



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

**We just wrapped up our 8th consecutive week of the 2026 session! Only one more week to go!**



*Senator Pekarisky with GMU Students, President Gregory Washington, and other Alum at the Capitol!*

**I would like to take a moment and extend my sincere gratitude to all of you that journeyed down to Richmond to meet with me to advocate on behalf of important pieces of legislation. The passion of you all continues to remind me why I do this job: to better the lives of everyday Virginians. I am grateful for this work,**

**and I will continue to advocate on your behalf and ensure your voices are heard.**

**Follow along to see what all I have been up to this week!**

**As always, it is a pleasure to serve you in the 36th District,**

**Cheers,**



**Stella Pekarsky**

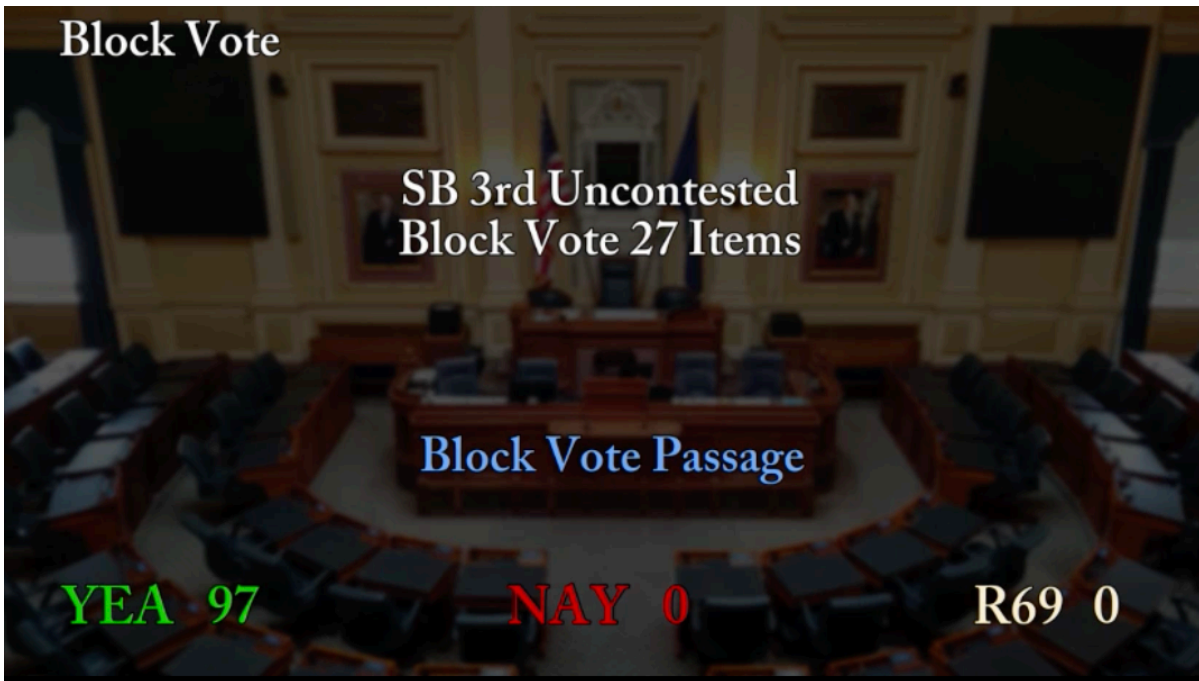
**Senator, District 36**

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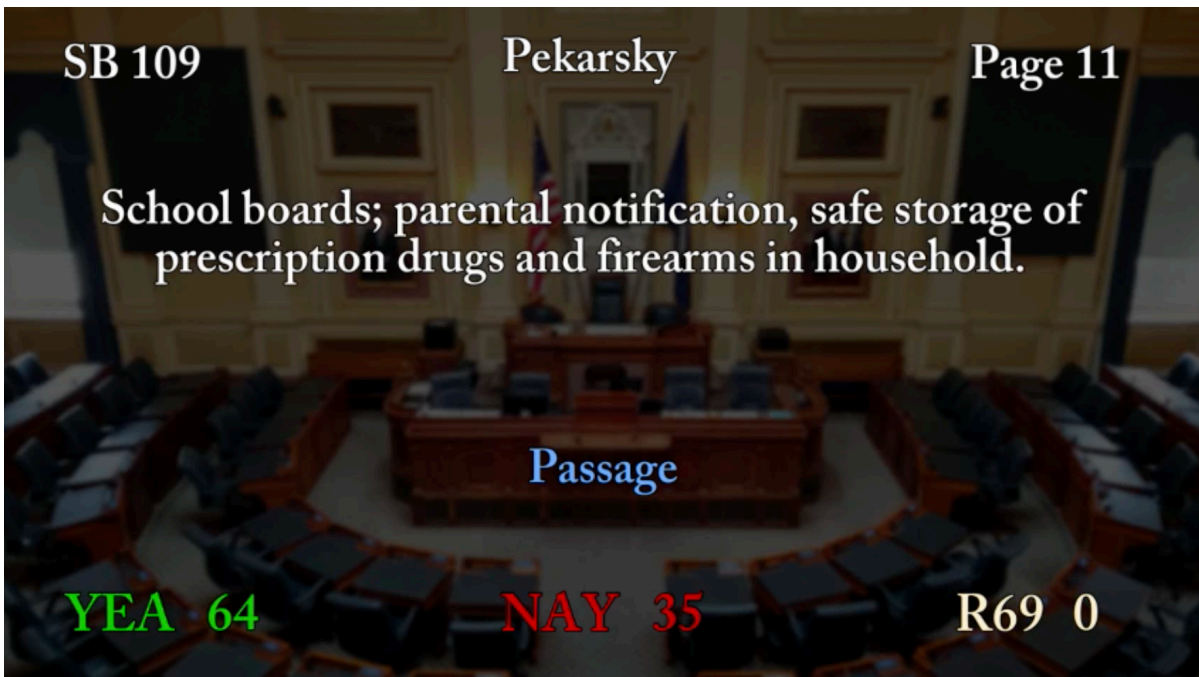
## **Legislative Updates**

**I am pleased to announce that SEVEN more of my bills have passed the House and Senate, and now head to the Governor's desk!**

**Click each bill number below to view the full bill text, the floor votes, and to track how it moved through the legislative body.**



**SB107** adds (1) a person with a child under 18 with serious health conditions including illness, injury, or physical or mental impairment and (2) a person, including a familial caretaker, who is personally responsible for a person with a serious health condition to the list of people allowed to claim exemption from jury service. This bill passed unanimously in a block vote.



**SB109** is a bill that requires school boards to notify parents about the importance of safely storing prescription medication and firearms in the home to

**prevent accidental or intentional deaths. This bill passed the House on a vote of 64-35.**

SB 126                      Pekarsky                      Page 21

Primary election; when filings to be made, extension for incumbents failure to file.

Passage

YEA 76                      NAY 23                      R69 0

**SB126** allows the filing deadline for primary elections for a particular elected office to be extended by 5 days when the incumbent for that office does not file by the deadline or files and withdraws before the deadline. This bill passed the House on a vote of 76-23.

SB 169                      Pekarsky                      Page 22

Candidates for office; challenges to candidate qualifications.

