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### 2020 Virginia House of Delegates: Demographics and Voting Behavior

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## 2020 Virginia House of Delegates: Demographics and Voting Behavior



*An examination of demographic factors of political affiliation, gender/sex, race, religious affiliation, education level, and age in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates and how these factors may influence trends in voting behavior among delegates.*

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**Table of Contents**

Introduction	2
Part I: Dataset Measures and Methodology	4
Delegate Demographics	4
House Bills	6
House Bill Subjects	7
Delegate Votes	9
Dataset Structure and Design	9
Part II: Demographics and Representation	10
Va. House of Delegate Demographics	11
State Demographics	14
Representation in the 2020 Va. House	15
Part III: Trends in Voting Behavior and Policy Implications	17
Va. House of Delegates Voting Behavior	20
Trends in Voting Behavior	33
Policy Implications	35
Concluding Remarks	37
Bibliography	39
Figures and Tables	42

## Introduction

Women<sup>1</sup> and minority groups<sup>2</sup> have historically been underrepresented in government and politics. Even today, this underrepresentation has persisted. Looking at state legislatures, women make up about 29.2% of state legislators, despite making up about 50% of the U.S. population<sup>3</sup>; African Americans make up about 9% of state legislators and 13% of the U.S. population<sup>4</sup>; and Hispanics/Latinos make up about 5% of state legislators and 17% of the U.S. population<sup>5</sup>. Although these groups continue to be underrepresented, legislative bodies have seen trends of increasing diversity and better representation of the populations which they represent<sup>6</sup>, leading to questions regarding the impact and policy implications of more diverse and representative legislatures.

Studies on trends in party affiliation have shown that women, minorities, younger generations, and college graduates tend to lean more towards the Democratic party<sup>7</sup>, suggesting that various demographic factors may correlate with certain ideologies among the general populace. Studies on legislators and legislative bodies have shown that women are generally “more likely to care about women’s issues” than their male counterparts, and that “racial and ethnic diversity in legislatures can foster policy change on behalf of minority interests or block proposals deemed harmful.”<sup>8</sup> Many legislators also express beliefs that align with such studies. Alfonso Lopez for example, a member of the Va. House of Delegates, while discussing a failed 2016 bill to grant in-state college tuition to undocumented immigrants living in the U.S. since

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<sup>1</sup> Brown, A.

<sup>2</sup> Krogstad, J. M.

<sup>3</sup> Women in State Legislatures 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Who We Elect: The Demographics of State Legislatures.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Brown, A.; Krogstad, J. M.

<sup>7</sup> Trends in Party Affiliation Among Demographic Groups.

<sup>8</sup> Reingold, B.

childhood, once said that “If [Virginia] had a more diverse legislature and more Latinos in the House of Delegates ... I don’t think [passing the bill] would be as difficult.”<sup>9</sup> Such beliefs are well-founded; a lack of political representation restricts the diversity of perspectives that a legislative body can lend to an issue, excluding minority perspectives on various issues, and both creating and further perpetuating institutional problems in government and society.

The primary focus and intent of this study is to examine how demographic factors – specifically looking at political affiliation, gender/sex, race, religious affiliation, level of education, and age – may have influenced the way that members of the 2020 Va. House of Delegates voted. In particular, this study looks to see whether there are trends between certain demographic identifiers and voting behavior; whether individuals of certain demographic identities tended to vote with others of certain like identities, and which demographic identifiers seemed to be the strongest predictive factors of common voting behavior. Additionally, in discussing the role that demographics may have in voting behavior trends among delegates, this study necessarily invokes questions regarding the representativeness of the Va. House. As such, a brief discussion on the demographic makeup of the House compared to that of the Commonwealth of Virginia as a whole is included. The data presented is primarily descriptive and narrative, and it is focused solely on the members of the 2020 Va. House of Delegates. Any relationships or trends between demographic factors and voting behavior, however, could be suggestive of the value of descriptive representation and/or diversity in legislatures, and could contribute to scholarship discussing the policy implications associated with such representation.

Two products were produced in this study: a dataset listing all 2020 Va. House Delegates, their demographics, and their voting behavior, and this paper, which includes discussion and

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<sup>9</sup> Lieb, D. A.

analysis of the delegate demographics and voting behavior in the 2020 Va. House. The paper is divided into three parts. The first part explains the measures and methodology used in the creation of the dataset. The second and third parts make use of the information collected in the dataset. The second part details the demographic makeup of the 2020 Va. House and compares the makeup of the House to the makeup of Virginia as a whole. Finally, the third part looks at eight bills from the 2020 General Assembly session, discusses how delegates voted on these bills and potential voting trends across demographic groups, and uses evidence from other studies in a discussion of policy implications and outcomes that may be associated with greater diversity and representation in legislative bodies.

### **Part I: Dataset Measures and Methodology**

All 100 members of the 2020 Va. House were included in this dataset, listed 1 to 100 by district. Information about delegates was collected from pre-existing databases and compiled into the dataset; demographic information on delegates was collected from the Virginia General Assembly's House member listings<sup>10</sup>, and information on bills and votes was collected from the Virginia Legislative Information System (LIS)<sup>11</sup>.

#### **Delegate Demographics**

Demographic information for the members of the 2020 Va. House of Delegates was collected from the listing of 2020 House members on the Virginia General Assembly's website<sup>12</sup>, under each delegate's self-reported "personal information." Some members did not provide information on certain factors (e.g. no birth year provided) or were unclear (e.g. for education, a college/university was listed but the level of the degree was not). This information was not

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<sup>10</sup> Virginia House of Delegates Member Listings.

<sup>11</sup> Virginia Legislative Information System: 2020 Session.

<sup>12</sup> <https://viriniageneralassembly.gov/house/members/members.php>

included in the dataset so as to not make assumptions regarding any delegate's demographic identifiers, as well as to maintain consistency in the data as being self-reported; unavailable demographic data was coded as "XXXXX."

**Political affiliation.** Democrat or Republican. Delegates identified as one or the other.

**Gender identity/sex.** Female or male. Delegates identified as one or the other.

**Race.** African American, Asian American, Hispanic/Latino White/Caucasian, or Other<sup>13</sup>.

Delegates could identify with one or multiple races. If a delegate identified with multiple racial backgrounds, their race identification was coded as "multiple race identifications."

**Religious affiliation.** Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Non-denominational, or "multiple religious affiliations." Subsects of Christianity (Baptist, Catholic, Episcopalian, Methodist, Presbyterian, Protestant, Quaker, Unitarian) were grouped together under Christian affiliation in the dataset<sup>14</sup>, with a breakdown of affiliation across subsects of Christianity among Christian members of the Va. House included in a separate column. For non-Christian religions, "NA" was recorded under the column for Christian subsects.

**Highest level of education.** (Lowest) High School, Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's Juris Doctor, Doctorate (Highest). The highest level of diploma/degree reported to have been complete was recorded as each delegate's highest level of education. Medical doctoral degrees were coded as Doctorate degrees in this study. A Doctorate was considered to be higher than a Juris Doctor, as the U.S. Census Bureau records Doctorate degrees as higher than professional degrees and includes Juris Doctors under the professional degree designation<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Racial identities used by House Delegates on the Virginia House of Delegates Member Listings.

<sup>14</sup> Many delegates self-reported as being affiliated with their respective subsect of Christianity. Subsects of Christianity were grouped together under Christian affiliation for ease of analysis of religious affiliation.

<sup>15</sup> United States Census Bureau.

**Age.** Delegates could report their birth year. Their birth year was recorded, as were the potential “high” and “low” ages based on that birth year (e.g. a delegate born in 1970 was also recorded as having a potential “high” age of 50 and “low” age of 49, based on their birth year).

### **House Bills**

Slightly over 1,700 House Bills were proposed in the Va. House of Delegates during the 2020 General Assembly session<sup>16</sup>. A sample of House Bills were selected for this study from the Virginia Legislative Information System (LIS) in accordance with the following methodology and exclusions.

- ⇒ Only House Bills which saw a floor vote were considered. Bills that did not make it to the House floor from committee were not recorded in the dataset. These bills were not considered because without a floor vote, voting behavior of all delegates cannot be collected on these bills. Reasons that bills did not make it to a House floor vote included being stricken from the docket, continued to a later legislative session, left in committee, or incorporated into another bill.
- ⇒ House Bills that were a part of a block vote were not considered for purposes of this study. This is because in a block vote, multiple bills are voted on together rather than individually. Because bills are voted on as a group (a “block”) rather than individually, block votes do not necessarily lend individual consideration to bills, as was preferred for this study.
- ⇒ If a bill was voted on to be reconsidered, the most recent/final act on the bill was included. If a bill was reconsidered and subsequently met one of the aforementioned criteria (i.e. no floor vote or included in a block vote), then the bill was appropriately

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<sup>16</sup> Virginia Legislative Information System: 2020 Session.



excluded from the dataset. If a bill was reconsidered and subsequently subject to a floor vote, that most recent/final floor vote was recorded. This is because these were the final acts by the House on said bill.

