wage or salary history of a prospective employee; (ii)



relying on the wage or salary history of a prospective employee in considering the prospective employee for employment; (iii) relying on the wage or salary history of a prospective employee in determining the wages or salary the prospective employee is to be paid upon hire; (iv) refusing to interview, hire, employ, or promote or otherwise retaliating against a prospective or current employee for not providing wage or salary history or requesting a wage or salary range; (v) failing or refusing to disclose in each public and internal posting for each job, promotion, transfer, or other employment opportunity the wage, salary, or wage or salary range; and (vi) failing to set a wage or salary range in good faith. The law authorizes the Attorney General to bring a cause of action to enforce its provisions and provides that an employer that violates such provisions is subject to a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 for the first violation and up to \$5,000 for any subsequent violation. The law permits an aggrieved prospective employee or employee to bring an action to recover actual damages and any other legal and equitable relief as may be appropriate within one year of when his rights were violated.

HB 1207/SB 2. Paid family and medical leave insurance program; notice requirements; civil action. The law requires the Virginia Employment Commission to establish and administer a paid family and medical leave insurance program with benefits beginning April 1, 2028. Under the program, benefits are paid to covered individuals, as defined in the law, for family and medical leave. Funding for the program is provided through premiums assessed to employers and employees beginning April 1, 2028. The law provides that the amount of a benefit is 80 percent of the employee's average weekly net earnings, not to exceed 100 percent of the statewide average weekly net earnings, which amount is required to be adjusted annually to reflect changes in the statewide average weekly wage. The law caps the duration of paid leave at 12 weeks in any application year, or four weeks in the case of paid leave for safety services, and provides self-employed individuals the option of participating in the program.

Landlord & Tenant Act

HB 15/SB 48. Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act; landlord remedies; noncompliance with rental agreement; mandatory waiting period. The law increases the mandatory waiting period for a landlord to pursue remedies for termination of the rental agreement from five days to 14 days. The waiting period begins after a landlord serves written notice on a tenant notifying the tenant of his nonpayment of rent and of the landlord's intention to terminate the rental agreement if rent is not paid.

HB 95. Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act; landlord remedies; noncompliance with rental agreement; payment plan. Effective July 1, 2027, the law requires a landlord who owns more than four rental dwelling units or more than a 10 percent interest in more than four rental dwelling units, before terminating a rental agreement due to nonpayment of rent if the exact amount of rent owed is less than or equal to one month's rent plus any late charges contracted for in the rental agreement and as provided by law, to serve upon such tenant a written notice informing the tenant of the exact amount due and owed and offer the tenant a payment plan under which the tenant must pay the exact amount due and owed in equal monthly installments over a period of the lesser of six months or the time remaining under the rental agreement. The law prohibits the landlord from charging any additional late fees during the payment plan period in connection with the unpaid rental amount for which the tenant entered into the payment plan so long as the tenant makes timely payments in accordance with the terms of the payment plan. The law also outlines the remedies a landlord has if a tenant fails to pay the exact amount due and owed or enter into a payment plan within five days of receiving notice or



if a tenant enters into a payment plan and after such plan becomes effective fails to pay rent when due or fails to make a payment under the terms of the agreed-upon payment plan. The law directs the Department of Housing and Community Development to develop a sample payment plan for use by landlords and maintain such sample payment plan on the Department's website.

HB 616. Department of Housing and Community Development; Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act; tenant records. Effective July 1, 2027, the law requires a landlord, upon written request by a tenant, to within 10 business days provide such tenant a statement containing all charges and payments incurred by the tenant over the duration of the tenancy or the past 12 months, whichever is shorter. The law specifies that such statement shall itemize separately rent and the cost of each utility and that the landlord is not obligated to provide such written statement if the landlord owns fewer than four rental dwelling units or less than a 10 percent interest in more than four rental dwelling units, whether individually or through a business entity, in the Commonwealth unless the landlord receives any state or local rental or utility assistance funds on behalf of the tenant. The law additionally directs the Department of Housing and Community Development to, based on input from relevant stakeholders, develop a standardized printable template for the landlord to use to provide the tenant such written statement.

HB 1005/SB 313. Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act; rental payment methods; prohibited fees. The law requires a landlord subject to the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act to accept payment of periodic rent and any security deposit by check and money order. The law additionally prohibits such a landlord from requiring a tenant to pay any fee to submit periodic rent payments or other amounts due in excess of the actual out-of-pocket expenses charged to the landlord by a third party to process a payment. Finally, the law prohibits a landlord from requiring a tenant to pay any fee for the maintenance or repair of any dwelling unit unless the repair is necessitated by the tenant's violation of the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act.

Local Government

HB 153/SB 94. Siting of data centers; site assessment; high energy use facility. The law provides that, prior to any approval of a rezoning application, special exception application, or special use permit for the siting of a new high energy use facility (HEUF), as defined in the law, a locality shall require that an applicant perform and submit a site assessment to examine the sound profile of the HEUF on residential units and schools located within 500 feet of the HEUF property boundary. The law also allows a locality to require that a site assessment examine the effect of the proposed facility on (i) ground and surface water resources, (ii) agricultural resources, (iii) parks, (iv) registered historic sites, and (v) forestland on the HEUF site or immediately contiguous land. The provisions of the law shall not apply to a site with an existing legislative or administrative approval where an applicant is seeking an expansion or modification of an already existing or approved facility and such expansion does not exceed an additional 100 megawatts or more of electrical power. Finally, the law provides that its provisions shall not be construed to prohibit, limit, or otherwise supersede existing local zoning authority.

