

# Washington County Virginia

## Democrats WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

January 22, 2026 Vol. 2, No. 1

<https://www.washcovadems.org>



### UPCOMING & IMPORTANT EVENTS

**Thursday, February 5 @ 6:00pm** - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING of Washington Co. VA Dems St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 124 E. Main St., Abingdon

**Thursday, February 12 @ 6:00pm** - GENERAL MEETING of Washington Co. VA Dems Washington Co. Library, 205 Oakhill St. NE, Abingdon [Please join us and invite a friend!](#)

### WEEKLY NEWS ROUNDUP

*(A collection of current news selected for impact on Washington County residents. Each article provides an overview and a hot link to the complete article online)*

**Transcribed Excerpt from The Coffee Klatch with Robert Reich and Heather Lofthouse - What Will Happen in 2026?** *(The Coffee Klatch - Saturday, January 3, 2026)*

Reading Mary Trump's books about Donald Trump over the holidays is insightful, and repetitive. Not necessarily a great work of non-fiction, but it is insightful. Very insightful in terms of seeing how Fred Trump, Donald's father was so ungenerous, unloving...of course it basically destroyed Fred Jr., but it lived on vicariously through the brashness of Donald.

***Donald grew up thinking he was basically invincible, but on the inside, Donald was totally insecure.*** Think about it if you have really a son of a bitch father, and a mother who is not present,

it's not surprising that you get someone who cuts off the drinking water for people who are thirsty...because of previous scores he is keeping.

***That is right with Donald Trump it is about scorekeeping, and it is also everything is a transaction...so it's transactional and scorekeeping and I think we are going to see more of it...really there is nothing worse than a tyrant gaining power, but I think a tyrant losing power may be scarier...***

You can find more opinions and analysis about where we are currently in our country and democracy on the weekly podcast "The Coffee Klatch with Robert Reich and Heather Lofthouse" at <https://robertreich.substack.com/podcast>

**"MERRY CHRISTMAS to all, including the dead Terrorists, of which there will be many more if their slaughter of Christians continues." Donald Trump** (*Letters from an American – Heather Cox Richardson, Substack 12/28/25*)

Over the Christmas holiday, the Trump administration threw its weight against the U.S. Constitution in favor of Christian nationalist authoritarianism.

***The Framers of the Constitution established the United States of America on the rule of law, rejecting any religious qualifications for office or religious legal doctrine. They recognized that the establishment of one religion over others attacked a fundamental human right—an unalienable right—of conscience.*** If lawmakers could destroy the right of freedom of conscience, they could destroy all other unalienable rights. Those in charge of government could throw representative government out the window and make themselves tyrants.

***In the First Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1791 as one of the ten amendments that make up the Bill of Rights, the new Americans agreed that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."***

**To that, sometimes under pressure, the nation has held. It is central to what it means to be an American.**

And yet, on December 25, 2025, a religious holiday for many Christians, the Trump administration attacked that American principle to claim the U.S. is a Christian nation.

Trump proclaimed "After the United States launched a powerful and deadly strike against ISIS Terrorist Scum in Northwest Nigeria on Christmas Eve, who have been targeting and viciously killing, primarily, innocent Christians, at levels not seen for many years, and even Centuries! ***I have previously warned these Terrorists that if they did not stop the slaughtering of Christians, there would be hell to pay, and tonight, there was.***"

As foreign policy journalist Anne Applebaum noted, rhetorically, ***"I'm not sure I understand why the Trump administration cares about Christians in Nigeria and not Christians in Ukraine."***

And as Ashley Ahn of the *New York Times* chronicled, Secretary of State Marco Rubio posted: "The joyous message of Christmas is the hope of Eternal Life through Christ." The Labor Department posted: "Joy to the World. Let Earth Receive Her King."

<https://heathercoxrichardson.substack.com/>

## **Trump's War Footing - His foreign and domestic policies are becoming one and the same, and their purpose isn't complicated. (Substack - Robert Reich 01/12/26)**

At the same time agents from Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Patrol are swarming into Minnesota and other states and cities, Trump is planning bombing raids on other countries.