Passage

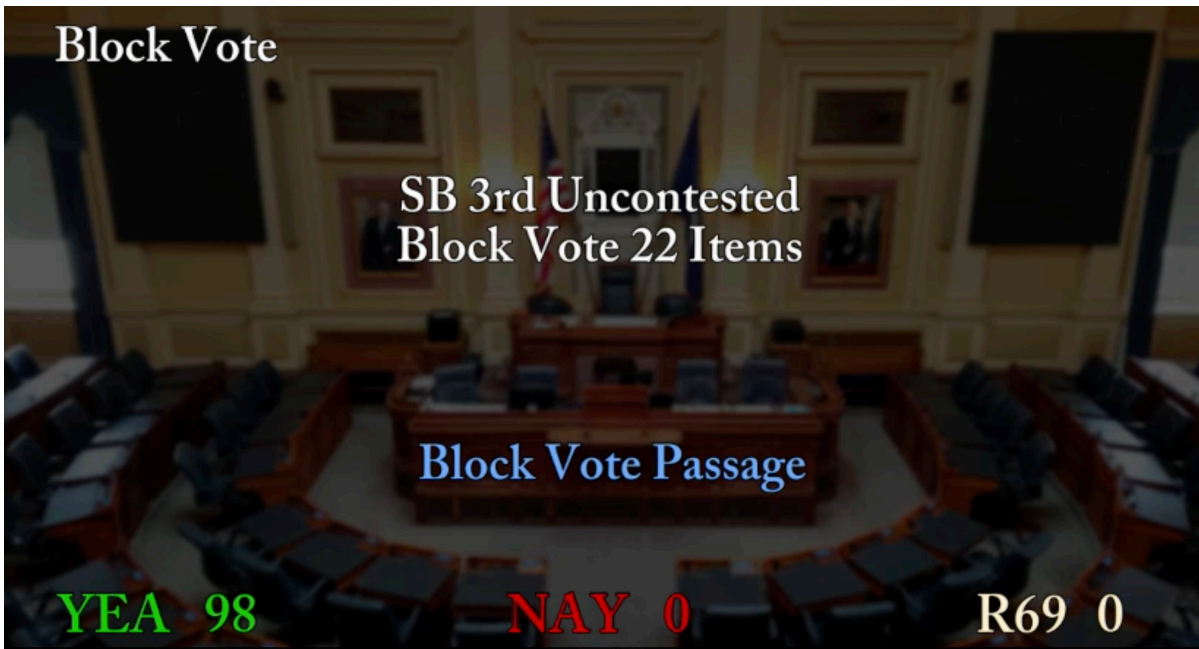
YEA 63                      NAY 36                      R69 0

**SB169** specifies that candidates who are nominated at a primary election cannot later be challenged on the basis of facts that were present prior to the primary election and could have been raised in a challenge to such

