

What Have Democrats Done for You and Me?

Economic Growth and Fiscal Responsibility

Virginia Democrats raised the minimum wage (from \$7.25 to \$9.50/hour as of May 1, 2021; will bump up to \$11/hour on Jan. 1, 2022, and \$12/hour on Jan. 1, 2023).

Ended fiscal 2021 with a **\$2.6 billion budget surplus** -- the largest in commonwealth history

Virginia's unemployment rate is 4.3% -- **well below the national average** of 5.2% and lower than the rates in all neighboring states.

Created a record-breaking **90,000 new jobs** since 2018

Secured **\$4.5 billion in statewide capital investment** since 2018

Millions of dollars in grants and low-interest loans to **small businesses** affected by the pandemic

The federal American Rescue Plan **increased child tax credits** for American families.

Virginia is investing **\$700 million** in American Rescue Plan funds to provide **universal broadband access**. The Virginia Farm Bureau says this investment it will shrink economic, educational and health disparities throughout rural Virginia and help us become the first state to achieve universal broadband access.

Health Care

Virginia Democrats provided science-based leadership during the pandemic, including promoting vaccinations, mask-wearing, and social distancing and other proven health practices.

Expanded **affordable health care** (Medicaid) to 500,000 Virginians

Strengthened women's reproductive rights with the **Reproductive Health Protection Act**, which overturned longstanding restrictions on abortion

Protected insurance coverage of **pre-existing conditions**

Required employers to provide **paid sick leave for 30,000 home health care workers**

Capped insulin copays at \$50/month – one of the lowest caps in the country

Voting Rights

The Voting Rights Act of Virginia became law in 2021; Virginia is first state in the nation to enact its own version of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. The Act restores and builds on provisions of the since-gutted 1965 act, prohibits discrimination and requires election officials to make the voting process accessible to all legal voters.

Virginia Democrats made it easier to vote by implementing early voting, voting by mail, and expanded poll hours to include weekends. Provided drop boxes for submitting absentee ballots. Removed the requirement for voters to present a photo ID.

Environment

The **Virginia Clean Economy Act** sets a schedule for closing old fossil fuel power plants and requires electricity to come from 100 percent renewable sources such as solar or wind.

The **Clean Energy and Community Flood Preparedness Act** establishes a carbon dioxide cap-and-trade program to reduce emissions from power plants. It also creates a Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund to enhance flood prevention, protection, and coastal resilience.

Adopted **cleaner vehicle emission standards** and required manufacturers to supply more low-emission and zero-emission vehicles to Virginia auto dealers

Passed the **Wildlife Corridor Action Plan** to identify connected habitats and determine where wildlife corridors are needed

Education

Virginia Democrats gave teachers a **5% pay raise**

Increased education funding, including a **\$60.9 million increase** for preschool programs

Criminal Justice Reform

Virginia is the **first southern state to abolish the death penalty**

Decriminalized marijuana, sending fewer people to jail for minor possession offenses

Banned no-knock warrants

Implemented **background checks for gun sales**

Equality

Virginia's Democratic leadership successfully fought to **remove Confederate monuments** from public spaces, including the heart of Richmond.

Virginia is the **first southern state to protect LGBTQ residents** from discrimination in their daily lives. The **Virginia Values Act** protects LGBTQ people and other groups (women, people of color, veterans, single people, seniors and people of faith) from discrimination in employment, housing, public spaces, and credit.

Required schools to provide an **equal learning environment** for **transgender and non-binary students**.

Became the 38th state to **ratify the Equal Rights Amendment**