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House Majority Leader Terry Kilgore, R-Scott, told the Senate on Saturday that the House was ready to adjourn the 2022 regular session.

# 30 reasons why the General Assembly session mattered

From staff reports

Virginia legislators adjourned on Saturday leaving plenty of unfinished business for an upcoming special session.

For instance, lawmakers still must resolve a state budget that hinges on the extent of tax cuts, as well as funding formulas for lab schools and construction of a potential stadium for the NFL's Washington Commanders.

During the 60-day session Democrats used their 21-19 edge in the Senate to scuttle a number of GOP priorities, while Republicans used their 52-48 advantage in the House to defeat a number of Democratic measures.

Here's a glance at where 30 key issues stand as lawmakers leave town.

## Abortion

Senate Democrats defeated GOP bills that would have mostly banned abortion after 20 weeks, required "informed consent" before an abortion and that prescribed required care for an infant born alive in a botched abortion.

## Board of Elections

A conference committee is working out differences in House and Senate bills that would expand the State Board of Elections and have the board — not the governor — appoint the state's commissioner of elections.

## Budget

House and Senate negotiators are working to craft a two-year spending plan to take effect July 1. Then-Gov. Ralph Northam proposed the \$158 billion, two-year budget in December and included about half of the tax cuts that new Gov. Glenn Youngkin is seeking. Youngkin, who added \$1.25 billion in revenues to the spending plan, favors the House version of the budget, which includes \$5.5 billion in tax cuts and rebates.

## Cannabis

House Republicans killed Senate-backed legislation to accelerate the start of legal sales of recreational marijuana to September of this year, through existing medical dispensaries and some hemp processors. The House also killed legislation that would have offered a path for recalibrating the sentences of people incarcerated due to marijuana-related convictions.

## Casinos

A Senate committee defeated a bill that would have let Petersburg vote on a proposed casino and would have barred Richmond from a do-over vote, but that could change in the unresolved state budget. The Senate version of the budget would block Richmond from conducting a second referendum on a proposed casino until the state completes a study of an alternative site in Petersburg.

## School choice

Both chambers approved legislation to expand the ability of colleges and universities to open "lab schools," public schools run by these entities with public school dollars. A conference committee is working to iron out differences between the House and Senate bills — namely, how to fund the schools.

Senate Democrats voted down legislation that would have given the state more power to approve applications for charter schools — public schools run by private entities.

## Clean Economy Act

The Senate defeated a House bill designed to roll back the 2020 Virginia Clean Economy Act, which commits Virginia to 100% renewable energy by 2045.

## Collective bargaining

A Senate panel killed legislation to repeal a 2020 law that lets localities give local public service employees the ability to collectively bargain for a contract.

## Criminal justice

The Senate defeated a bill to eliminate almost all mandatory minimum sentences.

A Senate panel defeated a bill that would have given Attorney General Jason Miyares new powers to prosecute crimes.

A conference committee is trying to resolve differences over a bill that would change the hours that search warrants can be executed. After Louisville police shot and killed Breonna Taylor during a nighttime raid at her apartment in March 2020, Virginia Democrats passed legislation confining execution of search warrants to daylight hours.

This year the House passed a bill that would expand the hours from between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. to between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. The Senate passed an amended version of the bill that would expand the hours but confine such searches to between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m.

## 'Divisive concepts'

Senate panels voted down Youngkin-backed legislation that would have banned the teaching of "inherently divisive concepts" in public schools. Youngkin had proposed similar language for the budget, but neither chamber included it in its version of the spending plan.

## Felons' rights

A House subcommittee voted down a proposed constitutional amendment under which felons who have completed their terms automatically would regain their right to vote.

## Football stadium

A conference committee is working to resolve differences in House and Senate bills to set up a Virginia Football Stadium Authority as the state seeks to lure the NFL's Washington Commanders to Virginia. Both bills would authorize the au-

thority to issue bonds to finance the project. The bills differ on the authority's time limit for issuing bonds, how much money would go back to the team and how much would go toward paying off the bonds.

## Governor's schools

Both chambers approved a bill that says governor's schools cannot discriminate in their admissions based on sex, race and other factors. The bill is a watered-down version of a Youngkin-backed proposal that called for race-blind admissions in the schools.

## Guns

Senate committees defeated a number of House GOP bills to remove or reduce gun restrictions. These included bills to allow the carrying of a concealed handgun without a permit and to repeal the law restricting handgun purchases to one a month.

A Senate panel also defeated a GOP bill to repeal the state's 2020 "red flag" law. It lets a prosecutor or law enforcement official petition a judge for an emergency order to bar a person who poses a substantial risk of injury to himself or others from purchasing, possessing or transporting a firearm.

