



Governor Tim Kaine with Kenneth Alexander

Kenneth Cooper Alexander
State Delegate • 89th House District

Kenneth Cooper Alexander

HOUSE OF DELEGATES

2007 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The following is a condensed list of some of the bills that passed or, where noted, failed in the 2007 Virginia General Assembly. HB indicates House Bills. SB indicates Senate Bills. You may find more details of these and other individual bills by visiting the state's website at <http://legis.state.va.us>



State Capitol Building
Richmond, Virginia

BUSINESS

Electric Reregulation HB3068/ SB1416 attempts to keep Virginia electric rates among the lowest in the country, but tries to ensure that electric companies have incentives to reinvest while trying to expand the opportunities for conservation and more environmentally friendly sources of electricity.

Payday Lending – *Failed* -12 bills repealing or reforming payday lending were introduced and all failed.

Minimum Wage - *Failed* - the minimum wage would have been increased from its current federally mandated level of \$5.15 per hour to \$6.50 per hour.

Adjustment or Relocation of Billboard Signs HB2128 Failed. Would have allowed relocation of billboards, without regard to the local zoning ordinance, when a billboard is displaced by highway construction.

CHESAPEAKE BAY CLEANUP

HB1710/SB771 issues \$250 million in bonds to be used to upgrade sewage treatment plants to reduce pollution-causing nutrients, primarily nitrogen and phosphorous, which are discharged into streams and rivers emptying into the Chesapeake Bay.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Property Tax Relief SJ354 permits the General Assembly to pass legislation giving localities the option to provide for the exemption from real property taxes or deferral of real property taxes related to 20% of the value of residential or farm property that is the owner occupant's primary dwelling and lived in continuously.

Governor's Term. *Failed.* Several resolutions were introduced to amend the constitution to allow a governor to serve two consecutive terms or to serve one six-year term.

COURTS

Expansion of Death Penalty HB2347 and HB2750 expands the list of murders classified as capital murder, a Class 1 felony. HB2347 adds the killing of any witness under subpoena in a criminal case, and HB 2750 adds the killing of a judge or justice. HB2348/SB1116 would have redefined the "triggerman rule" to include accomplices in murder to be eligible to receive the death penalty, but was vetoed by the Governor.

Sex Offender Registration HB 2749/SB1071 expands the reporting requirements of persons required to register with the Sex Offender Registry, as well as expand sentences for child pornography offenses.

Housing Authorities; Public Hearings HB3123 Housing authorities must hold at least one public hearing to receive views of citizens before taking certain actions.

EDUCATION

Medical insurance for Students HB1622 allows a full-time student to continue to receive health insurance for up to 12 months if the student is unable to continue as a full-time student due to a medical condition.

Two-Year College Transfer Grant Program HB1681 establishes a grant program for Virginia students who have successfully completed a degree program at a public two-year institution of higher education.

No Child Left Behind HB2542/SB1212 requires the Board of Education to request a waiver from those provisions of NCLB that are fiscally and programmatically burdensome to school divisions and are not instructionally sound.

School Bus Bill HB2302 gives local school boards permission—at their option—to rent or loan school buses to private schools to transport students. It is not mandatory.

EMINENT DOMAIN

HB2954/ SB781/SB1296 places restrictions on local government to condemn private property. An amendment allows for the condemnation of crack houses. Legislation to limit the state's use of eminent domain was a reaction to the 2005 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Kelo v. New London*, in which the court ruled that each state was responsible for setting its own rules for eminent domain.

HEALTH CARE

Abraham's Law HB2319/SB905 allows children 14 or older, jointly with their parents, to make a decision to refuse medical treatment, if the child has sufficient maturity, that all treatment options have been considered, and the parents believe that refusal of a particular treatment is in the child's best interest.

HPV Vaccination for Minors HB2035/SB1230 requires females to receive three doses of the human papillomavirus vaccine to sixth grade girls. A parent or guardian may elect for the child not to receive the vaccine.

Workers' Compensation HB1635/SB747 establishes that hypertension or heart disease is an occupational disease compensable under the Workers' Compensation Act for the Norfolk Airport Authority's police department.

Smoking Ban in Restaurants HB2422 Vetoed.

Childhood Obesity – HB2214/SB974 directs the Virginia Health and Education departments to work together to address childhood obesity in school age children, as well as other chronic health conditions.

Health Department HB2378/SB1240 modernizes the role of the Health Department, emphasizing disease prevention, making quality, safety, and privacy the focus of state health care regulations, and strengthening emergency preparedness.

Minority Health Issues HB3043 gives greater emphasis on

minority health issues by directing the Health Commissioner to designate a senior staff member who is a licensed physician to direct the department's minority health efforts.

Long-Term Care HB2033/SB1024 improves coordination of long-term care by making the Secretary of Health and Human Resources the single point of contact for coordinating long-term care throughout state government.