**candidate's eligibility for the primary ballot. This bill passed the House on a vote of 63-36.**

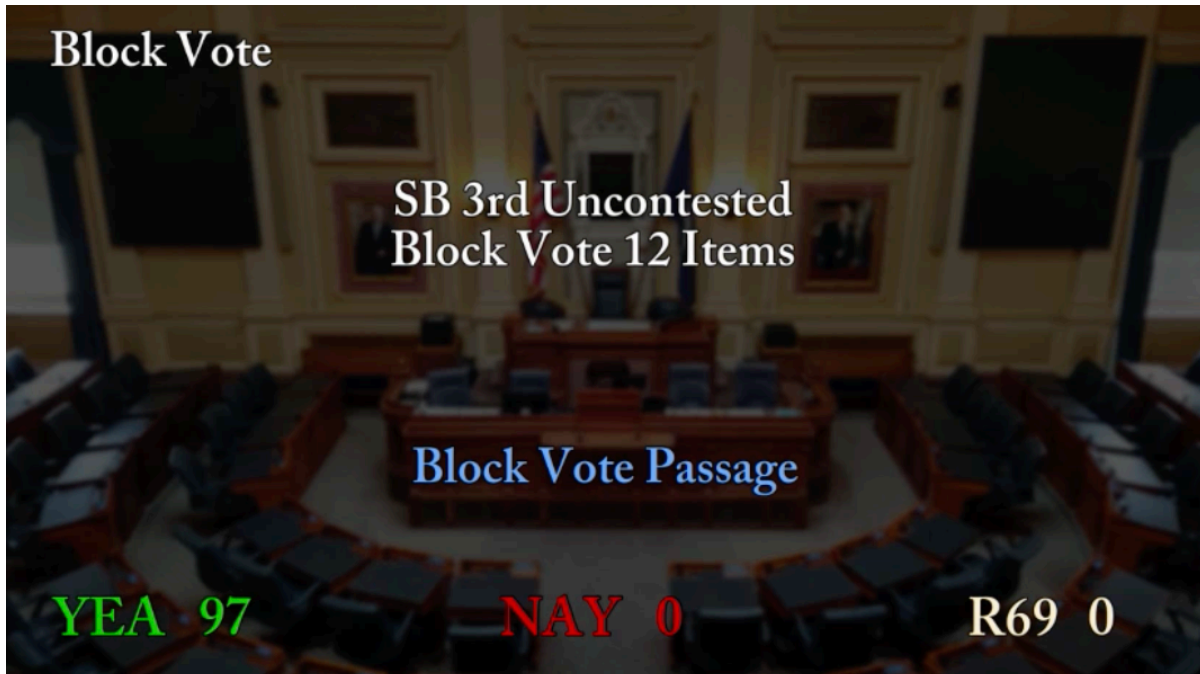


**SB305** would establish a waiver program for relatives or fictive kin that would allow the appropriate state and local social services departments to consider an approval for rehabilitated individuals. Each waiver would review a number of factors, including but not limited to: type of crime, time since conviction, evidence of rehabilitation, and community input. This bill passed the House unanimously in a block vote.

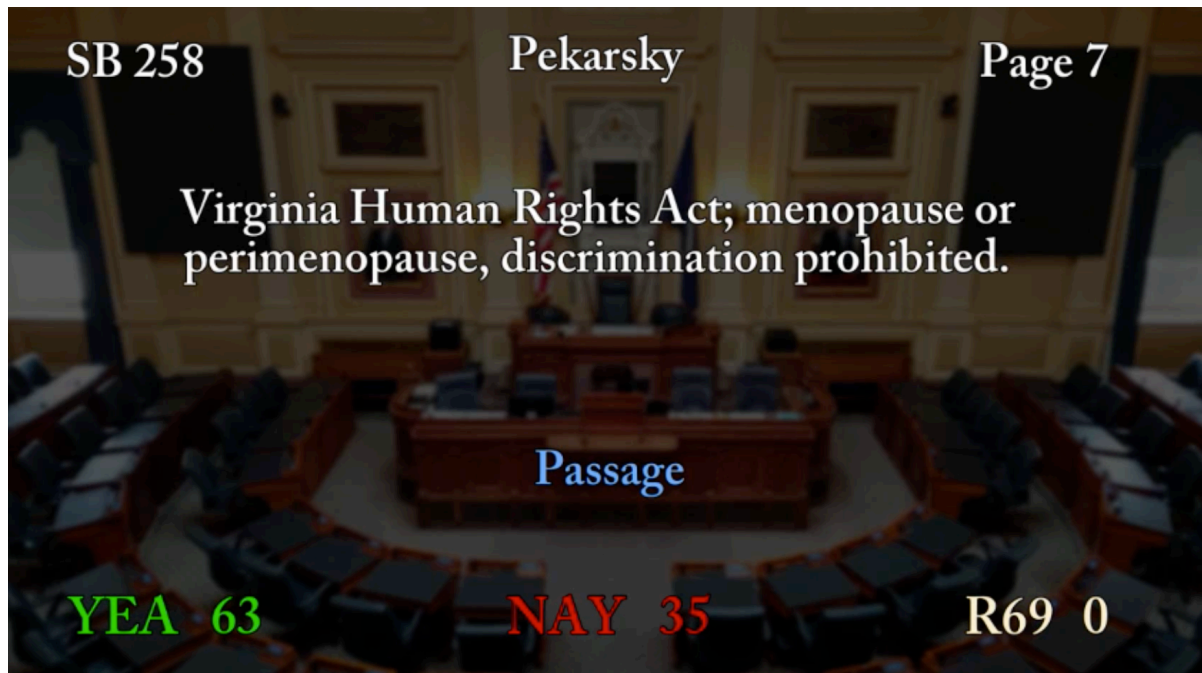


**SB308** establishes a clear framework to address the escalating fentanyl overdose crisis through evidence-

**based public health strategies. It directs relevant state agencies to collaborate with VDH in the development, implementation, and ongoing oversight of a statewide strategic opioid response plan. This bill passed the House unanimously in a block vote.**