- ⇒ In some cases, there were floor votes on whether a bill reported from a House committee ought to be engrossed<sup>17</sup>. In the case that this vote on a bill's engrossment was the final floor vote on said bill (i.e., engrossment of the bill was rejected by a House floor vote), this vote was still considered and recorded because (1) as a floor vote, all members of the House voted and (2) it would be the final action by the House on the bill.
- ⇒ Only actions by the House were considered for purposes of this study, as the focus of the study was on the House of Delegates irrespective of their interactions with the Virginia Senate or the Office of the Governor. Any Senate or Governor actions (e.g. proposed amendments, whether the bill ultimately passed or was rejected) were not considered. A consequence of this is that the vote recorded for a particular bill may not necessarily represent the final result of that bill's passing, and in the case of any amendments it may not necessarily represent a vote on the final version of the bill. This does, however, ensure that each bill considered was at the same stage as others considered when votes were collected—that is, votes on each bill were collected at the stage when the passage or rejection of the House version of the bill was under consideration.

### **House Bill Subjects**

LIS features an index of bills coded by subject. Bills considered in this study were collected by subject and coded in accordance with the LIS index so as to maintain an objective standard in determining the subject of a given bill. Some bills are included under just one

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<sup>17</sup> Engrossment is the formal reprinting of the bill in the form in which it will be considered for final vote of passage. A vote on a bill's engrossment is essentially a vote on whether to accept that particular version of the bill.

subject, while others may be included under multiple subjects, where appropriate. If a subject did not have any House Bills for the 2020 session, or if all of the bills in a particular subject were excluded, then that subject was excluded from the dataset. The following subjects were collected and included in the dataset:

- Administration of Government
- Agriculture, Animal Care and Food
- Alcoholic Beverage Control Act
- Appropriations
- Armed Forces
- Authorities
- Aviation
- Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
- Charters
- Civil Remedies and Procedure
- Commissions, Boards and Institutions Generally
- Commonwealth Public Safety
- Computer Services and Uses
- Conservation
- Contracts
- Counties, Cities and Towns
- Courts Not of Record
- Courts of Record
- Crimes and Offenses Generally
- Criminal Procedure
- Domestic Relations
- Eastern Shore of Virginia
- Education
- Elections
- Emergency Legislation
- Emergency Services and Vehicles
- Energy Conservation and Resources
- Financial Institutions and Services
- Fisheries and Habitat of the Tidal Waters
- Gambling, Lotteries, Etc.
- Game, Inland Fisheries and Boating
- General Assembly
- Governor
- Hampton Roads Area
- Hazardous Substances or Chemicals
- Health
- Highways, Bridges and Ferries
- Housing
- Hunting Laws and Permits
- Income Tax
- Insurance
- Judges, Justices and Other Elective Officers
- Labor and Employment
- Libraries
- Licenses, Business
- Military and Emergency Laws
- Mines and Mining
- Minors
- Motor Vehicles
- Narcotics and Drugs
- Northern Virginia
- Partnerships
- Pensions, Benefits and Retirement
- Personal Property and Personal Property Tax
- Persons with Disabilities
- Police
- Police, State
- Prisons and Other Methods of Correction
- Professions and Occupations
- Property and Conveyances
- Public Buildings, Facilities and Property
- Public Service Companies
- Real Estate and Real Estate Tax
- Sales and Use Tax

- Sporting Exhibitions, Events and Facilities
- State Corporation Commission
- Study Commissions, Committees and Reports
- Taxation
- Tobacco and Tobacco Products
- Trade and Commerce
- Transportation
- Unemployment Compensation
- United States Government
- Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area
- Waste Disposal
- Water and Sewer Systems
- Waters of the State, Ports and Harbors
- Weapons
- Welfare (Social Services)
- Wills, Trusts, and Fiduciaries
- Workers' Compensation

### **Delegate Votes**

This study observed delegate votes of “YEA” and “NAY.” In the dataset, votes were coded as “YEA” = 1 and “NAY” = 0. Only the most recent floor votes for a bill (“House: VOTE” on LIS) were considered (see above section on House Bills for clarification on the selection of bills for consideration and which House action was recorded in the dataset). In some cases, delegates were recorded as having “intended” to vote differently than how they did (e.g. a delegate may have voted YEA but be recorded as having “intended” to vote NAY). Delegates were recorded as they voted regardless of how they “intended” to vote because ultimately their actions—not intended actions—determine whether a bill passes or is rejected by the House. Additionally, if a delegate did not vote or abstained from voting on a particular bill that vote was not included and was coded as “9999” (excluded variable) in the dataset. Information for all other YEA- or NAY-voting delegates was recorded as appropriate.

### **Dataset Structure and Design**

The dataset contains the information collected on delegate demographics and voting behavior, with information sectioned by columns. The first section lists the delegates by name and district. Following that is the section on delegate demographics, with information on political affiliation, gender/sex, race, religious affiliation (including Christianity subject if applicable), highest level of education, and birth year (including a corresponding “high” and

“low” age for that year. The following, and largest, section is that of House Bills and delegate votes. House Bills are separated by subject, in alphabetical order.

There is also a second sheet in which duplicate bills have been removed (some bills were indexed under more than one bill subject in the main dataset). The information on delegate demographics is identical to the main dataset on the first sheet. In the section on House Bills and delegate votes, however, bills are not separated by subject, and each bill is only listed once. The corresponding information on delegate votes for each bill is identical to the first sheet.

Data was collected for each member of the 2020 Va. House of Delegates in accordance with the previously discussed conditions. Demographic data for each delegate was collected first, using members’ personal/biographical information as reported on the Va. General Assembly’s House of Delegates Member Listings. After all demographic data was collected, data on delegate votes was collected from Virginia’s Legislative Information System by subject; all bills under a certain subject were identified, appropriate exclusions were made, and information on how delegates voted was collected.

In the case that this paper is published separately from the dataset, the dataset may be located by DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/BCMNAB>.

## **Part II: Demographics and Representation**

For all demographic factors except for age, the percent distribution of delegate demographics was calculated using the number of delegates who identified with a particular demographic identifier out of all 100 delegates in the House, and out of the number of delegates in each political party<sup>18</sup>. For age, the mean and median birth year, along with the standard

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<sup>18</sup> *Figures 1-6.*

deviation, was calculated from the information that was reported. A mean, median, and standard deviation was also calculated for the “low” and “high” ages associated with each birth year<sup>19</sup>.

### **Va. House of Delegates Demographics**

The “average” member of the 2020 Va. House of Delegates was found to be a middle-aged/older, white, Christian, college-educated male. That is, when looking at each demographic factor included in this study (gender/sex, race, religious affiliation, education level, and age), the majority of delegates identified as male, most delegates were college-educated, the mean/median age of delegates was in their 50s, and so on. Although collectively most delegates were not necessarily middle-aged/older, white, Christian, college-educated men, these characteristics held the majority within each individual demographic factor. This was the case for both political parties in the Va. House, though House Democrats tended to have slighter majorities of each group as compared to House Republicans and to the House of Delegates as a whole.

**Political affiliation.** The 2020 session of the Va. General Assembly saw a slight democratic majority in the House of Delegates, with 55% of the Va. House of Delegates identifying as Democrats, and 45% of the Va. House of Delegates identifying as Republicans<sup>20</sup>.

**Gender/sex.** The 2020 session of the Va. General Assembly saw a majority-male House of Delegates, with 70% of all House delegates identifying as male and 30% of all House delegates identifying as female. House Democrats saw a smaller gap in their gender/sex ratio compared to the entire House of Delegates (i.e., the gender/sex ratio of House Democrats was *more* equal than the Va. House of Delegates as a whole), though still with a slight male majority; 56.4% of House Democrats identified as male, and 43.6% of House Democrats identified as female. House Republicans, on the other hand, saw a greater gap in their gender/sex ratio

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<sup>19</sup> Tables 1-3.

<sup>20</sup> Figure 1. Political affiliation in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates.

compared to the entire House of Delegates (i.e., the gender/sex ratio of House Republicans was *less* equal than the Va. House of Delegates as a whole), with a significant male majority; 86.7% of House Republicans identified as male, and 13.3% of House Republicans identified as female<sup>21</sup>.