### **Domestically and internationally, he is putting America on a war footing.**

ICE is [reportedly](#) investing \$100 million on what it calls “wartime recruitment” of 10,000 new agents, in addition to the 20,000 already employed. Its recruitment is targeting gun and military enthusiasts, people who listen to right-wing radio, who have gone to Ultimate Fighting Championship fights or shopped for guns and tactical gear, live near military bases, and attend NASCAR races. It’s calling for recruits willing to perform their “[sacred duty](#)” and “[defend the homeland](#)” by repelling “[foreign invaders](#).”

Meanwhile, Trump has announced that he’ll ask Congress for [a \\$1.5 trillion](#) defense budget for the next fiscal year — a 66 percent increase over the 2026 defense budget Congress just authorized.

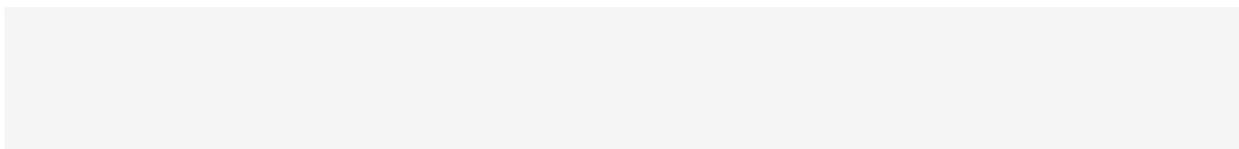
There’s coming to be no difference between Trump’s foreign and domestic policies.

***Both are based on the same eight maniacal ideas: (1) Might makes right. (2) Law is irrelevant. (3) America is at war with the world’s “radical left,” who are defined chiefly by their opposition to Trump. (4) Fear and force are better weapons in this war than hope and compromise. (5) The U.S. stock market is the best measure of Trump’s success. (6) Personal enrichment by Trump and other officials is justified in pursuit of victory. (7) So are lies, cover-ups, and the illegal use of force. (8) Trump is invincible and omnipotent.***

**These ideas are at such fundamental odds with the norms most of us share about what America is all about and how a president should think and behave that it’s difficult to accept that Trump believes them or that his White House thugs eagerly endorse them.**

<https://robertreich.substack.com/>

**VPAP (Virginia Public Access Project) Weekly Update (VPAP, Saturday January 17, 2026)**





# The Weekly Update



With the General Assembly session underway, VPAP's resources make it easy to keep up with all aspects of the legislature, from the latest bills filed to navigating Capitol Square.

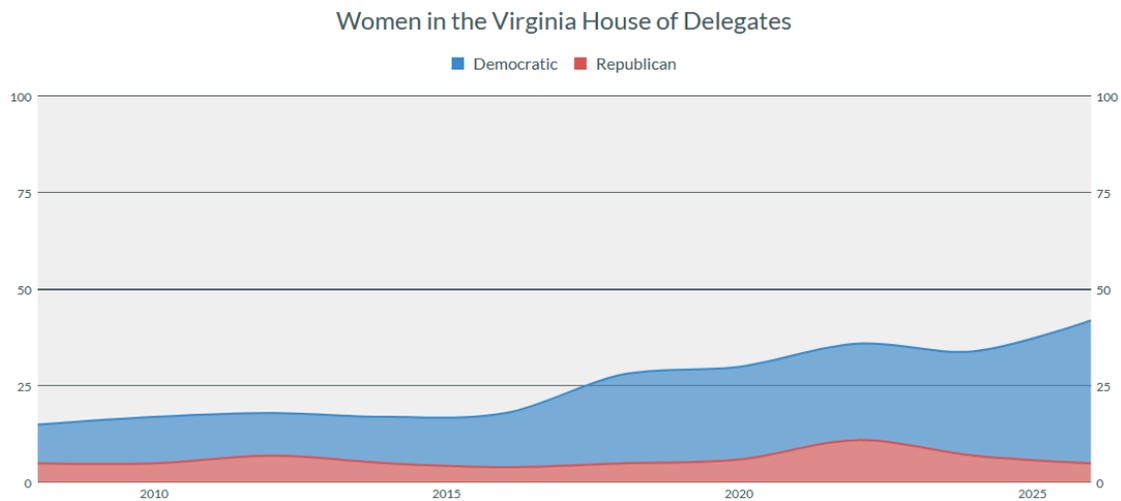
This week, our [data visualization](#) showing changes in committee assignments made it easy to understand new, returning, and removed members. Clear, unique tools like this can't be found anywhere else. That's why we're grateful for our supporters -- users like you! -- who ensure that VPAP can continue providing them.

