

Legislative Report
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1. Our new Governor, Governor Northam, is urging his executive staff and all members of the General Assembly to enter into a relationship of aggressive bipartisanship. His belief is all progress is driven by a respectful give and take throughout the decision-making process. This same point of view has been expressed by some new and previous members of the General Assembly. Major obstacles they face are a number of conditions beyond their control: budget sequestration at the federal level still affects our fortunes; we are closely affected by the "up and downs" of the U.S BUDGET which can create boom and bust conditions; and our own economic growth has trailed the nation for a number of years. In today's political and economic environment it is more crucial than ever our bipartisanship efforts at the State level work effectively and with great passion!

2. Our legislative journey in 2018. Will our previous and new representatives have a more cooperative or a continued controversial relationship than those bodies have had in the past? Remember that the State House lost at least 15 seats in the past election. Will this generate good will and/or more hostility? To date over 4000 bills have been submitted for actions some of which have been rejected in the past. (medicaid expansion, gun control. excuse free absentee voting, restoring the authority of the state agency to review and adjust electricity rates, etc). We already had a "SHOOT-OUT" over medicaid expansion which required some apologies and regrets. And some of the other proposals are as emotional and partisan. The only way this legislative session can be effective is if the parties are really serious about making bipartisanship work.

3. Legislative Updates. A. Transparency in Government. A VICTORY for the people of Virginia and for responsible government! After many years of unsuccessful requests our State Assembly has finally adopted a rule that requires a recorded vote on all measures acted upon by the members. B. Gerrymandering. Two U.S. District Federal Courts have now ruled in two different States (N.C. and PA.) that the state's district map is illegal and must be redone. Both states are appealing their decisions. In addition, the U.S. Supreme has two cases scheduled for hearings to evaluate the district maps for their respective states. Many have waited for years to see our Federal Courts address these most serious issues. C. Health Insurance (Affordable Care Act) through regulatory and legislative actions the current administration has made some significant changes to parts of the law the most recent being allowing groups to offer plans that do not comply with all the ACA requirements.