**Race.** The 2020 Va. House of Delegates was predominantly white, with 72% of all House Delegates identifying as White/Caucasian. Of the remaining House delegates, 17% identify as African American, 3% as Hispanic or Latino, 3% as Asian American, 2% as “Other,” and 1% with multiple race identifications. Most of the racial diversity in the Va. House of Delegates came from the makeup of the Democrats in the House. About half of House Democrats (51%) identified as White/Caucasian, and of the remaining delegates 31% identified as African American, 3.6% as Hispanic or Latino, 5.5% as Asian American, 5.5% as “Other,” and 1.8% with multiple race identifications. In contrast, House Republicans exhibited markedly less racial diversity; 97.8% of House Republicans identified as White/Caucasian, and the remaining 2.2% (which accounts for one Republican delegate) identified as Hispanic/Latino<sup>22</sup>.

**Religious affiliation.** A nearly overwhelming 85% of the 2020 Va. House of Delegates identified with some sect of Christianity. Of the remaining delegates, 4% identify as Jewish, 2% as Non-Denominational, 2% as Muslim, 1% as Buddhist, and 1% with multiple religious affiliations<sup>23</sup>. In this predominantly Christian religious makeup, the greatest diversity in religious affiliation in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates is seen between the different sects of Christianity, with no one of the eight sects found in the Va. House holding the majority of Christian affiliates<sup>24</sup>. Religious affiliation among House Democrats about mirrored that of the Va. House

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<sup>21</sup> *Figure 2.* Gender/sex in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates.

<sup>22</sup> *Figure 3.* Race in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates.

<sup>23</sup> *Figure 5.* Religious affiliation in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates.

<sup>24</sup> *Figure 6.* Religious affiliation in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates (Christianity subjects).

of Delegates as a whole; 74.5% of House Democrats identified as Christian, 7.3% as Jewish, 1.8% as Non-Denominational, 3.6% as Muslim, 1.8% as Buddhist, and 1.8% with multiple religious affiliations. The makeup of House Republican religious affiliation was even more homogenous than in the Va. House of Delegates as a whole; 97.8% of House Republicans identified as Christian, and 2.2% (which accounts for just one Republican delegate) identified as Non-Denominational<sup>25</sup>.

**Highest level of education.** Most 2020 Va. House delegates (89%) reported holding a Bachelor's degree or higher. 5% of House delegates reported their highest level of education as a Doctorate degree, 28% as a Juris Doctor, 24% as a Master's, 32% as a Bachelor's, 5% as an Associate's, and 1% as a high school diploma. A slightly higher proportion of House Democrats (94.4%) reported holding a Bachelor's degree or higher as compared to the Va. House of Delegates as a whole. 9.1% of House Democrats reported their highest level of education as a Doctorate degree, 32.7% as a Juris Doctor 29% as a Master's, 23.6% as a Bachelor's, and 1.8% as an Associate's. A slightly lower proportion of House Republicans (82.1%) reported holding a Bachelor's degree or higher as compared to the Va. House of Delegates as a whole. 22.2% of House Republicans reported their highest level of education as a Juris Doctor, 17.7% as a Master's, 42.2% as a Bachelor's, 8.8% as an Associates, and 2.2% as a high school diploma<sup>26</sup>.

**Age.** Members of the 2020 Va. House of delegates tended to be middle-aged/older. The mean birth year among all delegates was 1966, as was the median birth year (standard deviation = 12.55). So, the average age of delegates in the 2020 Va. House was 53-54. The youngest delegate in the Va. House was born in 1991 (age 28-29), and the oldest delegate in the Va. House was born in 1940 (age 79-80)<sup>27</sup>. Democrats in the Va. House tended to be slightly younger than

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<sup>25</sup> Figure 5. Religious affiliation in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates.

<sup>26</sup> Figure 4. Highest level of education in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates.

<sup>27</sup> Table 1. Age in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates.

average; the mean birth year among Democrats was 1969, as was the median birth year (standard deviation = 13.69), so the average age of Democrats in the Va. House was 50-51. Democrats had the oldest member of the Va. House of Delegates (born 1940, age 79-80) among their ranks, and the youngest Democrat in the House was born in 1990 (age 29-30)<sup>28</sup>. Republicans in the Va. House tended to be slightly older than average; the mean birth year among Republicans was 1963, as was the median birth year (standard deviation = 10.85), so the average age of Republicans in the Va. House was 56-57. The older Republican in the Va. House of Delegates was born in 1942 (age 77-78), and the Republicans had the youngest member of the House (born 1991, age 28-29) among their ranks<sup>29</sup>.

### **State Demographics**

Although the focus of this study is not a critical analysis of the representativeness of the 2020 Va. House of Delegates to the demographic makeup of the Commonwealth of Virginia, it is undoubtedly relevant in the discussion of how demographic factors may influence voting behavior, and a brief discussion is included because of the importance of acknowledging and considering the ramifications of underrepresentation of certain demographic groups in the legislative process.

Information on the demographic makeup of the Commonwealth of Virginia as a whole was collected from surveys and estimates published by the U.S. Census Bureau and Pew Research Center. Census Bureau estimates were collected from 2018 American Community Survey data. State demographic information was collected to allow for discussion of representation of gender/sex, race, religion, level of education, and age in the Va. House of Delegates. Statewide political affiliation was not addressed because historically there have not

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<sup>28</sup> *Table 2.* Age in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates (Democrats).

<sup>29</sup> *Table 3.* Age in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates (Republicans).



been the same barriers and issues surrounding representation of major political parties as there have been with representation of the other demographic factors discussed in this study.

**Gender/sex.** The U.S. Census Bureau lists estimated percentage distribution on how much of the Virginia population is female versus male.

**Race.** The U.S. Census Bureau lists estimated percentage distribution of the Virginia population across different racial identifiers (African American, Asian American, White/Caucasian, Hispanic/Latino or Other were collected).

**Religious affiliation.** Survey data published by the Pew Research Center lists approximate percentage distribution of different religious affiliations in the Virginia population, as of 2015 (Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, or Non-denominational were collected).

**Highest level of education.** The U.S. Census Bureau lists the estimated percent of Virginians who hold a bachelor's degree or higher.

**Age.** The 2018 American Community Survey, published by the U.S. Census Bureau, lists estimated percentage distribution of the Virginia population across different age groups (data on Virginians between the ages of 25-54 and 55-84 were collected).

### **Representation in the 2020 Va. House.**

The apparent homogeneity across the members of the 2020 Va. House of Delegates raises the question of how representative of Virginia's population the Va. House actually is. In consideration of the representativeness of the 2020 Va. House of Delegates, the demographic makeup of delegates in the House was compared to Virginia state demographic data and estimates published by the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, and the Pew Research Center.

**Representation of gender/sex.** Virginia is estimated to have a roughly 50/50 split between males and females (49.2% male and 50.8% female)<sup>30</sup>. This reveals a clear underrepresentation of women in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates, in which only 30% of delegates are female<sup>31</sup>.

**Representation of race.** The racial makeup of the state is estimated to be approximately 61.5% White/Caucasian (alone, not Hispanic or Latino), 19.9% African American (alone), 9.6% Hispanic/Latino, 6.9% Asian (alone). A number of Virginians also identified with other races, or with more than one race<sup>32</sup>. With 72% of House Delegates identifying as White/Caucasian, 17% as African American, 3% as Hispanic/Latino, 3% as Asian American, and 2% as “Other,”<sup>33</sup> there is some apparent underrepresentation of minority racial groups in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates.

**Representation of religious affiliation.** Survey data from 2015 shows that about 73% of Virginians identified as Christian (with variation in sects), 20% were reportedly unaffiliated with a particular religion, and 1% or less identified as Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, or with another world religion<sup>34</sup>. Of those reporting, 85% of House delegates identified as Christian, suggesting some overrepresentation of Christians in the 2020 Va. House. 2% of delegates identified as Non-denominational, an underrepresentation of Virginians unaffiliated with any particular religion. There does, however, seem to be fairly accurate descriptive representation of Non-Christian faiths in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates as compared to the population as a whole, with 4% of delegates identifying as Jewish, 2% as Muslim, and 1% as Buddhist, despite the low representation of these groups<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: Virginia.

<sup>31</sup> *Figure 2.* Gender/sex in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates.

<sup>32</sup> U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: Virginia.

<sup>33</sup> *Figure 3.* Race in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates.

<sup>34</sup> Religious Composition of Adults in Virginia.

<sup>35</sup> *Figure 5.* Religious Affiliation in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates.

**Representation of level of education.** About 38.2% of Virginians age 25 and older are estimated to hold a Bachelor's degree or higher<sup>36</sup>. In sharp contrast, about 89% of Va. House delegates in 2020 reported holding a Bachelor's degree or higher<sup>37</sup>. This shows that members of the 2020 Va. House of Delegates by and large tended to be more educated than the general population in Virginia.