Thanks for being part of the VPAP community.

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## Visual(s) of the Week



VPAP's visualizations simplify complex data, making it easy to find and understand information about Virginia politics and government.

[Explore all recent data visualizations](#) on our website, or see this week's below:

- [2026 General Assembly Committee Assignments](#)
- [Women in the House of Delegates](#)
- [Years of Service in the General Assembly](#)
- [Statewide Candidate End-of-Year Spending](#)

If you are not already a member of VPAP's Weekly Newsletter Update, you can be for FREE simply by signing up on the VPAP website. [vpap.org](http://vpap.org)

**Advice for Spanberger as she prepares to take Office** (*Cardinal News, Dwayne Yancey, 01/12/26*)

To Her Excellency, Gov.-elect Abigail Spanberger:

***Congratulations on your historic victory. By noon on Saturday, we can drop the “-elect” from your salutation. I’m sure lots of people are right now giving you advice, so allow me to join them.***

I’m not going to give you advice on specific positions to take, but I will offer some general advice on how to deal with a part of Virginia that didn’t vote for you except in a few blue places.

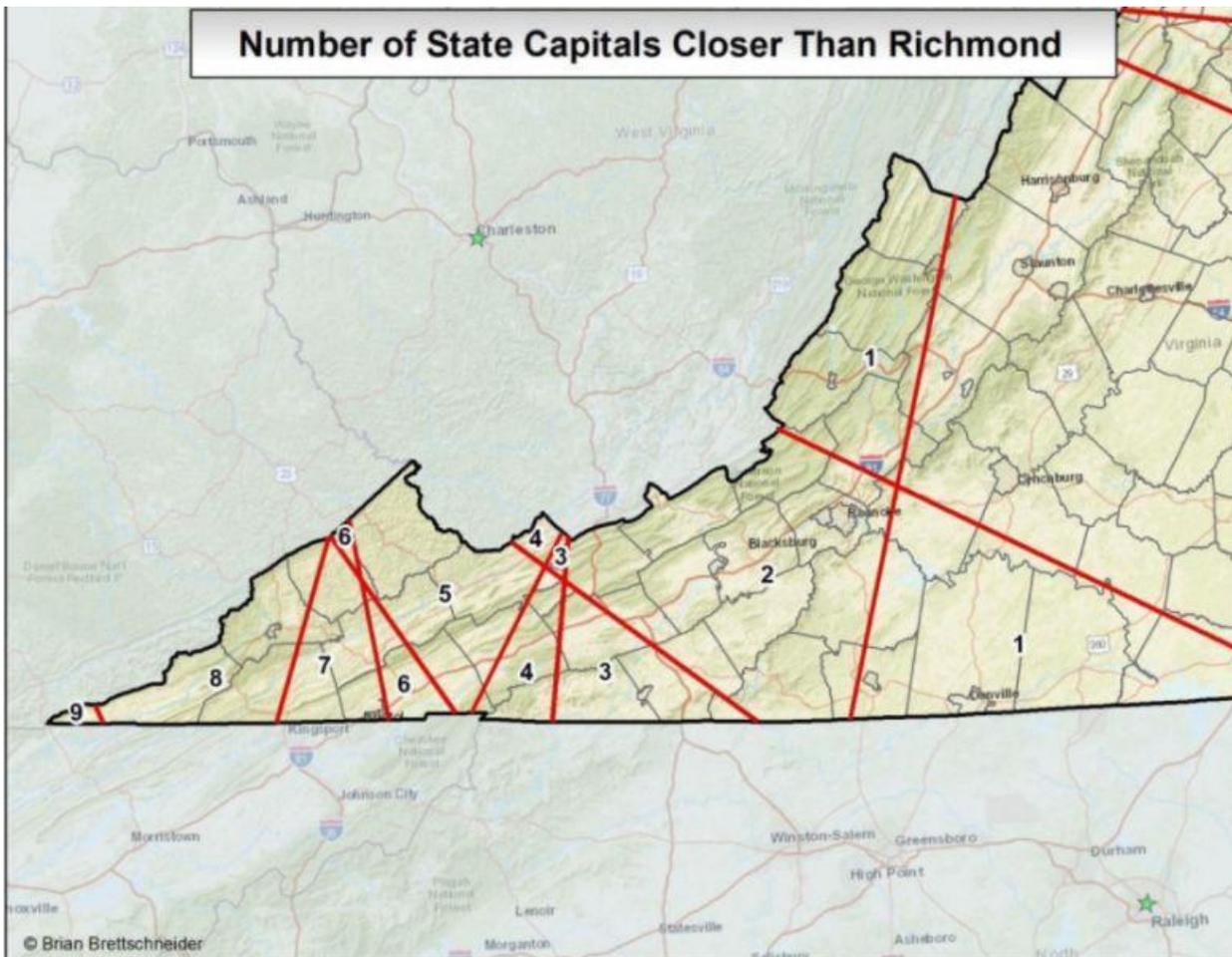
***I’ll forgo my usual tendency to produce a long list — you know, “47 things to know about Pittsylvania County” — and keep this one to just five things that should serve you well.***

