

## Saturday Morning Coffee with Your Delegate

Have an issue on your mind? Just want to chat about what is happening in our community?

Stop by Main Street Bagel for coffee on the second Saturday of the month. David will be available to chat about issues in an informal setting from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m.

**WHERE:** Main Street Bagel, 10268 Main Street  
Next to Coyote Grill in the City of Fairfax

**WHEN:** 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. on the following Saturdays:

- September 9th
- October 14th
- November 11th
- December 9th



David is always happy to meet with constituents individually for specific issues. To schedule a meeting time, call (703) 310-6752 or email at [deldbulova@house.state.va.us](mailto:deldbulova@house.state.va.us).

## HOW DID MY DELEGATE VOTE?

My voting record is how I am accountable to you.

To check how I voted on a specific issue, visit <http://leg1.state.va.us>. On the right side of the screen, choose the Session you are interested in. On the left side of the screen, choose how you want to search for your bill or issue. I always appreciate feedback on how I voted and am happy to discuss why I voted a particular way.



# Have a wonderful summer!

**David BULOVA**

P.O. Box 106  
Fairfax Station, Virginia 22039



## Report from Richmond

Summer Newsletter of Delegate David Bulova

# 2006

Dear 37th District Resident,

It has been an honor to represent you in the House of Delegates for the past eight months. By all accounts, 2006 has been a unique Session. However, even with the budget finally behind us, there is much to do. The General Assembly will likely reconvene in the Fall to continue the debate over transportation. At the same time, Virginia faces challenges in the areas of education, health care, natural resources, emergency planning, and public safety -- to name a few.

I am pleased to provide you with my first "Report from Richmond" -- a snapshot of some of the new laws that affect our community. Always feel free to contact me if you need more information on a particular item. I am also happy to announce that I will be holding morning coffees on the second Saturday of each month from September through December. See the back for more details.

I look forward to hearing from you and listening to your ideas as we work to improve the lives of all Virginians.



## Contact Us

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More than 3,000 bills were introduced in the 2006 Session of the General Assembly. The following are highlights of just some of the bills that passed that are likely to have an impact on the daily lives of Virginians. See the back for details on how to track my voting record or to get information on other bills.



**Sales Tax Holiday** (House Bill 532). You may have already taken advantage of the three day tax "holiday" on back-to-school clothes and supplies. The exemption applies to clothing or footwear selling for \$100 or less, and to supplies valued at \$20 per item or less. The holiday will occur each year on the first weekend of August.

**Tax Credit for Long-Term Care Insurance** (HB786). One of the greatest challenges facing older people and their families is the cost of long-term care. Long-term care insurance is one way to ease that burden. Virginians

who purchase long-term care insurance are now eligible for a 15% tax credit on the amount paid in the tax year.

**Property Tax Relief for Seniors and the Disabled** (HB121). Because Virginia is a "Dillon Rule" state, the General Assembly sets the limit of the real property tax exemption that localities can offer to senior citizens and the disabled. The asset cap was raised from \$340,000 to \$540,000. However, local governments must also adopt the increase for it to go into effect.

Continued inside...

# Report from Richmond

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**Coordination of State and Local Transportation Planning** (HB1513). Coordinated transportation and land use planning is, in every respect, just as important as adequate funding. New legislation now requires localities to submit comprehensive plan amendments to the Department of Transportation for review.



**Clean Smokestacks Act** (HB1055). For the first time, Virginia has gone above federal requirements for reducing emissions of mercury, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen oxide from electricity generating plants.

**In-State Tuition for Children of Military Personnel** (HB695). Children of active duty military personnel assigned to a permanent duty station in Virginia who reside in Virginia are now eligible for in-state tuition.

**Dangerous Dogs** (HB340). After several tragic incidents, Virginia has strengthened penalties for persons who keep dangerous dogs. The State Veterinarian will keep a registry, and persons found to have a dangerous dog must maintain a \$100,000 insurance policy.

**Methamphetamine** (HB1040). Common drugs containing pseudoephedrine (Sudafed, Triaminic, etc.) can also be used to manufacture methamphetamine, or "crystal meth," which is an illegal, highly addictive drug. Pseudoephedrine must now be sold behind the counter and limits are placed on the amount that can be purchased. The issue is how to achieve a balance between necessary restrictions and the ability of parents to legitimately purchase these products. Watch for tweaks in this law to address these issues.

**Small Business Health Insurance** (HB761). This allows the creation of cooperatives to provide health care coverage for small employers (fewer than 50 employees). Although not the only solution, it is an important step forward to making insurance more affordable and accessible.

**Communications Tax Reform** (HB568). The tax rate for all telecommunications services has been equalized at 5% to replace the hodge-podge of existing taxes on phones, cable, and other forms of communication. This will reduce the overall tax for these services for more than 80% of Fairfax residents.

**Cable Competition** (HB1404). To increase competition, the General Assembly established new procedures for granting cable franchises, while preserving Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax's ability to regulate customer service standards.

**Disrupting a Funeral** (HB372). It is now a misdemeanor to disrupt a funeral service. As Governor Kaine said, "It is unfortunate that the rising numbers of protests at the funerals of servicemen and women has made it necessary to legislate common decency."