**Representation of age.** As of 2018, it was estimated that approximately 39.9% of Virginia's population was between ages 25 and 54, and 26.7% of the population was between ages 55 and 84. When excluding the population under the age of 25 and over the age of 84 (that is, when only looking at Virginians between the ages of 25 and 84), roughly 60% of that population would be between ages 25 and 54, and 40% between ages 55 and 84<sup>38</sup>. The median birth year of Va. House delegates (14 delegates, accounting for 14% of the House, did not report their birth year) was 1966 (age 53-54). So, roughly 50% of reporting delegates were age 53 or younger, and 50% were age 54 or older<sup>39</sup>. Recognizing that 14% of House delegates did not report their birth year, there seems to be some overrepresentation of older Virginians and underrepresentation of younger Virginians in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates.

### **Part III: Trends in Voting Behavior and Policy Implications**

Analysis of delegate voting behavior on certain subjects/issue areas was conducted to see whether there may be trends in voting behavior on different issues across the different demographic factors considered. Eight bills were selected for analysis using survey data conducted to identify some of the top issues for voters. A narrative case-study approach was taken to get a more in-depth look at voting trends on these particular issues.

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<sup>36</sup> U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: Virginia.

<sup>37</sup> *Figure 4.* Highest level of education in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates.

<sup>38</sup> U.S. Census Bureau 2018 ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates.

<sup>39</sup> *Table 1.* Age in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates.

Two polls were used to inform selection of bill subjects for individual analysis; one, conducted by the Washington Post and the Schar School of Policy and Government in 2019<sup>40</sup>, looked at issues most important to registered voters in Virginia, and the other, conducted by Gallup in 2018<sup>41</sup>, looked at issues most important to registered voters nationwide. Among Virginia voters, the most important issues (those which the most of those surveyed identified at “very important”) were (1) gun policy, (2) education, (3) healthcare, (4) the economy, and (5) immigration<sup>42</sup>. Among voters nationwide, the most important issues (those which the most of those surveyed identified as “extremely/very important”) were (1) healthcare, (2) the economy, (3) immigration, (4) the treatment of women in U.S. society, and (5) gun policy<sup>43</sup>. Other important issues identified by voters in Virginia and nationwide on these polls included abortion, taxation, and climate change.

Eight bills were selected for discussion of delegate voting behavior in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates, with the decision on which bills to select informed by the previously discussed surveys. The selected bills, bill summaries<sup>44</sup>, and brief explanations on the selection of each bill<sup>45</sup> are listed below:

- House Bill 2 requires background checks on all firearm sales in Virginia. This bill was selected as it was a part of the Governor’s gun violence prevention legislative agenda, and gun policy was the top issue for Virginia voters and of the top five issues for voters nationwide.

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<sup>40</sup> Washington Post-Schar School Virginia Poll.

<sup>41</sup> Newport, F.

<sup>42</sup> Washington Post-Schar School Virginia Poll.

<sup>43</sup> Newport, F.

<sup>44</sup> Bill summaries for each bill sourced from the Virginia Legislative Information System: 2020 Session.

<sup>45</sup> Based on the above polls (Washington Post-Schar School Virginia Poll; Newport, F).

- House Bill 734 provides that Virginia shall generally conform to federal tax laws on a rolling basis, meaning that Va. tax laws incorporate changes to the Internal Revenue Code as soon as Congress enacts them, with some exceptions. Taxation was among the most important issues identified by voters, and taxation also involves the economy, which was of the top five issues for voters in Va. and nationwide.
- House Bill 980 repeals Virginia's mandatory ultrasound law and 24-hour waiting period prior to abortion and rolls back various restrictions on women's health centers. The issues of abortion and the treatment of women in the United States were among the top issues identified by voters surveyed.
- House Bill 1211 defines the requirements to obtain a driver privilege card such that requirements allow undocumented immigrants in Virginia obtain a driver privilege card. This bill was regarded as an important immigrants' rights bill<sup>46</sup>. Voters surveyed identified immigration as one of the top five most important issues to them, and this legislation is relevant to the issue of immigration.
- House Bill 1428 creates the Virginia Health Benefit Exchange, a state-run marketplace to be established and operated by a new division within the State Corporation Commission. This will make Virginia the 14<sup>th</sup> state to create its own health insurance exchange<sup>47</sup>, and will focus especially on enrolling uninsured and underinsured residents. Healthcare was among the most important policy issues identified by voters surveyed.
- House Bill 1508 requires school boards to employ school counselors in accordance with specified staffing ratios. Education was identified as one of the top issues to voters surveyed, and this legislation relates to education in Virginia.

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<sup>46</sup> Masters, K. – House, Senate Pass Long-Anticipated Immigrants' Rights Bills.

<sup>47</sup> Masters, K. – Virginia is Poised to Create its Own Health Insurance Marketplace.

- House Bill 1526, the Virginia Clean Economy Act, requires new measures to promote energy efficiency; sets a schedule for closing old fossil fuel power plants; requires electricity to come from 100% renewable sources by 2045-2050; establishes renewable portfolio standards; establishes energy efficiency standards; and advances offshore wind and solar energy generation. This legislation is relevant to issues of the environment and the economy, both identified as top issues to voters surveyed.
- House Bill 1547 defines the requirements to be eligible for in-state tuition such that students can obtain in-state tuition regardless of immigration or citizenship status. This bill was regarded as an important immigrants' rights bill<sup>48</sup>, and is also relevant to education policy; both immigration and education were important issue areas identified by voters surveyed.

A simple count of votes was used for analysis of voting behavior. For each demographic factor, a count of votes for the bill (YEA) and against the bill (NAY) was taken for each identifier in that demographic factor (e.g. for gender, a count was taken of the number of female delegates who voted YEA, the number of female delegates who voted NAY, and the same for male delegates, and so on), as well as percentages within each identifier in a demographic factor (e.g. for gender, the percentage of female delegates who voted YEA vs. NAY, the same for male delegates, and so on).

### **Va. House of Delegates Voting Behavior**

**House Bill 2.** House Bill 2 requires background checks on all firearm sales in Virginia<sup>49</sup>.

*By party affiliation...*

Democrats: 98% (54) YEA; 2% (1) NAY

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<sup>48</sup> Masters, K. – House, Senate Pass Long-Anticipated Immigrants' Rights Bills.

<sup>49</sup> Virginia Legislative Information System: 2020 Session.

Republicans: 0% (0) YEA; 100% (45) NAY

By *gender/sex*...

Female: 77% (23) YEA; 23% (7) NAY

Male: 44% (31) YEA; 56% (39) NAY

By *race*...

African American: 94% (16) YEA; 6% (1) NAY

Asian American: 100% (3) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

White/Caucasian: 39% (28) YEA; 61% (44) NAY

Hispanic/Latino: 66% (2) YEA; 33% (1) NAY

Other: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Multiple Identifications: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

By *religious affiliation*...

Buddhist: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Christian: 47% (40) YEA; 53% (45) NAY

Jewish: 100% (4) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Muslim: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Non-Denominational: 50% (1) YEA; 50% (1) NAY

Multiple Affiliations: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 100% (5) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

By *level of education*...

High School: 0% (0) YEA; 100% (1) NAY

Associate's: 20% (1) YEA; 80% (4) NAY

Bachelor's: 41% (13) YEA; 59% (19) NAY

Master's: 63% (15) YEA; 37% (9) NAY

Juris Doctor: 64% (18) YEA; 36% (10) NAY

Doctorate: 100% (5) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 40% (2) YEA; 60% (3) NAY

By *age*...

53 and older (born 1966 or earlier): 42% (19) YEA; 58% (26) NAY

53 and younger (born 1967 or earlier): 59% (24) YEA; 41% (17) NAY

Not Specified: 79% (11) YEA; 21% (3) NAY<sup>50</sup>

**House Bill 734.** House Bill 734 provides that Virginia shall generally conform to federal tax laws on a rolling basis, meaning that Va. tax laws incorporate changes to the Internal Revenue Code as soon as Congress enacts them, with some exceptions<sup>51</sup>.

By *party affiliation*...

Democrats: 100% (55) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Republicans: 73% (33) YEA; 24% (11) NAY

By *gender/sex*...

Female: 97% (29) YEA; 3% (1) NAY

Male: 84% (59) YEA; 14% (10) NAY

By *race*...

African American: 100% (17) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Asian American: 100% (3) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

White/Caucasian: 83% (60) YEA; 15% (11) NAY

Hispanic/Latino: 100% (3) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

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<sup>50</sup> Table 4. House Bill 2 Vote Counts and Percentages.

<sup>51</sup> Virginia Legislative Information System: 2020 Session.