1. Make sure you’re seen handling...
2. Show up. A lot...
3. Don’t leave Southwest and Southside out of...
4. Resist the siren’s call of...
5. Adopt one particular idea from...

***YES, I’m teasing you*** by not spoiling the punch line(s?) from the editorial. Perhaps it will be even more FUN if you try to guess what Mr. Yancey is going to say BEFORE clicking the link below.

***Here’s one last tidbit from this article:***

Fun fact: Big Stone Gap is closer to eight other state capitals than its own. **Can you help it feel closer?**



Brian

Brettschneider, a mapping hobbyist in Alaska, ran a computer program to find the state that had territory closer to other state capitals than their own. Virginia had more than any other state. The very western tip of Virginia is closer to nine other state capitals than it is to Richmond.

<https://cardinalnews.org/2026/01/13/advice-for-spanberger-as-she-prepares-to-take-office/>

## CALL TO ACTION

### Call Your Senators:

**Senator Tim Kaine:** Abingdon Office: [276-525-4790](tel:276-525-4790) , Washington, D.C. Office: [202-224-4024](tel:202-224-4024)

**Senator Mark Warner:** Abingdon Office: [276-628-8158](tel:276-628-8158) , Washington, D.C. Office: [202-224-2023](tel:202-224-2023)

### Call Your House Representative:

**Representative Morgan Griffith:** Abingdon Office: [276-525-1405](tel:276-525-1405) , Washington, D.C. Office: 202- 225-3861

**5 calls app:** They have the issue and even a script to get you started  
**Trump Litigation Tracker:**

***Just Security*** is an editorially independent, non-partisan, daily digital law and policy journal that elevates the discourse on national security, democracy and the rule of law, and rights. We

publish rigorous, expert analysis and informational resources on the issues that matter most. Just Security is based at the Reiss Center on Law and Security at the New York University School of Law.

<https://www.justsecurity.org/107087/tracker-litigation-legal-challenges-trump->

[administration/](#)