HB 256/SB 425. Comprehensive plan; environmental justice strategy. The law requires cities with populations greater than 20,000 and counties with populations greater than 100,000 to consider, beginning July 1, 2026, at the next and all subsequent reviews of the comprehensive plan, adopting an environmental justice strategy. The law provides that the locality's strategy



shall be to identify environmental justice and fenceline communities within the jurisdiction of the local planning commission and identify objectives and policies to reduce health risks, to promote civic engagement, to prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of environmental justice and fenceline communities, as those terms are defined in the law, and to establish baseline environmental and health conditions to characterize any disproportionate public health conditions in the identified fenceline communities.

SB 530. State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act; electronic disclosure by local government officers and employees. The law requires local government officers and employees to file their annual disclosure statements electronically with the Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council, using the Council's online filing system. Such officers and employees shall be able to file the annual disclosure statement electronically beginning January 1, 2027, but such electronic filing shall be required (i) for localities with populations in excess of 250,000, beginning January 1, 2028; (ii) for localities with populations in excess of 100,000 but not more than 250,000, beginning January 1, 2029; and (iii) for localities with populations not exceeding 100,000, beginning January 1, 2030. The law provides that the Department of Elections shall be responsible for coordinating the electronic filing by candidates for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, the Senate, or the House of Delegates, and the general registrars shall be responsible for coordinating the electronic filing by candidates for constitutional offices, local governing bodies, and elected school boards.

Motor Vehicles

HB 646. Green warning lights; certain farm vehicles. The law authorizes the use of green warning lights on vehicles displaying a permanent farm use placard, farm vehicles, farm tractors, and farm utility vehicles while operating on or along a highway.

HB 911/SB 446. Limited-duration licenses, driver privilege cards and permits, and identification privilege cards; expiration. The law extends the validity of limited-duration licenses, driver privilege cards and permits, and identification privilege cards, other than REAL ID credentials and commercial driver's licenses and permits, to a period of time consistent with the validity of driver's licenses, which, under current law, is a period not to exceed eight years or, for a person age 75 or older, a period not to exceed five years, and permits and special identification cards. The law aligns requirements for eligibility for limited-duration commercial driver's licenses and permits and REAL ID-compliant limited-duration commercial driver's licenses with federal requirements and clarifies the validity periods for such documents. The law directs the Department of Motor Vehicles to implement the extended validity periods for limited-duration licenses, driver privilege cards, or permits upon renewal or reissuance.

HB 1224/SB 396. Driver's licenses; requirements for initial licensure; persons age 18 to 21. Effective January 1, 2027, the law expands from 60 days to 90 days the length of time an applicant for a first-time noncommercial driver's license who is at least 18 years old and not more than 21 years old is required to hold a learner's permit and requires such an applicant to complete a course of driver instruction prior to being issued a driver's license. The law provides that learner's permits other than motorcycle learner's permits, accompanied by other documentation verifying that the driver is at least 18 years old and less than 21 years old and has successfully completed an approved driver's education course, constitute a temporary driver's license for the purpose of driving unaccompanied by a licensed driver 18 years old or older, provided that certain other requirements are met.



Public Education

HB 299/SB 200. Board of Education; Standards of Learning assessments and related assessment methods; development, administration, scoring, and release. The law makes several clarifying revisions to applicable law relating to the development, administration, and scoring of Standards of Learning assessments and related assessment methods for determining the level of achievement of Standards of Learning objectives by all students, including (i) clarifying that students who are children with disabilities, as that term is defined by applicable law, who participate in alternative methods of Standards of Learning assessment administration or in alternate assessments through the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program are exempt from several requirements set forth in applicable law relating to the administration and grading of Standards of Learning assessments and related assessments and (ii) repealing the provisions requiring the Board of Education to establish a through-year growth assessment system in lieu of a one-time end-of-year assessment. The provisions of the law limiting the number of end-of-course assessments that may be administered to students in grades seven through 12 and requiring the score received by each student in grades seven through 12 on an end-of-course assessment to account for at least 10 percent of the student's final grade in such course are subject to a contingent and delayed effective date.

HB 836/SB 491. Public schools; right to free public elementary and secondary education; discrimination based on immigration status prohibited; civil cause of action. The law prohibits any child in the Commonwealth from being denied a free public education through secondary school on the basis of the actual or perceived immigration or citizenship status of the child or the child's parents, in accordance with the Constitution of Virginia and consistent with the requirements of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. The law also, among other things, prohibits any school board, public elementary or secondary school, school resource officer employed by a local law-enforcement agency in any public elementary or secondary school, or any individual who is an employee, contractor, or agent of a school board from engaging in certain enumerated actions and practices that involve or result in the denial of a free public education, or denial of the benefits or exclusion from participation in any program or activity thereof, of a child on the basis of the actual or perceived immigration or citizenship status of the child or the child's parents. The law establishes a civil cause of action for violations of the foregoing prohibitions. The law requires the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Office of the Attorney General, to develop and make available to each school board by August 1, 2026, guidance and resources on developing policies and procedures to implement the requirements set forth in the law and requires each school board to develop and implement by December 31, 2026, such policies and procedures and to require each public elementary and secondary school principal and administrator in the school division to complete training on compliance with the provisions of the law as soon as is practicable but not later than the beginning of the 2027–2028 school year, consistent with the guidance and resources developed and made available by the Department of Education.

HB 1283/SB 724. High school graduation requirements; application. The law provides that, in the event that the Board of Education establishes or modifies any graduation requirements or diploma pathways, the Board shall only apply such new or modified graduation requirements or diploma pathways to students who enter ninth grade at the beginning of or after the first school year of implementation of such new or modified graduation requirements or diploma pathways.