Prevention in Health Care HB3131/SB1374 emphasizes prevention in all health and human resource agencies to make state financing and delivery of health care more efficient and effective. Increases prenatal care coverage for low-income women to emphasize keeping people well.

SLAVERY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Resolution HJ728 acknowledges with profound regret, on behalf of the Commonwealth, the slavery of Africans and the exploitation of Native Americans, and calls for reconciliation among all Virginians.

TAXES

Income Tax Cut HB3022/SB778 increases the filing threshold for the income tax from \$7,000 for individuals and \$12,000 for couples to \$13,950 and \$27,900. Also increases the personal exemption from \$900 to \$930.

TRAFFIC SAFETY

Photo Red Light HB1778/SB829 gives localities the option of installing photo-monitoring systems to enforce traffic light signals.

Cell Phone Use While Driving SB1039 prohibits the use of a cellular phone or other wireless device while driving by those with a provisional license or a learner's permit.

Car Child Restraint Device HB1908/SB1060 increases the age that children must be secured in a child restraint device, from five to eight.

May 1, 2007

Dear Friend,

The 2007 General Assembly session adjourned on Saturday, February 24, and held the reconvene session on April 4, in the House and Senate Chambers of the newly restored State Capitol. Over 3,000 pieces of legislation were introduced during the session. After several years in the making, the most significant legislation to pass was the historic transportation bill. Last year's special transportation session failed over whether to raise taxes for new roads. This year a compromise transportation plan was finally approved by both chambers and the Governor.

The transportation plan includes \$3 billion in new borrowing for statewide construction projects as well as regional plans for Hampton Roads and Northern Virginia. In Hampton Roads, a new regional authority could collect between \$170 million and \$210 million annually from levies on gasoline, home sales, vehicle registrations, and auto repairs. The list of projects includes rebuilding U.S. 460, widening I-64 on the Peninsula and in Chesapeake, a new Midtown Tunnel and an extension of the Martin Luther King Freeway, the Southeastern Parkway/Dominion Boulevard and Va. 17 project, a widening of I-664 on the south side and the Peninsula, and widening the Monitor-Merrimac Bridge-Tunnel.

While the plan avoids major statewide tax increases, the increased fees, particularly in the Hampton Roads region, fall short of the projected \$275 million annually that will be needed. Hence, the General Assembly will have to revisit the issue in future General Assembly Sessions to continue Virginia as being a vibrant place to live, to work and to visit, and moreover, as the 'best state to do business in.'

Indeed, we have a good quality of life, educated workforce, and low unemployment, and we can, and must, remain competitive in this global economy. Without a quality transportation system, this region cannot remain competitive in the global economy. Quite simply, a 21st century transportation system is what is required to bring quality jobs to our citizens. Not providing a solution to the transportation problem in Virginia would have been a failure. We need a long-term, sustainable source of revenue that does not adversely affect one sector of the economy at the expense of others. While the plan has its flaws, a flawed transportation plan is better than no plan at all. It could be several years before the opportunity would come around again.

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89th House District

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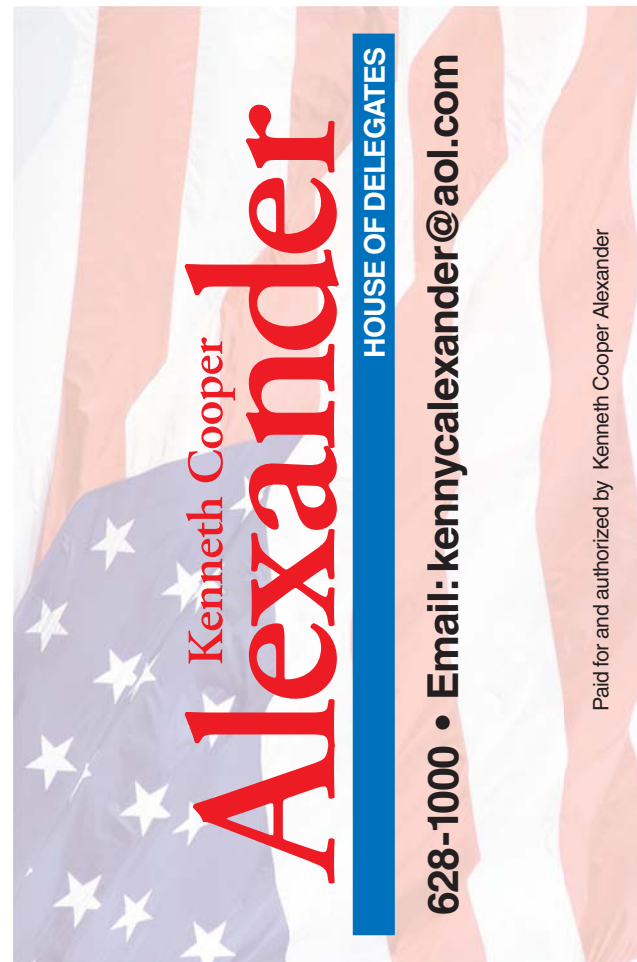
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