




VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT



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# NEW MONTH,



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AT WORK

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## New laws taking effect to bring change to Virginians' daily lives

**DAVE RESS**  
Richmond Times-Dispatch

Hundreds of new laws take effect Saturday, ranging from naming the Chincoteague Pony as the state's official pony to one saying drivers must move over a lane for disabled vehicles.

After more than two decades of trying, one of the 2023 General Assembly session's biggest new initiatives, setting minimum staffing ratios for nursing homes, has a delayed effective date: July 1, 2025.


But the July 1 start date for new laws includes several with significant impact on Virginians' daily lives.

Here are a few:

**Pocketbook bills**

A major reform of how Virginia regulates the electricity monopoly Dominion Energy is cutting power bills — by more than \$7 off a benchmark 1,000 kilowatt-hour, \$137 monthly bill. It does so by ending three surcharges. Down the pike, it clears the way for a program to ease the impact of Dominion's pass-through of fuel costs to ratepayers and gives the State Corporation Commission more power to see if the utility's base rate is justified, a move the legislation's advocates say should bring down that rate, which accounts for about two-thirds of a monthly bill.

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## REVERSAL BY SUPREME COURT

# Biden not giving up on student debt relief

New plan would ease default threat

**WILL WEISSERT, COLLEEN LONG AND MARK SHERMAN**  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden promised Friday to push ahead with a new plan to provide student loan relief for millions of borrowers while blaming Republican "hypocrisy" for triggering the day's Supreme Court decision that wiped out his original plan.

Biden said payment requirements for student loans would resume in coming weeks, but that he would work under the authority of the Higher Education Act to begin a new program designed to ease borrowers' threat of default if they fall behind over the next year.

Hours after the Supreme Court ruling, Biden commented from the White House, trying to stay on the political offensive even as the ruling undermined a key promise to young voters who will be vital to his 2024 reelection campaign.

Ticking off what he said were

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# VCU students: Ruling could be deterrent

**MICHAEL MARTZ AND GABRIELA DE CAMARGO GONCALVES**  
Richmond Times-Dispatch

Four incoming freshmen at Virginia Commonwealth University expressed concern Friday about the Supreme Court's decision to strike down the Biden administration's \$400 billion student debt relief program, saying it could deter some future students from attending college.

Caitlen Norvell of Portsmouth, a 2027 nursing major, believes student debt forgiveness could have encouraged more people to go to college.

"It's uncalled for," Norvell said of the justices' decision.

Camille Campoy, an information systems and business foundation major from Woodbridge in Prince William County, called it an unfair outcome because of how many students got their hopes up for forgiveness of a significant portion of their debt.

"It makes me stressed for the

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**WATCH:** VCU student Kristina Quitagua reacts to the Supreme Court's decision on student debt. Aim your smartphone camera at this code and tap the link. **NEWSVU**

## RICHMOND KICKERS

# Maggie Walker student joins team

**MELANIE MARTINEZ-LOPEZ**  
Richmond Times-Dispatch

From a young age, James Sneddon, a student at Maggie L. Walker Governor's School, grew up going to City Stadium to watch the Richmond Kickers play almost every weekend, looking up to the team's players.


Now, he is one of the players that young kids look up to.

"It's a dream for me," he said ahead of the Kickers' Saturday night match against the Chattanooga Red Wolves, which will feature postgame fireworks.

The Kickers announced Sneddon's signing last week, making him the third player from Richmond United to sign an academy contract with the Kickers this season. An academy contract allows the Kickers to treat him as a member of the team but does not pay him, preserving his college eligibility.

Sneddon, along with the other academy signings, Beckett Howell and Gabe Cox, will be given the opportunity to train and play

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