The law is applicable beginning with students who enter the ninth grade on or after the beginning of the 2027–2028 school year.

HB 1455/SB 815. School boards; opening of the school year; certain alternative schedules and schedule flexibility permitted. The law extends from no earlier than 14 days before Labor Day to no earlier than 14 days before September 1 of each year the requirement relating to the earliest date that each school board is permitted to schedule as the first day on which students are required to attend school each year.

Public Safety

HB 21/SB 27. Firearm industry members; standards of responsible conduct; civil liability. The law creates standards of responsible conduct for firearm industry members and requires such members to establish and implement reasonable controls regarding the manufacture, sale, distribution, use, and marketing of the firearm industry member's firearm-related products, as those terms are defined in the law. Such reasonable controls include reasonable procedures, safeguards, and business practices that are designed to (i) prevent the sale or distribution of a firearm-related product to a straw purchaser, a firearm trafficker, a person prohibited from possessing a firearm under state or federal law, or a person who the firearm industry member has reasonable cause to believe is at substantial risk of using a firearm-related product to harm themselves or unlawfully harm another or of unlawfully possessing or using a firearm-related product; (ii) prevent the loss of a firearm-related product or theft of a firearm-related product from a firearm industry member; (iii) ensure that the firearm industry member complies with all provisions of state and federal law and does not otherwise promote the unlawful manufacture, sale, possession, marketing, or use of a firearm-related product; (iv) prevent the installation and use of an auto sear on firearm-related products; and (v) ensure that the firearm industry member does not engage in an act or practice in violation of the Virginia Consumer Protection Act. The law also provides that a firearm industry member may not knowingly create, maintain, or contribute to a public nuisance, as defined in the law, through the sale, manufacturing, importing, or marketing of a firearm-related product. The law creates a civil cause of action for the Attorney General or a local county, city, or town attorney to enforce the provisions of the law or for any person who has been injured as a result of a firearm industry member's violation to seek an injunction and to recover costs and damages. The law also allows the Attorney General to issue a civil investigative demand if he has reasonable cause to believe that any person has engaged in, is engaging in, or is about to engage in any violation of such standards of responsible conduct.

HB 217/SB 749. Purchase, sale, transfer, etc., of assault firearms and certain ammunition feeding devices prohibited; penalties. The law creates a Class 1 misdemeanor for any person who imports, sells, manufactures, purchases, or transfers an assault firearm, as that term is defined in the law with some exceptions, and prohibits a person who has been convicted of such violation from purchasing, possessing, or transporting a firearm for a period of three years from the date of conviction. The law provides that an assault firearm does not include any firearm that is an antique firearm, has been rendered permanently inoperable, or is manually operated by bolt, pump, lever, or slide action. The law also prohibits the sale of a large capacity ammunition feeding device, as that term is defined in the law. The law provides that any person who willfully and intentionally (i) sells an assault firearm to another person or (ii) purchases an assault firearm from another person is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor and that any person who imports, sells, barter, transfers, or purchases a large capacity ammunition feeding device is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.



HB 901/SB 495. Substantial risk orders; eligible petitioners; substantial risk factors and considerations; court jurisdiction; constructive possession of firearms; penalty. The law expands the list of persons eligible to file a petition for an emergency substantial risk order. The law provides various factors that a judge or magistrate shall consider for the purpose of determining whether to issue an emergency substantial risk order or a substantial risk order. The law expands court jurisdiction over substantial risk orders from circuit courts to juvenile and domestic relations district courts and general district courts and requires petitions against minors to be filed in juvenile and domestic relations district courts. The law requires a copy of the order to be served on the parent or guardian of the minor at any address where the minor resides or the local board of social services in the case where the minor is the subject of a dependency or court-approved out-of-home placement. The law also provides the process for which firearms not owned by the subject of a petition are returned to the lawful owner of such firearms. The law provides that any emergency substantial risk order or substantial risk order issued remains in full force and effect pending any appeal. Lastly, the law provides that any person who makes a materially false statement or representation to a court during the petitioning process is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

HB 1482/SB 352. Law-enforcement officers; restrictions on wearing of facial coverings; exceptions; penalty. The law prohibits any law-enforcement officer, defined in the law, from wearing a facial covering, defined in the law, while engaged in the performance of his official duties. The law sets out several exceptions to such prohibition, including protective facial coverings to protect against disease, infection, and exposure to toxic substances and facial coverings worn by any law-enforcement officer assigned to a special weapons and tactics team while engaged in the performance of his official duties with such team. The law subjects the law-enforcement officer to disciplinary action, including dismissal, demotion, suspension, transfer, or decertification, and creates a Class 1 misdemeanor for any law-enforcement officer who wears a facial covering in violation of the provisions of the law unless the law-enforcement agency that employs such law-enforcement officer has adopted and established a written policy for and restrictions on the use of facial coverings. The law also directs the Department of Criminal Justice Services to develop a model policy for and restrictions on the use of facial coverings by law-enforcement officers.

HB 1525. Possession, transportation, or purchase of certain firearms by certain persons; penalty; emergency. The law, which became effective on April 22, 2026, provides additional exceptions, outlined in the law, for persons younger than 18 years of age to possess or transport handguns or assault firearms anywhere in the Commonwealth. The law also makes it a Class 1 misdemeanor for persons younger than 21 years of age to purchase a handgun or assault firearm anywhere in the Commonwealth. The law directs the Department of State Police to administer, enforce, and otherwise implement existing law related to required criminal history record information checks to sell firearms.

