

Virginia Viewpoint - January 12, 2024

Virginia Legislative Update

The Virginia General Assembly gavelled the 2024 Legislative Session into order this week with no shortage of significant changes. The first day of session included a landmark moment in the legislature's 405-year history when Del. Don Scott was sworn in as the first Black Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates. He now leads a Democratic majority that recently flipped the House by a 51-49 margin last November.

Republican Winsome Sears, who became the first Black Lieutenant Governor in Virginia's history when she assumed office in 2022, continues to preside over the Senate of Virginia. Democrats hold a slight edge in the Senate with a 21-19 majority.

Sen. Scott Surovell now leads Senate Democrats as Majority Leader following the retirement of Virginia's longest-serving senator Richard Saslaw, while Sen. Ryan McDougle takes the helm as Senate Republican Leader following the retirement of Sen. Tommy Norment. Meanwhile, Del. Todd Gilbert will continue serving as House Republican Leader.

On the eve of the 2024 session, special elections were held to determine the two remaining empty seats in the General Assembly. In SD-4, Republican Tammy Brankley Mulchi won the seat recently vacated by Sen. Frank Ruff. Meanwhile, Republican Eric Phillips prevailed in the HD-48 seat that was vacated by Del. Les Adams, who recently resigned and is currently seeking a judgeship in Danville.

With the 2024 class of the General Assembly now finalized, it is important to point out the unprecedented rate of turnover in both chambers. 40 percent of the Senate and nearly a third of the House were sworn in as new members on Wednesday. Adding to the theme of sweeping change, members will be working in all-new offices in the recently renovated General Assembly Building.

In addition, the makeup of committees are vastly different this year. The 2024 committee assignments in the Senate and House were recently announced and can be found below.

2024 Committee Assignments

Senate Committees

Agriculture; Conservation and Natural Resources (14 + 1 vacancy) (8-D/6-R/1-V)

Marsden, Chair; Obenshain; Stuart; Stanley; Suetterlein; Favola; Hashmi; Hackworth; Roem; Williams Graves; Perry; Pekarsky; French; Salim

Commerce and Labor (15) (9-D/6-R)

Deeds, Chair; Obenshain; Lucas; Marsden; Ebbin; Surovell; Stanley; McDougle; Locke; Reeves; DeSteph; McPike; Peake; Rouse and Bagby

Courts of Justice (15) (9-D/6-R)

Surovell, Chair; Obenshain; McDougle; Deeds; Stuart; Stanley; Boysko; Peake; Bagby; Jordan; Aird; Subramanyam; Carroll Foy; Perry and Salim

Education and Health (15) (9-D/6-R)

Hashmi, Chair; Lucas; Locke; Suetterlein; Peake; Pillion; Favola; Boysko; Bagby; Head; Aird; VanValkenburg; Durant; Pekarsky and Craig



Julia Clarlo Hammond

**Senior
Principal,
Cozen O'Connor
Public
Strategies**

jhammond@cozen.com
Phone: (804) 762-6920
Fax: (804) 762-6950



Heidi L. Hertz

**Principal,
Cozen O'Connor
Public
Strategies**

hhertz@cozen.com
Phone: (804) 762-6920
Fax: (804) 762-6950



Jerry W. Kilgore

**Co-Chair, State
Attorneys
General**

jkilgore@cozen.com
Phone: (804) 762-6916
Fax: (804) 762-6950



Thomas Alan Lisk

Member

tlisk@cozen.com
Phone: (804) 762-6921
Fax: (804) 762-6950

Related Practice Areas

- Government Relations - Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies

Finance and Appropriations (15) (10-D/5-R)

Lucas, Chair; Deeds; Locke; Marsden; Ebbin; McDougale; Obenshain; Stuart; Reeves; Favola; Surovell; McPike; Boysko; Pillion and Hashmi

General Laws and Technology (15) (9-D/6-R)

Ebbin, Chair; Locke; Reeves; McPike; Pillion; Rouse; Head; Jordan; Aird; VanValkenburg; Roem; Subramanyam; Carroll Foy; French and Craig

Local Government (14 + 1 vacancy) (8-D/6-R/1-V)

McPike, Chair; Stanley; Suetterlein; Bagby; Sturtevant; McGuire; Aird; VanValkenburg; Roem; Subramanyam; Williams Graves; Durant; Diggs; Pekarsky

Privileges and Elections (14 + 1 vacancy) (8-D/6-R/1-V)

Rouse, Chair; Deeds; Ebbin; Hackworth; DeSteph; Sturtevant; McGuire; VanValkenburg; Subramanyam; Carroll Foy; Durant; Perry; Diggs; Salim

Rehabilitation and Social Services (15) (8-D/7-R)

Favola, Chair; McDougale; Reeves; Surovell; DeSteph; Rouse; Head; Jordan; VanValkenburg; Williams Graves; Carroll Foy; Perry; French; Salim and Craig

Transportation (15) (8-D/7-R)

Boysko, Chair; Marsden; DeSteph; Suetterlein; Obenshain; Hashmi; Hackworth; Bagby; Sturtevant; McGuire; Aird; Roem; Williams Graves; Diggs and Pekarsky

Rules (15) (11-D/4-R)

Locke, Chair; Lucas; Deeds; Marsden; Favola; Ebbin; McPike; Surovell; Boysko; Hashmi; Rouse; McDougale; Stuart; Peake and Pillion

House Committees:

Agriculture, Chesapeake, and Natural Resources (22) (12-D/10-R)

Lopez (Chair), Clark (Vice Chair), Bulova, Tran, Helmer, Simonds, Willett, Herring, Krizek, Glass, Hernandez, Laufer, Ware, Wright, Orrock, Marshall, Wilt, Webert, Bloxom, Fowler, Runion, Kent

