

# Capitol Contact

## Virginia General Assembly

Virginia Association of Counties • 1207 E. Main Street, Suite 300 • Richmond, VA 23219  
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Thursday, January 9, 2020

# Virginia General Assembly Convenes



The first day of the 2020 General Assembly session was marked by historic changes, as Virginia's first female Speaker of the House, Delegate Eileen Filler-Corn; first female and first African-American House Majority Leader, Delegate Charniele Herring; and

first female and first African-American President pro tempore of the Senate, Senator Louise Lucas, formally assumed their new roles. The House of Delegates elected Suzette Denslow as Clerk. Denslow, who formerly served as Governor Ralph Northam's Deputy Chief of Staff, is the first woman elected in this capacity. Democrats now hold majorities in both chambers; with the shift in party control and the beginning of a new term, much of the day's work on the House and Senate floors was devoted to organizational requirements, with the Senate adopting revised rules of procedure and approving new committee assignments and the House expected to follow suit on Thursday.

The first day of the session is typically a busy one for legislators, as they work to submit the last of their pre-filed bills by the 10am filing deadline, and January 8 was no exception. As of Wednesday evening, more than 2,200 bills and resolutions had been filed, and if both chambers retain the traditional session calendar, bills can be filed until January 17. Legislators are also preparing and submitting amendments to the Governor's introduced budget, which are due Friday, January 10. VACo is working with patrons to submit several amendments to address local government priorities.

The day concluded with the Governor's annual State of the Commonwealth address to the General Assembly, in which he touted the strong state economy and outlined several key initiatives included in his proposed budget, such as investments in broadband, early childhood education, K-12, water quality, and workforce development.

[Watch Governor Northam deliver the State of the Commonwealth address](#)

Governor Northam discussed his legislative priorities, which include a major transportation funding package; criminal justice reform proposals, such as expanding eligibility for parole and decriminalizing possession of marijuana; and election administration changes, such as the expansion of no-excuse absentee voting and the establishment of Election Day as a state holiday. He contrasted Virginia's traditions of civil debate with polarization at the national level and encouraged members to set an example of "respect and decency" for the rest of the country.

The next 59 days can be expected to be similarly busy, with many complex proposals under consideration among the large volume of bills introduced. Expected adjournment for the 2020 session is Saturday, March 7. VACo will provide a list of key legislative dates once both chambers approve the procedural resolution establishing the schedule for the session.

**VACo Contact:** [Katie Boyle](#)

# 2020 Senate Standing Committees

(**ITALIC** indicates new member to committee)

## **AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION, AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

Petersen (Chair), Hanger, Ruff, Obenshain, Stuart, Marsden, Stanley, Lewis, Suetterlein, Mason, McClellan, Favola, Morrissey, Pillion, Hashmi

## **COMMERCE AND LABOR**

Saslaw (Chair), Norment, Newman, Obenshain, Lucas, Spruill, Edwards, Deeds, Barker, Marsden, Ebbin, Lewis, Surovell, Mason, Bell

## **EDUCATION AND HEALTH**

Lucas (Chair), Saslaw, Howell, Newman, Locke, Barker, Petersen, Cosgrove, Lewis, Dunnivant, Suetterlein, Peake, Edwards, Chafin, Hashmi

## **FINANCE AND APPROPRIATIONS**

Howell (Chair), Saslaw, Norment, Hanger, Lucas, Newman, Ruff, Vogel, Barker, Edwards, Deeds, Locke, Petersen, Marsden, Ebbin, McClellan

## **GENERAL LAWS AND TECHNOLOGY**

Barker (Chair), Ruff, Locke, Vogel, Ebbin, Reeves, McPike, Dunnivant, Mason, Boysko, Stuart, Pillion, Bell, Hashmi, Kiggans

## **JUDICIARY**

Edwards (Chair), Saslaw, Norment, Lucas, Obenshain, McDougle, Stuart, Stanley, Chafin, Deeds, Petersen, Surovell, McClellan, Boysko, Morrissey

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Lewis (Chair), Hanger, Stanley, Favola, DeSteph, Dunnivant, Chase, McPike, Howell, Spruill, Morrissey, Pillion, Bell, Hashmi, Kiggans

## **PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS**

Deeds (Chair), Howell, Vogel, Reeves, Ebbin, Chafin, Ruff, Spruill, Peake, McDougle, Surovell, Mason, McClellan, Boysko, Bell

## **REHABILITATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

Favola (Chair), Hanger, Locke, McDougle, Reeves, Chafin, Cosgrove, Surovell, DeSteph, McPike, Spruill, Mason, Boysko, Morrissey, Kiggans

## **RULES**

[Locke \(Chair\)](#), [Saslaw](#), [Howell](#), [Lucas](#), [Edwards](#), [Deeds](#), [Marsden](#), [Petersen](#), [Barker](#), [Favola](#), [Lewis](#), [Norment](#), [McDougle](#), [Vogel](#), [McPike](#)

## **TRANSPORTATION**

[Marsden \(Chair\)](#), [Newman](#), [Favola](#), [Cosgrove](#), [DeSteph](#), [Suetterlein](#), [McClellan](#), [Peake](#), [Boysko](#), [Obenshain](#), [Ebbin](#), [Surovell](#), [McPike](#), [Spruill](#), [Pillion](#)

# **Advocate for your locality at the VACo Local Government Day**

**In Partnership with VML and VAPDC**



**February 6, 2020 | Omni Richmond Hotel**

100 S 12th Street | Richmond, VA 23219

[Registration Form](#) | [Register Online](#) | [Omni Room Reservation Form](#)

Join us at the VACo/VML/VAPDC Local Government Day on Thursday, February 6!  
This is our day to advocate for localities at the 2020 General Assembly Session.

The event kicks off at noon. Governor Ralph Northam has been invited to speak. In addition, VACo and VML staff will provide legislative reports on the major issues facing Localities in the 2020 General Assembly Session. Attendees will spend the afternoon meeting and advocating their General Assembly representatives. There's a reception for VACo members and state legislators at 530pm.

**930am**      VACo Board of Directors' Meeting

**11am**        Registration

**1130am**     Box Lunch

**Noon** Governor Ralph Northam (Invited) | VACo and VML Staff Reports

**Afternoon** Visit Capitol and Lobby Legislators

**530pm** Reception

For information on how to reach your representatives, see the [Virginia House of Delegates](#) and the [Senate of Virginia](#) member websites. Find information about VACo's positions in the [2020 Legislative Program](#). We will distribute the Local Government Day Bulletin at the event.

Local leaders will have the opportunity to advocate on behalf of localities throughout the day and network and share information at a reception in the evening. Be a part of the legislative process at the 2020 General Assembly Session.

Register for the event at [VACo Local Government Day Online](#) or fax the [Registration Form](#) to 804.788.0083. Also, here's how you can book a room at the [Omni Richmond Hotel](#). **Be sure to book your room soon as the deadline for this special rate is January 17, 2020.**

**VACo Contact:** [Valerie Russell](#)