Other: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Multiple Identifications: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

*By religious affiliation...*

Buddhist: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Christian: 86% (73) YEA; 13% (11) NAY

Jewish: 100% (4) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Muslim: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Non-Denominational: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Multiple Affiliations: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 100% (5) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

*By level of education...*

High School: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Associate's: 80% (4) YEA; 20% (1) NAY

Bachelor's: 88% (28) YEA; 12% (4) NAY

Master's: 92% (22) YEA; 8% (2) NAY

Juris Doctor: 86% (24) YEA; 11% (3) NAY

Doctorate: 100% (5) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 80% (4) YEA; 20% (1) NAY

*By age...*

53 and older (born 1966 or earlier): 82% (37) YEA; 16% (7) NAY

53 and younger (born 1967 or earlier): 90% (37) YEA; 10% (4) NAY

Not Specified: 100% (14) YEA; 0% (0) NAY<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Table 5. House Bill 734 Vote Counts and Percentages.

**House Bill 980.** House Bill 980 repeals Virginia’s mandatory ultrasound law and 24-hour waiting period prior to abortion and rolls back various restrictions on women’s health centers<sup>53</sup>.

*By party affiliation...*

Democrats: 95% (52) YEA; 2% (1) NAY

Republicans: 0% (0) YEA; 98% (44) NAY

*By gender/sex...*

Female: 77% (23) YEA; 20% (6) NAY

Male: 41% (29) YEA; 56% (39) NAY

*By race...*

African American: 82% (14) YEA; 6% (1) NAY

Asian American: 100% (3) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

White/Caucasian: 39% (28) YEA; 60% (43) NAY

Hispanic/Latino: 66% (2) YEA; 33% (1) NAY

Other: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Multiple Identifications: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

*By religious affiliation...*

Buddhist: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Christian: 45% (38) YEA; 52% (44) NAY

Jewish: 100% (4) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Muslim: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Non-Denominational: 50% (1) YEA; 50% (1) NAY

Multiple Affiliations: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

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<sup>53</sup> Virginia Legislative Information System: 2020 Session.

Not Specified: 100% (5) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

*By level of education...*

High School: 0% (0) YEA; 100% (1) NAY

Associate's: 20% (1) YEA; 80% (4) NAY

Bachelor's: 34% (11) YEA; 63% (20) NAY

Master's: 63% (15) YEA; 29% (7) NAY

Juris Doctor: 64% (18) YEA; 36% (10) NAY

Doctorate: 100% (5) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 40% (2) YEA; 60% (3) NAY

*By age...*

53 and older (born 1966 or earlier): 42% (19) YEA; 53% (24) NAY

53 and younger (born 1967 or earlier): 56% (23) YEA; 41% (17) NAY

Not Specified: 71% (10) YEA; 29% (4) NAY<sup>54</sup>

**House Bill 1211.** House Bill 1211 defines the requirements to obtain a driver privilege card such that requirements allow undocumented immigrants in Virginia obtain a driver privilege card<sup>55</sup>.

*By party affiliation...*

Democrats: 100% (55) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Republicans: 4% (2) YEA; 93% (42) NAY

*By gender/sex...*

Female: 80% (24) YEA; 20% (6) NAY

Male: 47% (33) YEA; 51% (36) NAY

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<sup>54</sup> Table 6. House Bill 980 Vote Counts and Percentages.

<sup>55</sup> Virginia Legislative Information System: 2020 Session.

*By race...*

African American: 100% (17) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Asian American: 100% (3) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

White/Caucasian: 42% (30) YEA; 57% (41) NAY

Hispanic/Latino: 66% (2) YEA; 33% (1) NAY

Other: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Multiple Identifications: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

*By religious affiliation...*

Buddhist: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Christian: 51% (43) YEA; 48% (41) NAY

Jewish: 100% (4) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Muslim: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Non-Denominational: 50% (1) YEA; 50% (1) NAY

Multiple Affiliations: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 100% (5) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

*By level of education...*

High School: 0% (0) YEA; 100% (1) NAY

Associate's: 20% (1) YEA; 80% (4) NAY

Bachelor's: 41% (13) YEA; 56% (18) NAY

Master's: 71% (17) YEA; 29% (7) NAY

Juris Doctor: 64% (18) YEA; 36% (10) NAY

Doctorate: 100% (5) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 60% (3) YEA; 40% (2) NAY

*By age...*

53 and older (born 1966 or earlier): 44% (20) YEA; 53% (24) NAY

53 and younger (born 1967 or earlier): 63% (26) YEA; 37% (15) NAY

Not Specified: 79% (11) YEA; 21% (3) NAY<sup>56</sup>

**House Bill 1428.** House Bill 1428 creates the Virginia Health Benefit Exchange, a state-run marketplace to be established and operated by a new division within the SCC<sup>57</sup>.

*By party affiliation...*

Democrats: 100% (55) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Republicans: 2% (1) YEA; 98% (44) NAY

*By gender/sex...*

Female: 80% (24) YEA; 20% (6) NAY

Male: 46% (32) YEA; 54% (38) NAY

*By race...*

African American: 100% (17) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Asian American: 100% (3) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

White/Caucasian: 40% (29) YEA; 60% (43) NAY

Hispanic/Latino: 66% (2) YEA; 33% (1) NAY

Other: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Multiple Identifications: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

*By religious affiliation...*

Buddhist: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

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<sup>56</sup> Table 7. House Bill 1211 Vote Counts and Percentages.

<sup>57</sup> Virginia Legislative Information System: 2020 Session.

Christian: 49% (42) YEA; 51% (43) NAY

Jewish: 100% (4) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Muslim: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Non-Denominational: 50% (1) YEA; 50% (1) NAY

Multiple Affiliations: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 100% (5) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

*By level of education...*

High School: 0% (0) YEA; 100% (1) NAY

Associate's: 20% (1) YEA; 80% (4) NAY

Bachelor's: 41% (13) YEA; 59% (19) NAY

Master's: 71% (17) YEA; 29% (7) NAY

Juris Doctor: 64% (18) YEA; 36% (10) NAY

Doctorate: 100% (5) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 40% (2) YEA; 60% (3) NAY

*By age...*

53 and older (born 1966 or earlier): 44% (20) YEA; 56% (25) NAY

53 and younger (born 1967 or earlier): 61% (25) YEA; 39% (16) NAY

Not Specified: 79% (11) YEA; 21% (3) NAY<sup>58</sup>

**House Bill 1508.** House Bill 1508 requires school boards to employ school counselors in accordance with specified staffing ratios<sup>59</sup>.

*By party affiliation...*

Democrats: 100% (55) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

<sup>58</sup> Table 8. House Bill 1428 Vote Counts and Percentages.

<sup>59</sup> Virginia Legislative Information System: 2020 Session.

Republicans: 62% (28) YEA; 36% (16) NAY

By *gender/sex*...

Female: 100% (30) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Male: 76% (53) YEA; 36% (16) NAY

By *race*...

African American: 100% (17) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Asian American: 100% (3) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

White/Caucasian: 76% (55) YEA; 22% (16) NAY

Hispanic/Latino: 100% (3) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Other: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Multiple Identifications: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

By *religious affiliation*...

Buddhist: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Christian: 80% (68) YEA; 19% (16) NAY

Jewish: 100% (4) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Muslim: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Non-Denominational: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Multiple Affiliations: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 100% (5) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

By *level of education*...

High School: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Associate's: 80% (4) YEA; 20% (1) NAY

Bachelor's: 66% (21) YEA; 31% (10) NAY

Master's: 92% (22) YEA; 8% (2) NAY

Juris Doctor: 93% (26) YEA; 7% (2) NAY

Doctorate: 100% (5) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 80% (4) YEA; 20% (1) NAY

By *age*...

53 and older (born 1966 or earlier): 76% (34) YEA; 22% (10) NAY

53 and younger (born 1967 or earlier): 88% (36) YEA; 12% (5) NAY

Not Specified: 93% (13) YEA; 7% (1) NAY<sup>60</sup>

**House Bill 1526.** House Bill 1526, the Virginia Clean Economy Act, requires new measures to promote energy efficiency; sets a schedule for closing old fossil fuel power plants; requires electricity to come from 100% renewable sources by 2045-2050; establishes renewable portfolio standards; establishes energy efficiency standards; and advances offshore wind and solar energy generation<sup>61</sup>.

By *party affiliation*...

Democrats: 95% (52) YEA; 4% (2) NAY

Republicans: 0% (0) YEA; 100% (45) NAY

By *gender/sex*...

Female: 80% (24) YEA; 20% (6) NAY

Male: 40% (28) YEA; 59% (41) NAY

By *race*...

African American: 100% (17) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Asian American: 100% (3) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

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<sup>60</sup> Table 9. House Bill 1508 Vote Counts and Percentages.

<sup>61</sup> Virginia Legislative Information System: 2020 Session.



