

# MEET FLIPPABLE VIRGINIA

House of Delegates District 85 (HD 85) **Alex Askew**

House of Delegates District 83 (HD 83) **Nancy Guy**

Senate District 7 (SD 7) **Cheryl Turpin** (The Senate District includes both House districts.)

## Virginia is Flippable

State elections are in odd numbered years. Last election Democrats needed to flip 17 seats in the House of Delegates to gain a Democratic majority. They flipped 15 and tied one which they lost by a coin toss. The surge in voter turnout led to Democratic wins for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General. We need the same kind of turnout in the 2019 election to solidify gains made in 2017. Our goal this year is to flip two more seats in the House and at least one more in the Senate.

## Virginia Snapshot

The Commonwealth of Virginia has a rich, storied and difficult history. Despite painful legacies, however, today's Virginia reflects something different: over the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup>, Virginia has shifted from a largely rural, politically Southern and conservative state to a more urbanized, pluralistic and politically moderate environment. Approximately 8.5 million people live in Virginia. African Americans make up about 20% of the state's population, Hispanics, 10%, and Asians, about 7%. Eight Native American tribes, recognized by the state and the federal governments, represent Virginia's original inhabitants. Overall population has increased more than 6% since the 2010 census.

Virginia's economy is strong. Its unemployment rate, 2.9% (2018) is below the national average. Many people work for government agencies and government contractors, especially in Northern Virginia which was once considered the state's dairy capital and now hosts software, communication technology and defense contracting companies. Virginia has the fourth highest number of technology workers in the US, after California, Texas and New York. Computer chips are the state's highest grossing export, surpassing coal and tobacco combined. Although agriculture has declined in importance since the mid-1960's, it is still the single largest industry in the state; and Virginia is the largest producer of seafood on the East Coast.

Virginia's General Assembly, founded in 1619, is the oldest legislature still in existence in the Western Hemisphere. The General Assembly is a bicameral body with 100-member House of Delegates and 40-member Senate. Delegates serve two year terms; and senators serve four year terms. The Assembly selects judges and justices making it more powerful than the executive branch of government.

Regional differences play a large role in Virginia politics. Rural southern and western areas have been supporting the Republican party while urban and growing suburban areas—including much of Northern Virginia—form the Democratic Party base. College towns elsewhere in the state, Charlottesville and Blacksburg, and Roanoke with strong union presence, also support Democrats.

## East Bay Activist Alliance Candidates

Virginia Beach, in southeast Virginia, is strategic and competitive for Democrats. In 2017, we supported a winning candidate in Virginia Beach, for House District 85, Cheryl Turpin. She won by less than 400 votes. This coming election she is running for the seat in Senate District 7 (which includes her House district). We are one seat away from flipping the Virginia Senate.

**Key issues identified by Askew, Guy and Turpin are public education, voting rights and redistricting, gun safety, health care, affordable housing, women's reproductive rights and the environment.**

Virginia Beach is a city of about 450,000 people on the Atlantic coast. It's diverse population closely mirrors that of the state as a whole. Virginia Beach, Hampton Roads and Norfolk are all closely linked in this regional setting. In addition to tourism along its miles of waterfront, Virginia Beach is a hub of international commerce, has a large agribusiness sector and is home to several US military bases.