**SB309 adds a small component to driver's education curriculums to make student drivers and their parents aware of the existence of the "Blue Envelope" Program – a program that requires the Virginia DMV to have available envelopes for drivers on the autism spectrum. These envelopes would contain information that police would require in a traffic stop, as well as helpful instructions for interacting with the driver on the autism spectrum. This bill passed the House unanimously in a block vote.**



**SB258 amends the Virginia Human Rights Act to explicitly include menopause or perimenopause, thereby prohibiting discrimination on the basis of either condition. This bill passed the House on a vote of 63-35.**

**With these seven bills passing the House this week, this brings my total number of bills thus far that are heading to the Governor to ELEVEN.**

**Here is a full list of my bills that now head to the Governor for approval:**

- **[SB 107: Jury Exemption](#)**
- **[SB 109: Safe Storage](#)**
- **[SB 117: Teacher Contracts](#)**
- **[SB 126: Deadline Extension](#)**
- **[SB 169: Candidate Qualifications](#)**
- **[SB 258: Menopause](#)**
- **[SB 172: Insurance Claims](#)**
- **[SB 305: Barrier Crimes](#)**
- **[SB 308: VDH Opioid](#)**

→ [SB 309: Blue Envelope Program](#)

→ [SB 492: Geologists](#)

## Stella's Bills

**Three of my bills that have yet to be heard on the House floor ([SB108](#), [SB115](#), and [SB394](#)) have successfully passed through their respective House committees, and will be heard and voted on during the House floor session in the coming days.**

**On Wednesday, March 4th, I presented [SB108](#) and [SB394](#), and they both successfully reported from the House Education Committee.**

Bills without Subcommittee Hearings

S.D. 108 (Pekarsky)

School boards; student cell phone and smart device possession and use policies, prohibition.

REPORT WITH SUBSTITUTE

Yea 18 Nay 1 Abs 0

Y Rasoul	Y Covira-Fowler	Y Laufer	X Cherry	Y Kent
X Simonds	Y Askew	Y LeVere-Bolling	Y Tata	Y Whittle
Y McQuinn	Y Clark	Y Anderson	Y Scott, P.A.	
X Guzman	Y Cousins	Y Dougherty	Y Garrett	
Y Sewell	Y Reaser	N Bulova	Y Zehr	

**[SB108](#) is simply an amendment to the no cell phones in schools bill that was passed and signed into law in the 2025 legislative session. It simply updates the language to be more clear and concise by changing “restrict cell phone and smart device usage on school property” to “prohibit cell phone and smart device usage on school property.” This bill reported on a 18-1 vote.**

K-12 Subcommittee Report  
S.D. 394 (Pekarsky)  
AI use in instructional settings; AI Innovation in Education Pilot Program established, report.  
REPORT WITH SUBSTITUTE

Yea 16   Nay 0   Abs 0

Y Rasoul	Y Conviros-Fowler	Y Laufer	X Cherry	Y Kent
X Simonds	Y Askew	Y LeVere Bolling	Y Tata	X Whittle
Y McQuinn	X Clark	Y Anderson	Y Scott, PA.	
X Guzman	Y Cousins	Y Dougherty	Y Garrett	
Y Sewell	X Reaser	Y Bulova	Y Zehr	

**SB394** establishes the AI Innovation in Education Pilot Program that will use funds to promote innovative AI use in schools. This includes applications for instruction, tutoring, engagement, and efficiency and will prioritize diverse, impoverished, and rural school divisions. This bill reported on a 16-0 vote.

Additionally, on Wednesday, March 4th, **SB115** successfully reported from the House Appropriations committee on a 15-7 vote.