Public Utilities

HB 2/SB 72. Phase I and Phase II Utilities; energy efficiency upgrades; low-income residents; report. The law states that it is the policy of the Commonwealth to reduce, wherever feasible and cost-effective, heating-related costs of living for low-income residents. The law requires Dominion Energy Virginia and Appalachian Power to make best, reasonable efforts to provide by December 31, 2031, prescriptive efficiency measures, as defined in the law, and related efficiency improvements to at least 30 percent of the qualifying households, as defined in



the law, identified by such utilities, provided that the State Corporation Commission determines that such measures and improvements are in the public interest. The law requires such utilities to report to the Commission its activities, plans, and filings regarding the law's provisions no later than January 1, 2028, annually thereafter, and in any recurring filing that the Commission deems appropriate. The law also requires that Dominion Energy and Appalachian Power make reasonable efforts to incorporate recommendations or feedback provided by the task force that evaluates barriers to access and enrollment in programs for income-qualified energy customers.

HB 429/SB 249. Electric utilities; integrated resource plans. The law makes various changes related to the content and process for an integrated resource plan (IRP) developed by an electric utility that provides a forecast of its load obligations and a plan to meet those obligations. The law (i) extends the planning timeframe from 15 to 20 years; (ii) requires Appalachian Power to file an IRP by removing an exception from the definition of "electric utility"; (iii) changes the frequency with which a utility is required to file an IRP from biennially to triennially; (iv) requires utilities to consider the use of grid-enhancing technologies as alternatives to new transmission infrastructure, and when new transmission lines are envisioned, to provide the reasons grid-enhancing technologies are not sufficient to defer or eliminate the need for new transmission infrastructure; and (v) requires utilities to consider the use of surplus interconnection service, as defined in the law, to add new electric generation projects and energy storage resources to the grid. The law requires that the current stakeholder review process for integrated resource plans be facilitated by a third-party facilitator selected by the State Corporation Commission and compensated by the utility. The law requires, as part of the stakeholder review process, the utility to provide stakeholders with reasonable access to the same modeling software, modeling assumptions, modeling inputs, and data used by the utility to evaluate supply and demand resources in its integrated resource plan to enable stakeholders to create modeling scenarios for the utility's consideration during the development of its integrated resource plan. The law requires the State Corporation Commission to (a) establish guidelines that ensure that utilities develop comprehensive integrated resource plans and provide meaningful public engagement and maximum transparency during the planning process; (b) conduct a proceeding by July 1, 2027, and at least once every five years thereafter, to identify and review each of its existing orders relevant to integrated resource plans to determine if such orders remain necessary and effective and are not overly burdensome; and (c) convene a work group to make recommendations on the required guidelines. As introduced, this law was a recommendation of the Commission on Electric Utility Regulation.

HB 770/SB 650. Public utilities; water and sewerage companies; discounted rates for low-income customers. Effective January 1, 2027, the law provides that a public utility engaged in the business of furnishing water or sewerage facilities may propose and the State Corporation Commission may approve rates and tariff provisions that provide discounted service to customers with an annual household income equal to or less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level. The law permits the utility to recover the costs of providing such discounted service through its rates for commercial and industrial customers.

HB 1151/SB 423. Electric utilities; delay in provision of service permitted. Effective July 1, 2027, the law provides that a distributor of electric energy may delay the provision of service if such delay is necessary to maintain electric grid reliability, to avoid exceeding available generation or transmission capacity constraints, or to ensure compliance with load



interconnection policies or rules issued by the State Corporation Commission or the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Social Services

HB 301. Adult adoptees; access to vital records. The law requires the State Registrar to provide adult adoptees access to their birth certificate upon request, provided that the requester submits an application, proof of identification, and payment and that the original birth certificate is not the certificate of birth in use, subject to amendment, or used by an individual for legal purposes. The law directs the State Registrar to make a contact preference form available to birth parents that allows them to indicate their preference for contact by the adopted person, to be stored with the adopted person's birth certificate and provided upon the adopted person's request for the birth certificate.

HB 931/SB 270. Recovery residences; regulations. The law establishes certain requirements for recovery residences and directs the State Board of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (the Board) to promulgate regulations to establish minimum certification standards for recovery residences. The law also requires that the regulations promulgated by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (the Department) related to the certification of recovery residences include provisions that no recovery residence, or operator, employee, or agent of a recovery residence, may require a resident to participate in medical or psychological services, including clinical substance use treatment, that such recovery residence receives financial benefit from, either directly or indirectly, as a condition of entering or continuing residence at such recovery residence. The law requires the Department to monitor credentialing agencies providing credentials to recovery residences to ensure criteria related to certification comply with regulations and specifies that no such credentialing agency shall provide credentials to a recovery residence that is owned or operated by an individual who is employed by or in a position of authority at such credentialing agency, or an immediate family member of any such individual. The law also requires that referrals to recovery residences made by the Department, any agency of the Commonwealth, or a court may only be made to recovery residences that are certified.

HB 1366. Department of Social Services; corrective action plans and assumption of temporary control of local boards and local departments. The law grants the Commissioner of Social Services the authority to create and enforce a corrective action plan for any local board of social services or local department of social services that (i) fails to administer public assistance and social services programs in accordance with applicable laws and regulations or (ii) takes any action or fails to act in a manner that poses a substantial risk to the health, safety, or well-being of a child or adult. The law permits similar authority for any local board of social services that (a) fails to provide child welfare services in accordance with applicable law or regulations or (b) takes any action or fails to act in a manner that poses a substantial risk to the health, safety, or well-being of a child. Under the law, if a local board or department fails to comply with a corrective action plan, the Commissioner has the authority to temporarily assume control of all or part of the local board's operations. The law also provides that, when a local board of social services or local department of social services requests assistance, the Commissioner has the authority to utilize staff of the Department of Social Services or contract with private entities to provide public assistance and social services programs in the locality served by the local board or department. The law also adds adult services to the definition of "social services" for purposes of Title 63.2 (Welfare (Social Services)).