A Senate committee also defeated GOP measures to: repeal the requirement that the owner of a lost or stolen firearm report it to law enforcement within 48 hours or face a civil penalty of up to \$250; reduce the penalties for carrying a concealed handgun without a permit; and to repeal a law giving localities the authority to bar guns from such places as government buildings and public parks.

The House and Senate passed bills making it a misdemeanor to knowingly possess a firearm on which the serial number has been removed or altered.

## Hazing

A conference committee is working out differences in House and Senate bills to punish hazing following the death of Virginia Commonwealth University freshman Adam Oakes.

## LGBT

A GOP-controlled House panel rejected a proposed constitutional amendment to remove from the state constitution defunct wording barring same-sex marriage.

## Marcus Alert

Legislators passed a bill that would let localities with populations under 40,000 opt out of a 2020 law, the Marcus Alert, meant to improve the response to mental and behavioral health crises. The concern is that smaller localities can't afford the cost. Lawmakers said they will continue to work toward broader implementation.

## Masks

Youngkin signed a measure to end school mask mandates

effective March 1.

## Minimum wage

Senate Democrats defeated legislation to cap the state's minimum wage at \$11 per hour and block scheduled future increases to \$15 per hour.

## Parole

The House and Senate passed legislation that would make the votes of the Virginia Parole Board subject to the Freedom of Information Act and a measure that requires the parole board to publish within 30 days a statement regarding any action it has taken on the parole of a prisoner.

## Political contributions

Senators rejected proposals to limit political donations to candidates to \$20,000 per election cycle and to cut off campaign cash from Dominion Energy and other utilities.

A House subcommittee rejected a Senate bill that would bar most personal uses of campaign finance money by lawmakers.

## Prisons

A House panel defeated an effort to launch an independent ombudsman and civilian oversight of the Department of Corrections.

## Richmond sewers

A House committee rejected a Senate bill that would speed the deadline from 2035 to 2030 for Richmond to complete a \$1.3 billion project to eliminate overflows of sewage-contaminated stormwater into the James River.

## School construction

A House panel defeated measures that would have given all cities and counties the option of adding 1% to their local sales tax for school modernization or construction, subject to a local referendum.

Conference committees are working on bills that would create a fund to provide grants to school boards to finance school construction and modernization, and that would change the state Literary Fund to make more money available to local school divisions through loans with lower interest rates.

## Sexually explicit material

The General Assembly passed legislation to require parental notification about sexually explicit material in schools.

## School offenses

The House and Senate passed bills that would require K-12 principals to report to police certain incidents that occur on school grounds and notify any involved minor's parents that the matter is being referred to authorities. When Democrats controlled the legislature, they passed a law to give principals more discretion.

## School resource officers

Lawmakers passed a watered-down bill that would no longer require a school resource officer in each elementary or secondary school. It would instead require the training of a law enforcement officer as a liaison to a school without a resource officer.

## Tax cuts

Youngkin is pushing for the House version of tax cuts, which are larger than the Senate version. Both chambers have agreed to a \$1.2 billion, one-time tax rebate of \$300 for individuals and \$600 for families.

The House backed Youngkin's proposed 5-cent-per-gallon cut in the gasoline tax for 12 months, but the Senate killed it.

The Senate also deferred until next year Youngkin-backed proposals to double the standard deduction for income tax filers and give small businesses a one-time income tax exemption up to \$250,000.

The House and Senate are divided over the scale of cuts to the state sales tax on groceries. The House voted to repeal the entire 2.5% grocery tax, while the Senate retained the 1% that goes directly to local government. Both would replace the money taken from local K-12 schools, but not revenue drained from the transportation fund.

The House voted to exempt up to \$40,000 of military retirement income, phased over three years, while the Senate limited the exemption to \$20,000.

Both chambers blocked bills to carry out Youngkin's proposal to require voters to approve an increase of 1% or more in local real estate taxes after reassessment of property values.

A House panel defeated a bill to make the earned income tax credit fully refundable. The Senate did not act on its version of the bill.

## Voting

The Senate rejected House bills to restore the photo ID requirement for voting; to require that absentee ballots be received before polls close on Election Day in order to count; to limit absentee voting to the two weeks before an election; and to scrap drop boxes for absentee ballots.

The House and Senate passed measures that require an applicant for an absentee ballot to provide the last four digits of their Social Security number on the application.

Youngkin signed legislation requiring that the State Registrar of Vital Records transmit to the Department of Elections a weekly list of people who died.

## Wheeler

Both chambers approved a list of Youngkin Cabinet appointees after the Senate backed a committee amendment that removed Andrew Wheeler, Youngkin's pick for secretary of natural resources.

Staff writers Mel Leonor, Michael Martz, Patrick Wilson, Eric Kolenich and Andrew Cain contributed to this report.