Bills Before the Committee  
S.B. 115 (Pekarsky)  
Concealed handgun permits; reciprocity with other states.  
REPORT WITH SUBSTITUTE

Yea 15   Nay 7   Abs 0

Y Torian	Y Reid	Y Price	N Austin	N Wiley
Y Carr	Y Willett	Y Tran	N Morefield	N McLoughlin
Y McQuinn	Y Sewall	Y Simonds	N Bloxom	
Y Krizak	Y Askew	Y Thomas	N Hodges	
Y Hayes	Y Herring	Y Laufer	N Wyatt	

**SB115** would ensure that any reciprocal agreements for concealed carry permits would be with states that have the same or higher standards as our Commonwealth.

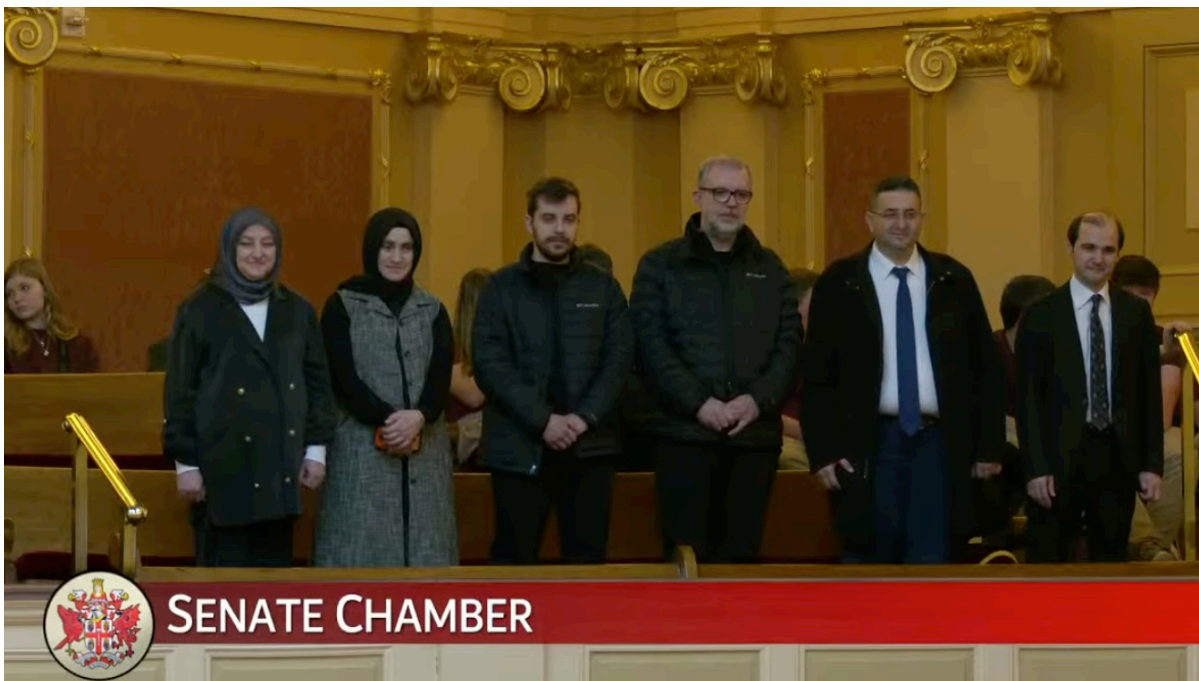
The remainder of my bills (**SB493**, **SB685**, **SB137**) are going to *conference*. Conference is simply a temporary, joint-committee composed of both conferees (the Senate patron of the bill, and the House patron of the same bill) or otherwise known as “cognates.” A conference committee’s purpose is to reconcile different versions of the same legislation before the bills can fully pass the legislature and head to the Governor for approval. Because both chambers are required to pass identical

**text, a conference committee negotiates a compromise report that must be approved by both chambers prior to being signed into law.**