HB 1490. Department of Social Services; centralized intake system for reports or complaints of child abuse or neglect; response to complaints within 24 hours for children under three years of age. Effective July 1, 2027, the law establishes a centralized hotline for reports and complaints of child abuse or neglect. The law requires the Department of Social Services to establish and maintain a hotline for reports and complaints of child abuse or neglect and specifies that the Department shall determine the validity of such reports and complaints. The law eliminates the requirement that local departments must be capable of receiving and responding to reports and complaints of abuse or neglect and instead requires that any complaint of child abuse or neglect received by a local department shall be immediately forwarded to the Department's child abuse and neglect hotline.

Effective in due course, the law directs the Department of Social Services to (i) promulgate regulations necessary to implement the provisions of the law by July 1, 2027, and (ii) contract with a third party by August 1, 2026, to conduct a comprehensive study and review of the screening process used for child protective services complaints across Virginia.

SB 640. Department of Social Services; corrective action plans; centralized hotline for reports or complaints of child abuse or neglect. The law establishes a centralized hotline for reports and complaints of child abuse or neglect and grants the Commissioner of Social Services the authority to create and enforce a corrective action plan for any local board of social services or local department of social services that (i) fails to administer public assistance and social services programs in accordance with applicable laws and regulations or (ii) takes any action or fails to act in a manner that poses a substantial risk to the health, safety, or well-being of a child or adult. The law permits similar authority for any local board of social services that (a) fails to provide child welfare services in accordance with applicable law or regulations or (b) takes any action or fails to act in a manner that poses a substantial risk to the health, safety, or well-being of a child. Under the law, if a local board or department fails to comply with a corrective action plan, the Commissioner has the authority to temporarily assume control of all or part of the local board's operations. The law also provides that, when a local board of social services or local department of social services requests assistance, the Commissioner has the authority to utilize staff of the Department of Social Services or contract with private entities to provide public assistance and social services programs in the locality served by the local board or department.

The law requires the Department of Social Services to establish and maintain a hotline for reports and complaints of child abuse or neglect and specifies that the Department shall determine the validity of such reports and complaints. The law eliminates the requirement that local departments must be capable of receiving and responding to reports and complaints of abuse or neglect and instead requires that any complaint of child abuse or neglect received by a local department shall be immediately forwarded to the Department's child abuse and neglect hotline. The law also adds adult services to the definition of "social services" for purposes of Title 63.2 (Welfare (Social Services)).

The law directs the Department of Social Services to (1) promulgate regulations necessary to implement the provisions of the law and (2) contract with a third party by August 1, 2026, to conduct a comprehensive study and review of the screening process used for child protective services complaints across Virginia. The law also directs the Secretary of Health and Human Resources to convene a Social Services Task Force to develop a comprehensive improvement plan to address changes needed within the State Department of Social Services and the local departments of social services.



The provisions of the law related to centralized intake have a delayed effective date of July 1, 2027.

Special License Plates

The issuance of revenue-sharing special license plates for supporters of the Richmond Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) bearing the legend SAVING LIVES TOGETHER is authorized. (HB 811)

The existing non-revenue sharing special license plate for members of the Virginia Realtors is converted to a revenue-sharing special license plate with the revenue benefiting the Virginia REALTORS Disaster Relief Fund. (HB 1339/SB 204)

The issuance of Sons of Confederate Veterans and Robert E. Lee special license plates is repealed. Such special license plates already in circulation will remain valid until their expiration and will not be renewed. (HB 1344)

Information on creating or obtaining special license plates is available at any DMV office or online at www.dmv.virginia.gov.

Speed Cameras

HB 994. Photo speed monitoring devices; placement and operation. The law authorizes the governing body of any locality to provide by ordinance for the placement and operation of a photo speed monitoring device by a law-enforcement agency in a safety red zone, defined in the law, for the purpose of recording vehicle speed violations in such safety red zone. The law directs the Supreme Court of Virginia to develop a summons for vehicle speed violations captured by photo speed monitoring devices and requires summonses issued for such vehicle speed violations to be such summons. The law makes various changes to the requirements for the use of photo speed monitoring devices, including the use of funds from collected civil penalties, signage, data retention and storage, photo speed monitoring device calibration, making certain information available to the public, requirements for private vendors, and reporting. The law establishes civil penalties for violations of requirements and provides that for any summons issued, failure to comply with the requirements for the operation of photo speed monitoring devices renders such summons invalid.

The law also limits the use of photo speed monitoring devices in highway work zones to when workers are present, as defined in the law, and provides that a certificate sworn to or affirmed by a law-enforcement officer or a retired sworn law-enforcement officer is not prima facie evidence of the facts contained therein for a photo speed monitoring device placed in a highway work zone unless the operator of the photo speed monitoring device provides a sworn certification verifying that workers were present at the time of the vehicle speed violation.

The law directs the Commissioner of Highways to develop criteria for designating a highway segment as a high-risk pedestrian corridor for purposes of identifying safety red zones.

The law contains delayed effective dates for certain provisions.