White/Caucasian: 36% (26) YEA; 63% (45) NAY

Hispanic/Latino: 66% (2) YEA; 33% (1) NAY

Other: 50% (1) YEA; 50% (1) NAY

Multiple Identifications: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

*By religious affiliation...*

Buddhist: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Christian: 47% (40) YEA; 53% (45) NAY

Jewish: 100% (4) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Muslim: 0% (0) YEA; 50% (1) NAY

Non-Denominational: 50% (1) YEA; 50% (1) NAY

Multiple Affiliations: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 100% (5) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

*By level of education...*

High School: 0% (0) YEA; 100% (1) NAY

Associate's: 20% (1) YEA; 80% (4) NAY

Bachelor's: 41% (13) YEA; 59% (19) NAY

Master's: 63% (15) YEA; 37% (9) NAY

Juris Doctor: 64% (18) YEA; 36% (10) NAY

Doctorate: 80% (4) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 20% (1) YEA; 80% (4) NAY

*By age...*

53 and older (born 1966 or earlier): 44% (20) YEA; 56% (25) NAY

53 and younger (born 1967 or earlier): 54% (22) YEA; 46% (19) NAY

Not Specified: 71% (10) YEA; 21% (3) NAY<sup>62</sup>

**House Bill 1547.** House Bill 1547 defines the requirements to be eligible for in-state tuition such that students can obtain in-state tuition regardless of immigration or citizenship status<sup>63</sup>.

*By party affiliation...*

Democrats: 100% (55) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Republicans: 2% (1) YEA; 98% (44) NAY

*By gender/sex...*

Female: 80% (24) YEA; 20% (6) NAY

Male: 46% (32) YEA; 54% (38) NAY

*By race...*

African American: 100% (17) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Asian American: 100% (3) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

White/Caucasian: 40% (29) YEA; 60% (43) NAY

Hispanic/Latino: 66% (2) YEA; 33% (1) NAY

Other: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Multiple Identifications: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

*By religious affiliation...*

Buddhist: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Christian: 49% (42) YEA; 51% (43) NAY

Jewish: 100% (4) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

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<sup>62</sup> Table 10. House Bill 1526 Vote Counts and Percentages.

<sup>63</sup> Virginia Legislative Information System: 2020 Session.

Muslim: 100% (2) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Non-Denominational: 50% (1) YEA; 50% (1) NAY

Multiple Affiliations: 100% (1) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 100% (5) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

*By level of education...*

High School: 0% (0) YEA; 100% (1) NAY

Associate's: 20% (1) YEA; 80% (4) NAY

Bachelor's: 41% (13) YEA; 59% (19) NAY

Master's: 71% (17) YEA; 29% (7) NAY

Juris Doctor: 64% (18) YEA; 36% (10) NAY

Doctorate: 100% (5) YEA; 0% (0) NAY

Not Specified: 40% (2) YEA; 60% (3) NAY

*By age...*

53 and older (born 1966 or earlier): 47% (21) YEA; 53% (24) NAY

53 and younger (born 1967 or earlier): 59% (24) YEA; 41% (17) NAY

Not Specified: 79% (11) YEA; 21% (3) NAY<sup>64</sup>

### **Trends in Voting Behavior**

Due to the more narrative approach taken to data analysis in this particular study, we do not currently have the evidence to draw causal conclusions, however the data still are suggestive of some trends in delegate voting that may be seen in the data as a whole. Delegates of the same political party, for example, tended to vote with one another. Of the bills surveyed, the lowest frequency by which Democrats voted together was YEA 95%/NAY 4%. Republican delegates

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<sup>64</sup> *Table 11.* House Bill 1547 Vote Counts and Percentages.

similarly tended to vote with one another; excluding House Bills 734 and 1508<sup>65</sup>, which saw a greater divide among Republican delegates (YEA 73% /NAY 24% and YEA 62%/NAY 36%, respectively), the lowest frequency by which Republicans voted with one another was YEA 4%/NAY 93%<sup>66</sup>.

Apparent trends can also be seen among gender/sex, race, and religion. Women seemed to vote with one another, and seemed to do so more often than men, with the greatest divide between women voting together across the bills surveyed at YEA 77%/NAY 20% (for men, it was YEA 47%/NAY 51%). Among racial groups, it seemed that non-white delegates tended to vote with one another, and among religious groups as well it seemed that non-Christian delegates tended to vote with one another. Education and age seemed to be more variable in terms of delegate voting behavior on the selected bills<sup>67</sup>.

It may be tempting to attempt to draw some conclusions based on this information, however it is not clear whether one of these trends is in fact driving the other without controlling for the others. From one perspective, it could be argued that political party is the driving factor in these apparent trends. For one, it appears that delegates of the same political party tend to vote the same, based on the bills surveyed in this study. Survey data collected by Pew Research Center which suggests that the ideological divide between individuals of different political parties is much greater than the divide between individuals of other different demographic factors<sup>68</sup> could further support this perspective; if delegates are more ideologically divided by party than by any other factor, then it would follow that they may be more likely to vote along party lines than by any other demographic factor.

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<sup>65</sup> Conforming to federal tax laws and setting required school counselor staffing ratios, respectively.

<sup>66</sup> *Tables 4-11.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *The Partisan Divide Over Political Values Grows Even Wider.*

From another perspective, however, it could be argued that other demographic factors such as gender/sex, race, religion, etc. are actually the driving factors in the apparent trends in voting behavior, with trends seen in party differences appearing simply as a result of the parties' demographic makeups. In the 2020 Va. House, it seems that female delegates tend to vote together, delegates who identify as people of color tend to vote together, and non-Christian delegates tend to vote together. Women and minority groups are more likely to identify with the Democratic party, generally speaking<sup>69</sup>, and this is clearly visible among Va. House delegates: 80% of female delegates are Democrats, 97% of non-white delegates are Democrats, and 93% of non-Christian delegates are Democrats. A strong case can thus also be made that the demographic makeup of political parties influence apparent partisan voting trends, and that other demographic factors than party more likely influence how delegates vote.

### **Policy Implications**

Regardless of what is the driving factor in these trends, there still are some implications that can be drawn from this and other existing studies regarding the potential policy outcomes associated with greater diversity and representation in legislative bodies. Consider the trends in party affiliation among women and minorities along with apparent trends in their voting behavior in the 2020 Va. House (i.e., that women and minority groups seem to identify and align with the Democratic Party). Whether the driving factor at play in these trends is partisanship, the demographic makeup of the political parties in the Va. House, some combination of these, or something altogether different, when taking a surface-level view of these trends it wouldn't be unreasonable to expect that an increase in diversity and representation among legislators may see more "liberal" policies passed.

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<sup>69</sup> Trends in Party Affiliation Among Demographic Groups.

To some extent this may be true, though there have been somewhat contradictory research findings on the extent to which gender and race influence policy attitudes, suggesting that the trends observed are not nearly as simple as “more diversity = more liberal policies.” One study on women in local government, for example, found that women tended to “hold more liberal policy attitudes” and value women’s issues more than their male counterparts, but also noted that such “gender differences tend to decline with the level of office.”<sup>70</sup> Another study on the impact of women legislators on state legislative policies found that the states with the highest percentage of female legislators introduced and passed more legislation related to issues of women, children, and families, and suggested that female legislators tend to have “distinctive priorities” in these areas. There were, however, no other issue areas for which women were necessarily found to have different priorities than their male counterparts<sup>71</sup>.

Similarly, a study on agenda-setting behavior of state legislators found that African American legislators “overwhelmingly vote and identify themselves as Democratic,” and tend to have a greater focus on welfare and civil rights issues, but it was also noted that it was unclear whether these policy attitudes were “due to race or to constituency pressure.”<sup>72</sup> Another study, focused on legislative activity in U.S. House committees, found that African American legislators were significantly more likely to participate in bill markups than were white legislators, suggesting that they have “stronger preference intensities” on various political issues. The study acknowledges that the participation measure doesn’t necessarily capture a member’s legislative priorities, however noting the “general liberal leanings of African American

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<sup>70</sup> Holman, M. R.

<sup>71</sup> Thomas, S.

<sup>72</sup> Bratton, K. A. and Haynie, K. L.

legislators” this nonetheless is suggestive that race matters in determining which issues are prioritized by the member<sup>73</sup>.

Not only does it seem that demographic factors such as gender and race likely influence policy priorities, it is also important to note that differences in policy attitudes and agendas are not the only means by which increased diversity and representation in legislative bodies may impact policy outcomes. Differences in leadership style, legislative engagement, and differences in perspectives on society that may be observed across different demographic groups may also have an impact on policy outcomes. It can thus be expected that increased diversity and representation of women and minority groups in legislative bodies would have an impact on the policies passed by said bodies. Even in the absence of substantive policy changes, there still are symbolic benefits to better representation, such as higher levels of trust and perceptions of legitimacy in government, and greater interest and engagement in politics by minority groups<sup>74</sup>. These symbolic effects, such as increased interest in political engagement, can in turn have more substantive effects on government and policy as well.