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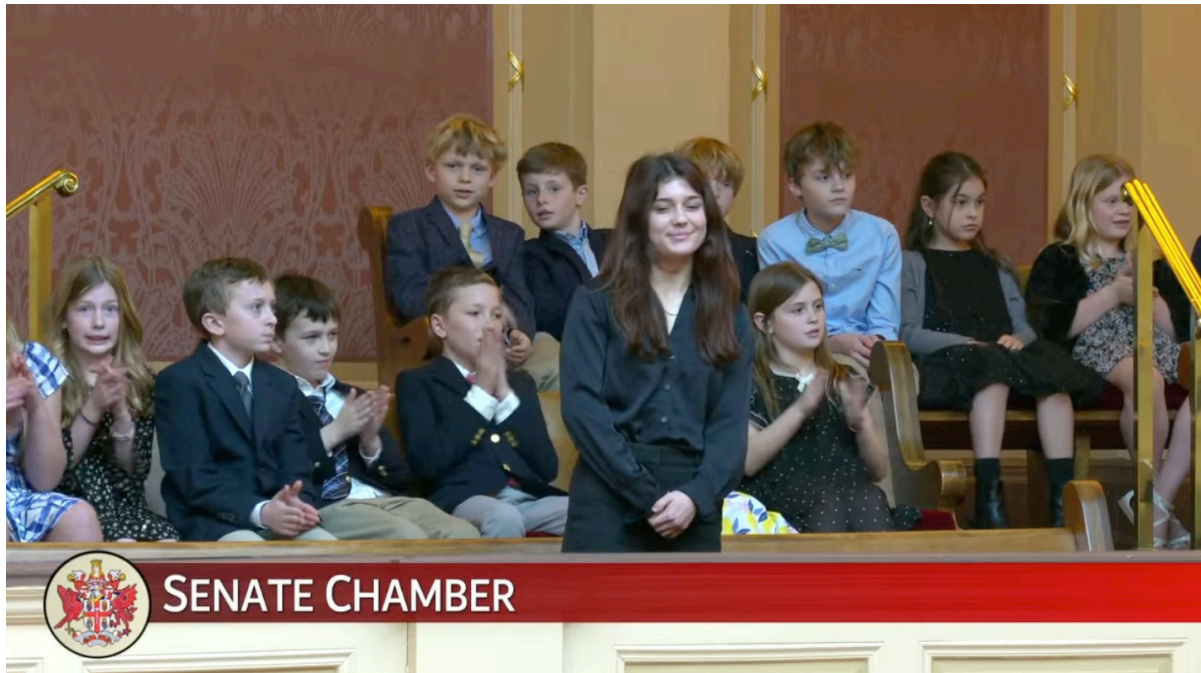
## **Richmond Updates**

**On Tuesday, March 3rd, I had the pleasure of introducing the American Turkish Friendship Association, known as ATFA, and its Executive Director, Hakan Atasever to the Senate.**



**ATFA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization serving communities across Northern Virginia and the Commonwealth through interfaith dialogue, community service initiatives, youth leadership development, and cultural exchange programs. Their work brings together faith leaders, public officials, business professionals, and young leaders to foster understanding, civic engagement, and collaboration across diverse communities. It was a pleasure welcoming them to the Capitol!**

**On Thursday, March 5th, I was proud to officially recognize my Session intern, Sophie Atiyeh, in the Senate Chamber.**



**Sophie is a freshman at the University of Richmond, and is double-majoring in Political Science and Leadership Studies. She is also a 2023 graduate of the FBI National Academy's 24th Youth Leadership Program. Sophie joined my office this session to observe and learn more about how Virginia's state government operates, to gain firsthand experience with the legislative process, and to further explore her passion for public policy.**



**I am grateful for the work Sophie has done this session, and for her contributions to my office. Her intellect, worth ethic and passion for service have made her an invaluable part of my team. I wish her the best of luck with her college career and future endeavors!**

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***Meetings, Meetings, Meetings***



***Senator Pekarsky with advocates from the Virginia Poverty Law Center!***



***Senator Pekarsky with Radford University President, Dr. Bret Danilowicz!***



***Senator Pekarsky with GMU students for their Mason Lobby Day!***

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## **Upcoming Events**

### **A Celebration of Life for Michael Frey**

**Please join us as we celebrate the life of Michael Frey — a kind, humble, and generous soul who brought warmth and laughter to everyone he met.**