HB 1220. Photo speed monitoring devices; placement and operation. The law directs the Supreme Court of Virginia to develop a summons for vehicle speed violations captured by photo speed monitoring devices and requires summonses issued for such vehicle speed violations to be such summons. The law makes various changes to the requirements for the use of photo speed



monitoring devices, including the use of funds from collected civil penalties, signage, data retention and storage, photo speed monitoring device calibration, making certain information available to the public, requirements for private vendors, and reporting. The law establishes civil penalties for violations of requirements and provides that for any summons issued, failure to comply with the requirements for the operation of photo speed monitoring devices renders such summons invalid.

The law also limits the use of photo speed monitoring devices in highway work zones to when workers are present, as defined in the law, and provides that a certificate sworn to or affirmed by a law-enforcement officer or a retired sworn law-enforcement officer is not prima facie evidence of the facts contained therein for a photo speed monitoring device placed in a highway work zone unless the operator of the photo speed monitoring device provides a sworn certification verifying that workers were present at the time of the vehicle speed violation.

The law contains delayed effective dates for certain provisions.

SB 84. Photo speed monitoring devices, pedestrian crossing violation monitoring systems, and stop sign violation monitoring systems; placement and operation; violation enforcement; civil penalties. The law authorizes state and local law-enforcement agencies to place and operate pedestrian crossing violation and stop sign violation monitoring systems in school crossing zones, highway work zones, and high-risk speed corridors for purposes of recording pedestrian crossing and stop sign violations, as those terms are defined in the law. The law requires local law-enforcement agencies implementing or expanding the use of pedestrian crossing violation and stop sign violation monitoring systems, prior to the implementation or expansion of such systems, to conduct a public awareness program for such implementation or expansion.

The law directs the Supreme Court of Virginia to develop a summons for vehicle speed violations captured by photo speed monitoring devices and violations captured by the other devices authorized by this law and requires summonses issued for such violations captured by such devices to be such summons. The law makes various changes to the requirements for the use of these devices, including the use of funds from collected civil penalties, signage, data retention and storage, photo speed monitoring device calibration, making certain information available to the public, requirements for private vendors, and reporting. The law establishes civil penalties for violations of requirements and provides that, for any summons issued, failure to comply with the requirements for the operation of such devices renders such summons invalid and requires courts to dismiss such summons.

The law also limits the use of such devices in highway work zones to when workers are present, as defined in the law, and provides that a certificate sworn to or affirmed by a law-enforcement officer or a retired sworn law-enforcement officer is not prima facie evidence of the facts contained therein for a device placed in a highway work zone unless the operator of the photo speed monitoring device, pedestrian crossing violation monitoring system, or stop sign violation monitoring system, respectively, provides a sworn certification verifying that workers were present at the time of the violation.

SB 219. Photo speed monitoring devices; placement and operation; summons. The law requires a second summons for a vehicle speed violation captured by a photo speed monitoring device to be mailed if a summoned person fails to appear on the date of return set out in the first summons mailed. If the summoned person fails to appear after the second summons, the law



requires the Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles to refuse to issue or renew the vehicle registration certificate or the license plate issued for such vehicle until the required civil penalties and any administrative fees have been paid and any applicable reinstatement processes required by the Department of Motor Vehicles have been completed.

The law directs the Supreme Court of Virginia to develop a summons for vehicle speed violations captured by photo speed monitoring devices and requires summonses issued for such vehicle speed violations to be such summons. The law makes various changes to the requirements for the use of photo speed monitoring devices, including the use of funds from collected civil penalties, signage, data retention and storage, photo speed monitoring device calibration, making certain information available to the public, requirements for private vendors, and reporting. The law establishes civil penalties for violations of requirements and provides that, for any summons issued, failure to comply with the requirements for the operation of photo speed monitoring devices renders such summons invalid and requires courts to dismiss such summonses.

The law provides that any person against whom an enforcement action is carried out by a locality or law-enforcement agency, pursuant to the authority granted for the use of photo speed monitoring devices, where the enforcement action was based upon a willful disregard for applicable law, shall be entitled to an award of compensatory damages and to an order remanding the matter to the locality with a direction to carry out any further enforcement in a manner consistent with the law and may be entitled to reasonable attorney fees and court costs. The law also provides that if a locality fails to comply with such an order, the court may order that the locality shall be ineligible to receive any funds collected from enforcement using photo speed monitoring devices, in excess of those used for its photo speed monitoring device program, and that the court shall order that any such excess funds be deposited in the Virginia Highway Safety Improvement Program until the locality comes into compliance with such order.

The law also limits the use of photo speed monitoring devices in highway work zones to when workers are present, as defined in the law, and provides that a certificate sworn to or affirmed by a law-enforcement officer or a retired sworn law-enforcement officer is not prima facie evidence of the facts contained therein for a photo speed monitoring device placed in a highway work zone unless the operator of the photo speed monitoring device provides a sworn certification verifying that workers were present at the time of the vehicle speed violation.

The law contains delayed effective dates for certain provisions.

Taxation

HB 488. Wage garnishment; state tax debt. Effective July 1, 2027, the law provides that the maximum part of the aggregate disposable earnings of an individual for any workweek that is subject to garnishment to collect delinquent taxes and charges owed to the state government shall not exceed the lesser of (i) 25 percent of such individual's disposable earnings for that week or (ii) the amount by which such individual's disposable earnings exceed 40 times the federal or Virginia minimum wage, whichever is greater. The law also directs the Department of Taxation to recognize Currently Not Collectible status granted by the Internal Revenue Service and to offer taxpayers with such status a similar Virginia status with comparable protections from collection activities.