### **Concluding Remarks**

A review of various studies suggest that demographic factors may influence the policy attitudes of legislators. This, in turn, could suggest that the demographic makeup of legislative bodies as a whole may influence overall policy outcomes. Indeed, when looking at trends apparent in this study, it seems possible that demographic factors may play a role in how members of the Va. House of Delegates vote on particular bills, and thus that the demographics of the body as a whole may play a role in the policies that are passed. Further study on this may include the consideration of other factors such as constituency pressure, and statistical testing to

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<sup>73</sup> Gamble, K. L.

<sup>74</sup> Hayes, M. and Hibbing, M. V.

investigate potential causal relationships between delegate demographics, voting behavior, and policy outcomes.

This study primarily sought to prompt deeper consideration of the representativeness of the Va. House of Delegates and the broader policy implications of diversity and representation in our legislatures. Additionally, a dataset containing information on the demographics and voting behavior of members of the 2020 Va. House was produced and made available alongside this study. In highlighting the need for greater diversity in our legislatures and drawing attention to some of the associated policy implications, the hope is that this study and the accompanying dataset may motivate and support further research in this area.



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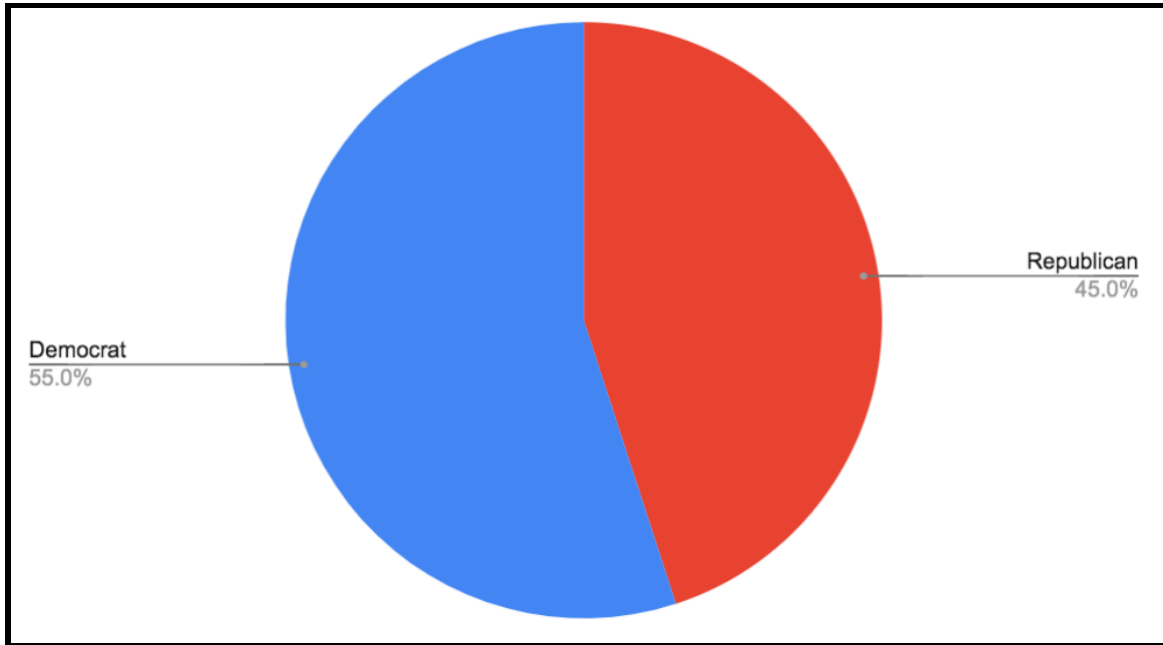
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**Figures and Tables**

*Figure 1. Political affiliation in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates.*



*Figure 2. Gender/sex in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates.*

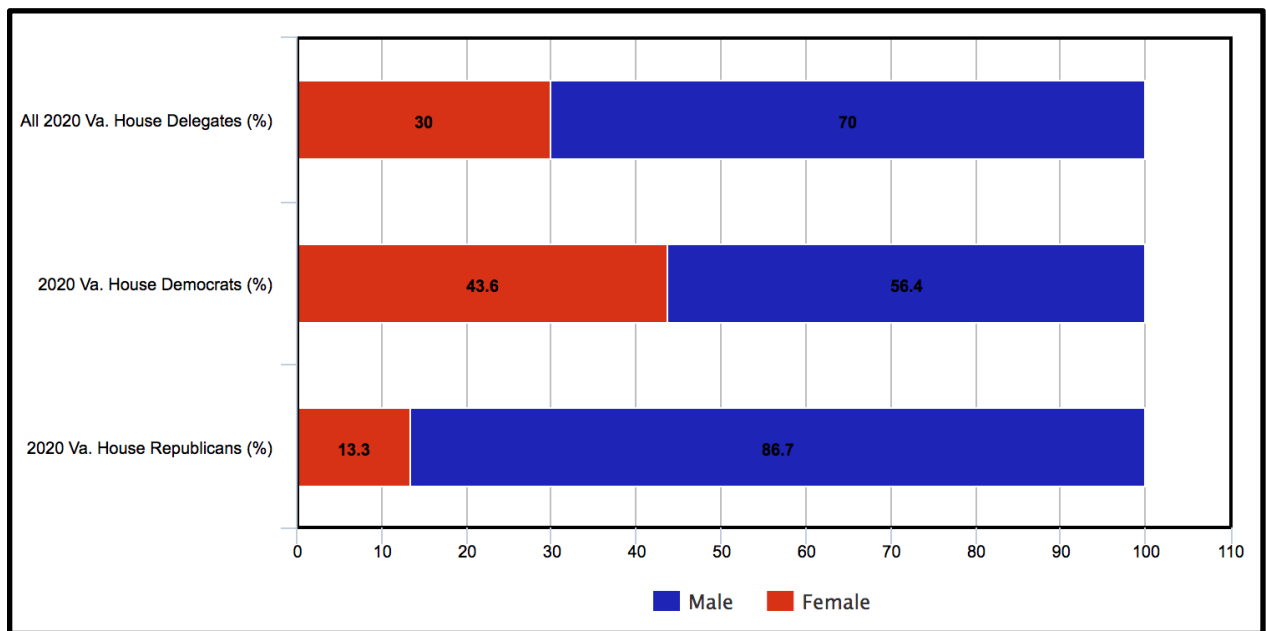


Figure 3. Race in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates.

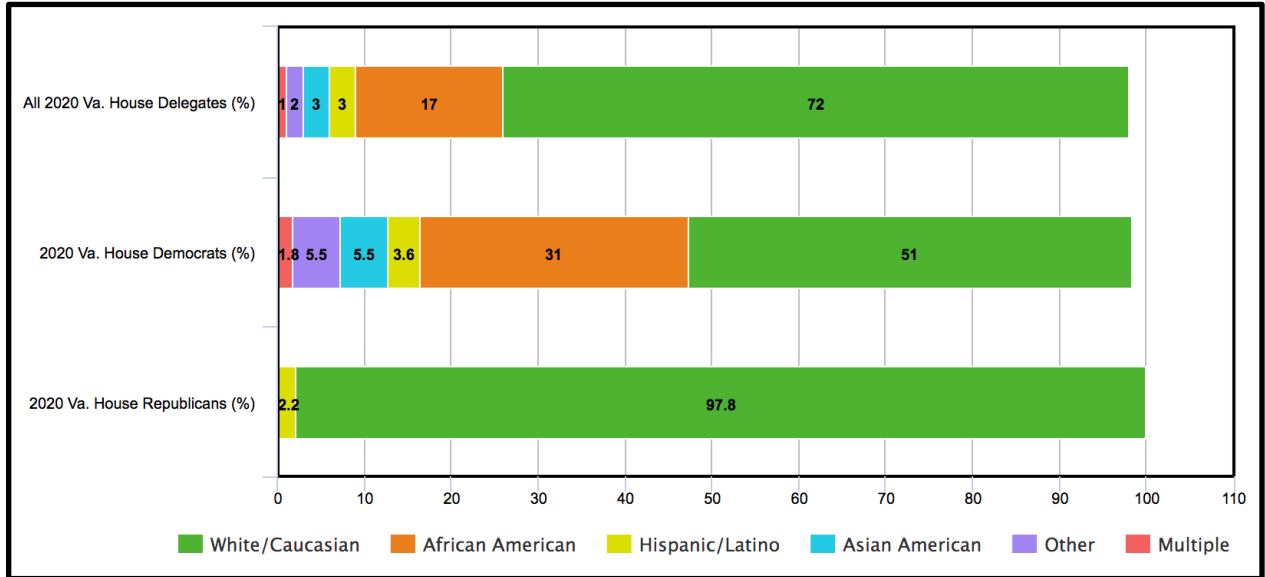


Figure 4. Highest level of education in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates.