Appropriations (22) (12-D/10-R)

Torian (Chair), Sickles (Vice Chair), Bulova, Carr, McQuinn, Krizek, Hayes, Reid, Rasoul, Willett, Sewell, Askew, Knight, Austin, Morefield, Bloxom, Marshall, Hodges, Coyner, Wyatt, Wiley, Campbell

Communications, Technology, and Innovation (22) (12-D/10-R)

Hayes (Chair), Shin (Vice Chair), Lopez, Ward, Clark, Glass, Seibold, Maldonado, Henson, Jones, Keys-Gamarra, Martinez, McNamara, Hodges, Taylor, Cordoza, Wright, Freitas, Wachsmann, Griffin, Earley, Lovejoy

Counties, Cities and Towns (22) (12-D/10-R)

Mundon King (Chair), Bennett-Parker (Vice Chair), Sewell, Shin, Simonds, Askew, Reaser, Callsen, Cohen, Jones, Gardner, Martinez, Morefield, Hodges, McNamara, Wyatt, Ballard, Tata, Wachsmann, Campbell, Milde, Lovejoy

Courts of Justice (22) (12-D/10-R)

Hope (Chair), Simon (Vice Chair), Watts, Sullivan, Delaney, Maldonado, Hernandez, Cousins, Reaser, Thomas, Callsen, Keys-Gamarra, Kilgore, Leftwich, Ballard, Williams, Batten, Cordoza, Arnold, Davis, Obenshain, Earley

Education (22) (12-D/10-R)

Rasoul (Chair), Simonds (Vice Chair), McQuinn, Sewell, Convirs-Fowler, Askew, Clark, Cousins, Reaser, Laufer, Cohen, LeVere Bolling, Batten, Freitas, Coyner, Cherry, Tata, Scott, P.A., Garrett, Ennis, Green, Zehr

Finance (22) (12-D/10-R)

Watts (Chair), Sullivan (Vice Chair), Mundon King, Bennett-Parker, Convirs-Fowler, Tran, Simonds, Hernandez, Laufer, Anthony, Gardner, Keys-Gamarra, Orrock, Ware, Fowler, Freitas, McNamara, Walker, Runion, Garrett, Davis, Kent

General Laws (22) (12-D/10-R)

Bulova (Chair), Carr (Vice Chair), Torian, Price, Krizek, Simon, Delaney, Bennett-Parker, Seibold, Cole, McClure, Thomas, Knight, Leftwich, Morefield, Fowler, Coyner, Austin, Bloxom, Wiley, Campbell, Arnold

Health and Human Services (22) (12-D/10-R)

Sickles (Chair), Tran (Vice Chair), Hope, Price, Hayes, Willett, Herring, Shin, Cole, Srinivasan, Henson, Gardner, Orrock, Hodges, Walker, Cherry, Scott, P.A., Taylor, Ennis, Oates, Higgins, Owen

Labor and Commerce (22) (12-D/10-R)

Ward (Chair), Herring (Vice Chair), Lopez, Sullivan, Convirs-Fowler, Helmer, Mundon King, Maldonado, Shin, Jones, LeVere Bolling, Feggans, Kilgore, Marshall, O'Quinn, Webert, Wilt, McNamara, Gilbert, Runion, Ballard, Williams

Privileges and Elections (22) (12-D/10-R)

Price (Chair), Convirs-Fowler (Vice Chair), Sickles, Krizek, Reid, Maldonado, Glass, Cole, Srinivasan, Henson, Anthony, LeVere Bolling, O'Quinn, Gilbert, Leftwich, Bloxom, Scott, P.A., Wachsmann, Cherry, Milde, Green, Phillips

Public Safety (21) (12-D/9-R)

Simon (Chair), Mundon King (Vice Chair), Hope, Lopez, Rasoul, Clark, Helmer, Seibold, Bennett-Parker, McClure, Thomas, Feggans, Wilt, Webert, Batten, Cordoza, Taylor, Ennis, Oates, Obenshain J., Owen, Phillips

Rules (16) (11-D/5-R)

Scott, D.L. (Chair), Helmer (Vice Chair), Watts, Ward, Sickles, Herring, Carr, Torian, Simon, Hayes, Tran, Gilbert, Kilgore, Austin, O'Quinn, Batten

Transportation (21) (12-D/9-R)

Delaney (Chair), Reid (Vice Chair), Ward, McQuinn, Carr, Watts, Sewell, Glass, McClure, Anthony, Cohen, Feggans, Austin, Wyatt, Wiley, Tata, O'Quinn, Williams, Griffin, Milde, Higgins, Zehr

Scott makes history as first Black speaker of House of Delegates

By CHARLOTTE RENE WOODS, Richmond Times-Dispatch (Metered Paywall - 7 articles a month)

Del. Don Scott Jr., D-Portsmouth, took his place Wednesday at the dais as the first Black person to become speaker of the House of Delegates in the more than 400 years since the legislature began and the first enslaved African people arrived on Virginia's shores.

"I know this is God's favor. I know this is God's grace," Scott said after taking the oath of office from S. Bernard Goodwyn, chief justice of the Virginia Supreme Court.

Republicans win both special elections in Southside

By MARKUS SCHMIDT, Cardinal News

Republicans swept two special elections in two overlapping Southside districts Tuesday, sending two new lawmakers to Richmond just in time for taking their oaths of office when the General Assembly is set to reconvene for its 2024 session on Wednesday.

In the 9th state Senate District, Republican Tammy Brankley Mulchi defeated Democrat Tina Wyatt-Younger in the special election for the Senate seat vacated by Sen. Frank Ruff, R-Mecklenburg County, who is retiring for health reasons.