HB 716. Income tax; innocent spouse tax relief. The law authorizes the Department of Taxation to grant relief to a taxpayer liable for payment of all or part of any unpaid tax, assessment, or other deficiency that is owed due to a mistake made by such taxpayer's spouse on a joint tax return, regardless of whether the taxpayer claimed such relief from the federal government.

HB 915. Local taxation; extension for federal government shutdown. The law allows a local governing body to provide an extension on personal property taxes owed by federal employees who are furloughed due to a federal government shutdown and essential federal employees who continue to work during such shutdown but do not receive immediate payment for such work as a result of such shutdown. The law states that any such extension granted shall end and the taxes shall be due no later than 90 days following the reopening of the federal government.

HB 954. Rounding procedures. The law provides for rounding procedures in certain cash transactions and authorizes the governing body of a locality to by ordinance set temporary procedures for the adjustment of bills and account balances for taxes and other charges due to the locality to account for the cessation of production of the penny coin by the United States Mint until July 1, 2027. The law also directs the Department of Taxation to evaluate options and recommend a uniform procedure for such adjustments and balances for all localities of the Commonwealth and report its findings and recommendations no later than November 1, 2026.

Technology

HB 518. Streaming advertisement volume control; civil penalty. Effective July 1, 2027, the law requires a video streaming service, social media video service, or third-party advertising manager, as defined in the law, that serves consumers residing in the Commonwealth to exercise reasonable care to engage in normalization of the audio of short-form content, as defined in the law, so that such audio is not transmitted at a louder volume than the long-form content, also defined in the law, it accompanies, consistent with the regulations adopted by the Federal Communications Commission pursuant to the federal Commercial Advertisement Loudness Mitigation (CALM) Act for television broadcast stations, cable operators, and other multichannel video programming distributors. The law provides that the Office of the Attorney General shall enforce the provisions of the law.

HB 1161. Government Data Collection and Dissemination Practices Act; dissemination of personal information to federal government; civil penalties. The law provides that any agency or political subdivision of the Commonwealth shall only disseminate personal information (i) to the extent necessary to comply with state or federal law, including the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act; (ii) to the extent necessary to carry out the administration of a state or federal program pursuant to state or federal law; (iii) to comply with a subpoena, court order, or administrative proceeding; (iv) to the extent necessary to ensure fulfillment of the obligations of a purchase or contract made in accordance with the Virginia Public Procurement Act or a memorandum of understanding or management agreement made in accordance with the Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act; (v) when the data subject has given consent; or (vi) to the extent necessary to accomplish a proper purpose of the agency. The law also prohibits an agency or political subdivision from selling personal information. The law authorizes a court, in the case of a willful and knowing violation, to subject a specific public officer, appointee, or employee of any agency to civil penalties.



HB 1186/SB 394. Department of Education; artificial intelligence system use in instructional settings; development of AIS safety guidance required; AIS Innovation in Education Pilot Program established; report. The law requires the Department of Education, in consultation with school divisions and other relevant stakeholders, to compile information on current uses of artificial intelligence systems (AIS) for student instruction in public schools in the Commonwealth and to establish and post in a publicly accessible location on its website guidance for the safe, ethical, and equitable use of AIS in instructional settings in public elementary and secondary schools. The law requires each school board to establish, implement, and enforce policies consistent with the guidance developed by the Department in accordance with the provisions of the law. The law also directs the Department to establish and oversee the AIS Innovation in Education Pilot Program for the purpose of funding, evaluating, and scaling innovative uses of AIS in public elementary and secondary schools by providing support to school divisions in piloting AIS applications for instruction, tutoring, student engagement, operational efficiency, and teacher support and to submit an annual report to the Chairs of the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Health by December 1. The Pilot Program has an expiration date of July 1, 2030.

SB 338. Consumer Data Protection Act; data controller responsibilities; precise geolocation data. The law provides that, for purposes of the Consumer Data Protection Act, a controller of personal data shall not sell or offer for sale precise geolocation data concerning a consumer.

Traffic Infractions

HB 55. Noise abatement monitoring systems; local authority; civil penalties. The law authorizes counties and cities in Planning Districts 8, 9, and 15 (Northern Virginia, Rappahannock-Rapidan, and Richmond) to place and operate noise abatement monitoring systems, defined in the law, on any highway located in the locality for the purpose of recording and enforcing exhaust system violations, also defined in the law. The law provides that the operator of a vehicle is liable for a civil penalty not to exceed \$100, but the violation shall not be reported on the driver's operating record or to the driver's insurance agency. The law provides that a locality may exempt from enforcement by noise abatement monitoring systems vehicles used for agricultural, horticultural, or forestry purposes as demonstrated by vehicle license plates. Under the law, the civil penalty will be paid to the locality in which the violation occurred to be used for the cost of administering the noise abatement monitoring system program and for transportation safety initiatives. The law contains the same data privacy and storage requirements as are in current law for photo speed monitoring devices. The law requires any locality that places and operates such a noise abatement monitoring system to report on its public website by January 15 of each year on the number of traffic violations prosecuted, the number of successful prosecutions, and the total amount of monetary civil penalties collected. The law has an expiration date of July 1, 2028.

HB 320. Live streaming while driving; prohibited; penalty. The law prohibits any person, while driving a moving motor vehicle on the highways in the Commonwealth, from (i) initiating, participating in, or manipulating an electronic device in order to interact with any live stream, as that term is defined in the law, and (ii) manipulating any electronic device to enable or maintain the functions of a live stream on or with such electronic device. The law establishes penalties for violations, in addition to any other penalties available under current law, including periods of license suspension and a fine of not more than \$500 if a person who commits such a violation is involved in an accident at the time of such violation.



