2024 Virginia General Assembly Preview

Description

On November 7th Virginia held elections for both the House of Delegates and the Senate of Virginia. As a result, Democrats now hold one seat majorities in both Chambers. These were the first elections held under Virginiaâ??s new non-partisan redistricting law. The redistricting process resulted in many incumbent legislators retiring. Coupled with primary losses and several Delegates running for Senate seats the two chambers had an unprecedented amount of turnover. Forty percent of the Senate is new with nearly a third of the House being new also. Due to the high influx of freshman members, and coupled with the retirements of many senior legislators, the 2024 session will be challenging.

While the Senate stayed under Democratic control, going from a two-seat majority to a one seat majority, the Senate has the added challenge of having lost most of its senior leadership. Senator Scott Surovell will replace Dick Saslaw (retired) as Majority Leader and Senator Ryan McDougle will replace Tommy Norment (retired) as Minority Leader. The Senate also has a new President Pro-Tempore in Senator Louise Lucas who will also serve as the Chair of Senate Finance and Appropriations.

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The House of Delegates did not face nearly the same level of turnover or retirements as the Senate but it did flip in party control. Democrats earned a one seat majority. This brings a slew of leadership changes to the House. Delegate Don Scott will replace Delegate Todd Gilbert as Speaker. Delegate Gilbert will now act as the Minority Leader. Delegate Charniele Herring is the new Majority Leader. The change in partisan control also brings all new committee and sub-committee chairs. Many of those changes are yet to be announced.

The Commonwealthâ??s fiscal outlook appears to be grim. There is a substantial loss in federal funding in both the education and health sectors of the budget. As these are the top two most costly areas of the budget, we will need to find ways to fill in the lost funding. There is also substantial concern about a looming recession which will cause legislators to be very careful about funding initiatives with ongoing costs. The Governor will release his two-year budget on December 15th which will give us a better understanding of the Commonwealthâ??s fiscal position.

Because there are so many new members of the General Assembly, outreach and education will be even more important that in the past. This is exacerbated by the substantial loss of institutional knowledge; especially in the Senate. VLTA will keep you up to date on legislation of interest or concern to the industry as the 2024 session progresses.



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Founding Partner, has more than two decades of experience in government affairs- with a focus on legislative and regulatory health care issues. He has worked with clients in the economic development, renewable and alternative energy, and pharmaceutical industries. James previously served as Manager of State Government Affairs for Troutman Sanders Strategies and the Director of Policy for the Virginia Pharmacists Association. James spent three legislative sessions as Legislative Assistant to Delegate John Oâ??Bannon. James is a veteran of the United States Army, serving as an infantryman during Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm and Provide Comfort. After his military service, James received his Bachelor of Arts in History from Virginia Commonwealth University. He is an active member of Saint Benedictâ??s Catholic Church and VFW Post 6364. He formerly served on St. Benedict Churchâ??s parish finance council and on the school board for Saint Benedict Catholic School. James and his wife have three daughters and live in Richmond.

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