**Anti-Price Gouging** (HB1094). The Governor is authorized during a disaster to order a supplier to reduce the price to the prevailing local market if he finds that the supplier is selling goods at such an unconscionable price that it presents a danger to the public welfare.

**Sex Offenders** (HB1038/HB984). New legislation substantially increases penalties for certain sex crimes and strengthens provisions regarding the civil commitment of sexually violent predators.

**Sale of Violent or Sexually Explicit Video Games** (HB1403). The sale, rental, loan, or commercial display of a sexually explicit computer game or video to a juvenile is now a Class 1 misdemeanor.

**Brandishing a Machete** (HB588). This law makes it illegal to point, hold, or brandish a machete or similar weapon with the intent to intimidate. Unfortunately, machetes have become the weapon of choice by gangs in Northern Virginia.

**Internet Safety** (HB58). School superintendents are now required to incorporate Internet safety instruction into the student Internet curriculum.



**HOV Lanes and Clean Fuel Vehicles** (HB1248/HB843). The use of HOV lanes by clean fuel vehicles is extended to 2007. However only those who received their plates before July 2006 can ride in HOV lanes in the I-395/I-95 corridor. The fine for first-time HOV lane violations is increased to \$125. The fine for a second violation within five years is raised to \$250.

**Towing and Recovery** (HB1258). A new Board for Towing and Recovery Operators has been established to better regulate the industry, and new protections have been put in place to protect against predatory towing.

**Virginia Energy Plan** (Senate Bill 262). This legislation deals with a range of energy issues. The original bill included provisions for off-shore drilling in Virginia -- which I voted against. The final bill, which I voted for, modified that language and focused more on conservation, including the creation of a personal income tax deduction for 20% of the sales tax paid on certain energy efficient appliances. The legislation also begins to deal with Virginia's failed experiment with electricity deregulation. Expect this to be a big issue in future General Assembly sessions.



## SPOTLIGHT ON THE BUDGET



The longest budget impasse in Virginia's history finally came to an end just days before the fiscal year ended. Although the budget did not address the Commonwealth's growing transportation crisis, it did make significant progress in other areas. Here are some of the highlights from the budget:

**Public Education.** The budget provides record funding for K-12 education. Overall funding increased more than \$1.56 billion. That includes a four percent teacher salary increase. The budget also included more than \$40 million in investments in early childhood programs. Studies consistently show that these investments pay off in reduced funding for remedial education later.

**Protecting Our Environment.** The 2006 budget provides more than \$200 million to clean up the Chesapeake Bay. News that nearly two-thirds of Virginia's rivers are now classified as polluted demonstrates the magnitude of our challenge. While a significant step, the investment is just a "drop in the bucket."

**Higher Education.** Virginia's colleges and universities -- among the best in the nation -- received significant funding in the upcoming budget. More than \$240 million will help address growing enrollments. Significant increases in higher education research will promote economic development and foster innovation.

**Health and Human Services.** An additional \$120 million for community mental health and mental retardation care will allow these individuals to be served in their communities. Despite this progress, the cost of health care in general continues to grow much faster than the rate of inflation. Virginia's biennial budget for Medicaid increased by \$480. Further, approximately 15% of Virginians are now uninsured. Health care affordability will be a major issue in upcoming years. To help prepare, the General Assembly has ordered a study of potential options, with the first report due in November 2006.

### Transportation -- The Uncertain Road Ahead



Despite much debate, the budget does not address the need for a sustainable, adequate source of revenue for transportation. However, our quality of life depends on a reliable transportation system. It is a crisis that steals time from our families and costs our businesses billions of dollars every year.

In stark terms, the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority estimates that an additional \$700 million per year is needed to implement vital improvements -- including roads, mass transit, and investment in technology. The problem is even greater State-wide. Inaction will not result in the status quo. Rather, with no changes, all of the State's transportation funds will be dedicated to simply maintaining existing infrastructure and matching federal money by the year 2010. This means no new State projects.

As we prepare for a possible Special Session in September, I want to share with you my perspective on the transportation debate. The feedback that I have received from constituents during the last few months has been instrumental in shaping my approach in Richmond and I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this very important subject.

- Surplus funds should be used for one-time capital projects. However, long-term transportation planning requires a sustainable, and dedicated source of revenue.
- The General Assembly must ensure that funds intended for transportation are actually used for transportation. The Transportation Trust Fund must be protected.
- Any new revenue needs to be equitable, and to the extent practicable, have a direct relationship with the payer's use of the transportation system.
- Process and accountability are important to gaining the public's trust. Transportation planning must be transparent and involve the public.
- Selecting projects should be based on need, not politics. The General Assembly needs to avoid earmarks for specific transportation items in the budget. Project selection should be consistent with State and regional transportation plans.
- It is important to have a State-wide component to funding. However, I am convinced that we need to be empowered to solve our own problems. To the extent possible, funds collected in Northern Virginia should stay here.
- We must do a better job of coordinating transportation and land use planning. While this will not correct for past mistakes, we need to ensure that future decisions are not made in a vacuum. This includes strengthening regional land use and transportation planning processes.