HB 564/SB 583. Parking, stopping, and standing enforcement; bus obstruction monitoring systems. The law allows localities to authorize the use of bus obstruction monitoring systems by a public transit agency operating within the locality for the purpose of enforcing local ordinances related to parking, stopping, or standing in bus stop zones or in lanes reserved for transit buses during posted times.

HB 812. Regulation of traffic; bicycles and certain other devices; bicycle signals. The law requires a person operating a bicycle or other device lawfully permitted in a bicycle lane or on a shared-use path in or approaching an intersection with a bicycle signal to obey such bicycle signal. The law also sets requirements for signals that are displayed by bicycle signals and requirements for situations in which traffic lights, including bicycle signals, are out of service. The law provides that a violation constitutes a traffic infraction punishable by a fine of no more than \$350.

SB 221. School crossing zones; active times. The law authorizes a local governing body, by ordinance, to increase from 30 minutes to up to 60 minutes the period of time before and after regular school hours during which school crossing zones are active if it determines that children will be going to or from school during that period of time.

Voting

HB 82/SB 58. Elections; deadline for receipt of absentee ballots and certain other information, etc. Effective January 1, 2027, the law moves the time of the deadline for receipt of an absentee ballot, information required to cure an absentee ballot, or proof of identification to accompany a provisional ballot provided for lack of identification from noon to 5:00 p.m. on the day of the deadline.

HB 612/SB 311. Constitutional amendment (voter referendum); marriage between two adult persons; repeal of same-sex marriage prohibition. The law provides for a referendum at the November 3, 2026, general election to approve or reject an amendment that requires the equal treatment under the law of a lawful marriage between two adult persons regardless of the sex, gender, or race of such persons. The amendment also repeals the current provision that defines marriage as only a union between one man and one woman.

HB 773. Elections; absentee voting; cure process. Effective January 1, 2027, the law removes the requirement that absentee ballots be received by the Friday immediately preceding the day of the election for the general registrar to implement the process of curing errors or failures in such absentee ballots. The law also moves the deadline for curing errors or omissions in absentee ballot applications from noon on the third day after the election to noon on the Monday after the election.

HB 774. Elections; absentee and provisional ballots; cure process. Effective January 1, 2027, the law requires that, if the electoral board determines that any person having submitted a provisional vote was not entitled to vote as a result of a material error or omission on the provisional ballot form, the registrar is required to promptly notify the voter by telephone or email of the error or omission and to provide information to the voter on how to correct the issue so his ballot may be counted. The voter is entitled to make such necessary corrections before noon on the Monday after the election. The law moves the deadline for curing errors or omissions in absentee ballot applications from noon on the third day after the election to noon on the Monday after the election. The law also requires the Department of Elections to issue



guidance to local election officials on the uniform processing and counting of provisional ballots, including any provisional ballot cast by a person submitting a registration application on the same day as the election.

HB 781/SB 449. Constitutional amendment (voter referendum); fundamental right to reproductive freedom. The law provides for a referendum at the November 3, 2026, election to approve or reject an amendment to the Constitution of Virginia relating to the right to make one's own decisions related to reproductive health care, including access to abortion. The amendment protects patients and their doctors and nurses from being punished for making such decisions. The amendment allows the state to place restrictions on access to abortion during the third trimester of pregnancy except when the patient's life or physical or mental health is at risk or the pregnancy cannot survive.

HB 963/SB 6. Constitutional amendment (voter referendum); qualifications of voters, right to vote, persons not entitled to vote. The law provides for a referendum at the November 3, 2026, general election to approve or reject an amendment that would provide for the fundamental right to vote in the Commonwealth, revise the qualifications of voters so that a person convicted of a felony is not entitled to vote during his period of incarceration but is automatically invested with the right to vote upon release from incarceration, and update the existing prohibition on voting by persons found to be mentally incompetent to instead apply to persons who have been found to lack the capacity to understand the act of voting.

SB 582. Elections; absentee and provisional ballots; process and timing for rejected absentee ballot applications, returned absentee ballots, and rejected provisional ballots. Effective January 1, 2027, the law requires the general registrar to promptly notify a voter by telephone or email of an error or omission on the provisional ballot form and to provide information to the voter on how to correct the issue so his ballot may be counted if, prior to the determination of the validity of provisional ballots by the electoral board, the general registrar determines that such voter's provisional ballot form contains a material error or omission. The voter is entitled to make such necessary corrections before noon on the Monday after the election. The law also requires the list of absentee ballot applicants to be updated daily and to include whether each application has been accepted or rejected and, if it has been rejected, the reason for rejection or, if it has been accepted, the status of the absentee ballot. Registrars are also required to enter such information into the voter registration system, and such information is required to be made available to voters via a free-access system made available by the Department of Elections. The law removes the requirement that absentee ballots be received by the Friday immediately preceding the day of the election for the general registrar to implement the process of curing errors or failures in such absentee ballots. The law also moves the deadline for curing errors or omissions in absentee ballot applications from noon on the third day after the election to noon on the Monday after the election. Finally, the law requires the Department to promulgate regulations and issue guidance to local election officials on the uniform processing and counting of provisional ballots and requires the Secretary of Administration to convene a work group for the purpose of studying potential changes to the same day registration provisional voter process.



Published in Richmond, Virginia, by the Division of Legislative Services, an agency of the General Assembly of Virginia. Contact the Division at 201 North 9th Street, 4th Floor, Richmond, VA 23219, online at <http://dls.virginia.gov>, or by phone at 804-698-1810.