**Michael had a deep love for animals, baseball, and, most of all, people. His friendship, compassion, and gentle spirit left a lasting mark on all who knew him. While we miss him dearly, we gather to honor the joy he shared and the memories that continue to live on in our hearts.**

**When: April 11th, 2026, 2-4 pm**

**Where: Government Center Auditorium**

EVITE

### **Fairfax County Win And Walk Challenge**



**The 2026 Fairfax County Walk & Win Challenge returns this spring, inviting residents, employees, and visitors to get moving, explore their community, and win prizes.**

**→ Feb 15 –March 30, 2026:**

# Take the Walk & Win Pledge and be entered to win in the pledge bonus prize drawing!

→ **April 1, 2026:**

**Walk on National Walking Day or join a community walk to be entered into the National Walking Day bonus drawing.**

## Win & Walk Challenge

### Menstrual Product Drive



**FAIRFAX COUNTY**  
**MENSTRUAL PRODUCT DRIVE**  
 MARCH 2 - 31, 2026

*COLLECTING NEW AND UNOPENED PACKAGES OF:*

*LINERS* *TAMPONS* *PADS* *MENSTRUAL CUPS*

*In the United States, 2 in 5 menstruators struggle to purchase period products.*

View the list of collection sites & nonprofit recipients:



Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services | FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY | FAIRFAX - FALLS CHURCH Community Services Board | FAIRFAX COUNTY COMMISSION for WOMEN Promoting Equality for Women & Girls

 Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. For information, call 703-560-6946.

**Please join us in supporting our local shelters and nonprofits by donating new and sealed packages of tampons, pads, liners, and menstrual cups from March 2nd - March 31st. A full list of drop-off locations can be found by clicking the button below.**

## LOCATIONS

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### **Public Meetings**

→ **Monday March 9th, 2026:**

**Blood Drive at Sully Government Center**

→ **Wednesday March 11th, 2026:**

**Planning Commission Meeting**

→ **Friday March 13th, 2026:**

**Resident Feedback Due For Title VI Transportation Policy**

→ **Sunday March 15th, 2026:**

**Fairfax County Waste Management Facilities Survey Closes**

**To see the full public meetings calendar for Fairfax County, check out their official website *below*.**

## Public Calendar

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### **County News**

**Fairfax County Paid Summer Internship Program for Students with Disabilities**

**I am thrilled to share the Fairfax County Disability Rights and Resources is accepting applications for the 2026 John Hudson Internship Program (JHIP).**

**This summer's paid internships are hosted within Information Technology Services in the**

**Department of Land Development Services and the [Alcohol Safety Action Program](#) in the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.**

**Application packets are due by Tuesday, March 31st at **11:59 PM****

**APPLY HERE**

**Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to hold Public Meeting on March 17 to Consider Land-sale for Data Center Use**



**The community will have the opportunity to provide public comments during the March 17 public hearing before the Board decides whether to enter the Purchase and Sales Agreement.**

**For more information, check out the Fairfax County Government Website by clicking the button below!**

**FFX GOVT WEBSITE**

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**[Other News](#)**

→ **Virginia Mercury: [Early voting begins Friday, March 6th, for Virginia redistricting referendum](#)**

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## **[Submit Issues to VDOT](#)**

**VDOT has an online form that you can complete for a list of issues, including needing a road repaired, something removed from the road, a stop sign installation, and other requests. You can find that form [HERE](#).**

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## **[Contact my Office](#)**

**If you would like to schedule a meeting during the 2026 Legislative Session, contact our office directly at: [senatorpekarsky@senate.virginia.gov](mailto:senatorpekarsky@senate.virginia.gov)**

**I would love to hear directly from you!**

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## **[Commending & Memorial Resolutions](#)**

**Continue to submit your Commending & Memorial Resolution nominations by reaching out to my office directly at: [senatorpekarsky@senate.virginia.gov](mailto:senatorpekarsky@senate.virginia.gov)**

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

**Stay informed on what's happening in Richmond & the 36th District!**

**SUBSCRIBE**

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**As always, it is a pleasure to serve you in the 36th  
District,  
Cheers,**



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

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