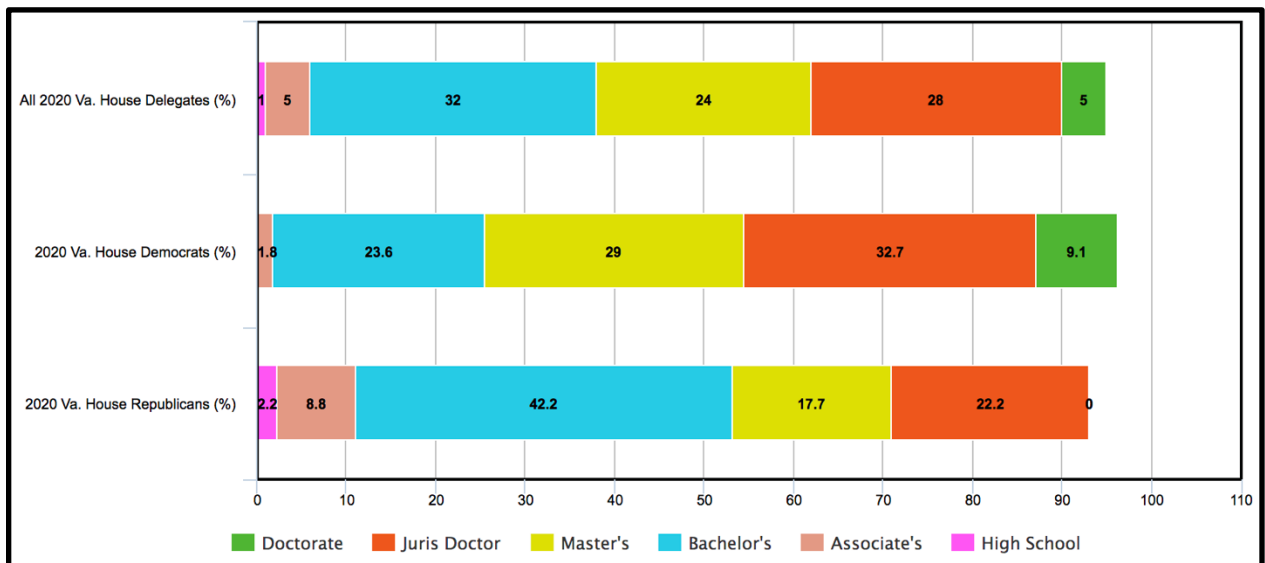


Figure 5. Religious affiliation in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates.

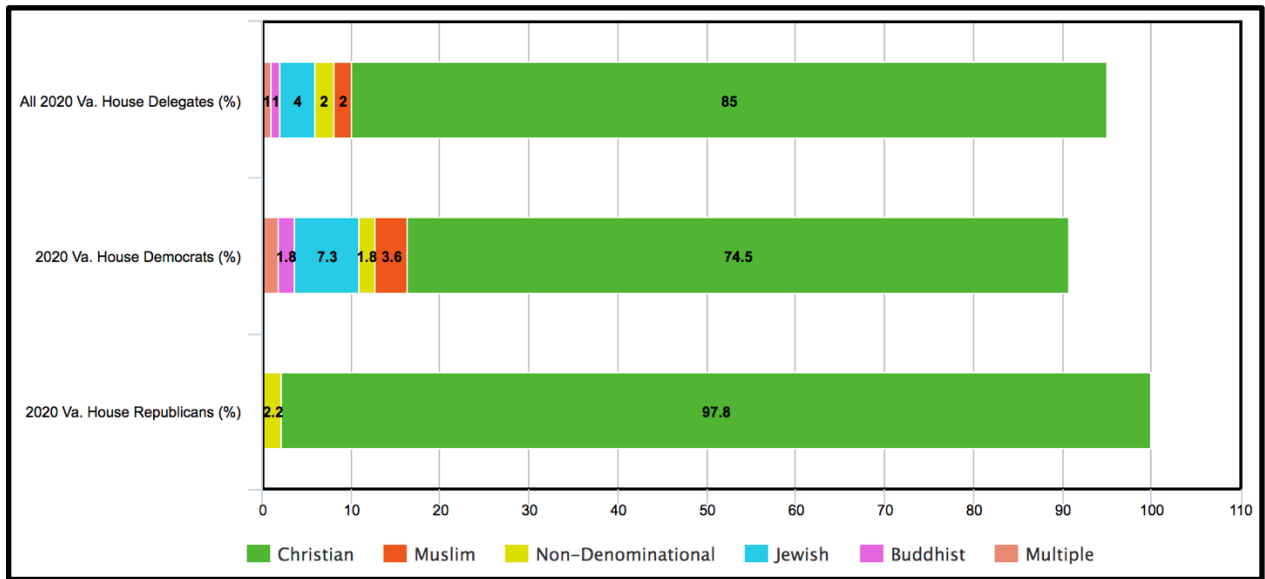
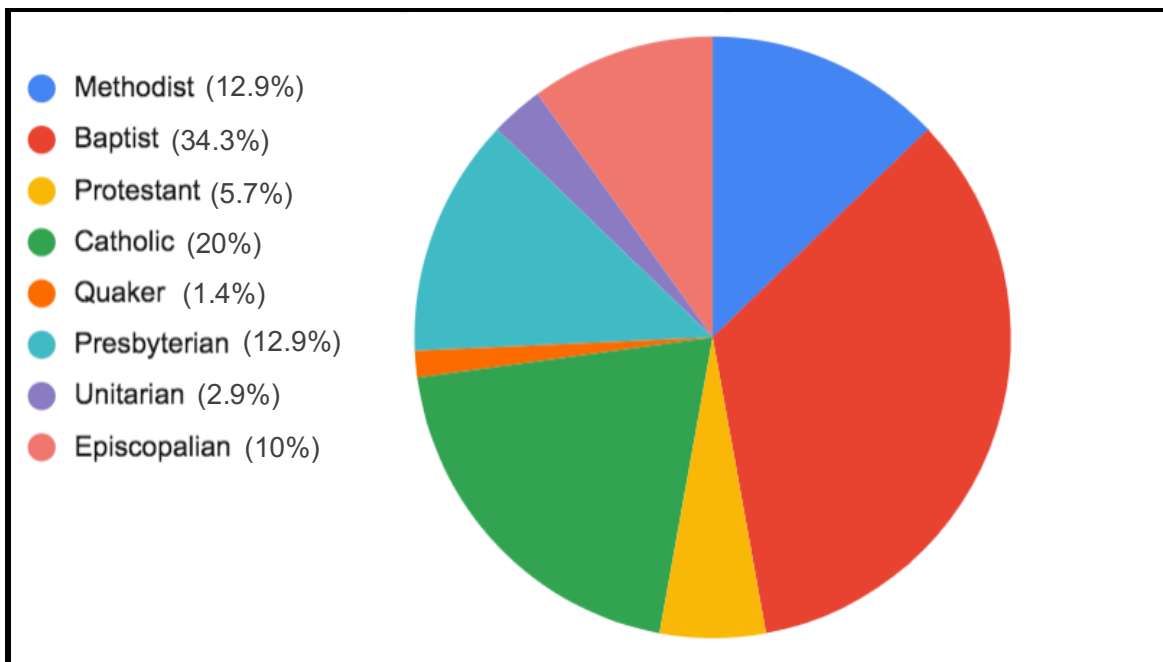


Figure 6. Religious affiliation in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates (Christianity subjects)



*Table 1. Age in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates.*

	<b>Birth Year</b>	<b>Age</b>
<b>Oldest</b>	1940	79-80
<b>Mean/Average</b>	1966	53-54
<b>Median</b>	1966	53-54
<b>Youngest</b>	1991	28-29
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	12.55	12.55

*Table 2. Age in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates (Democrats).*

	<b>Birth Year</b>	<b>Age</b>
<b>Oldest</b>	1940	79-80
<b>Mean/Average</b>	1969	50-51
<b>Median</b>	1969	50-51
<b>Youngest</b>	1990	29-30
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	13.69	13.69

*Table 3. Age in the 2020 Va. House of Delegates (Republicans).*

	<b>Birth Year</b>	<b>Age</b>
<b>Oldest</b>	1942	77-78
<b>Mean/Average</b>	1963	56-57
<b>Median</b>	1963	56-57
<b>Youngest</b>	1991	28-29
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	10.85	10.85

Table 4. House Bill 2 Vote Counts and Percentages.

	YEA	NAY
<u>PARTY</u>	---	---
Democrats	54 (98%)	1 (2%)
Republicans	0 (0%)	45 (100%)
<u>GENDER/SEX</u>	---	---
Female	23 (77%)	7 (23%)
Male	31 (44%)	39 (56%)
<u>RACE</u>	---	---
African American	16 (94%)	1 (6%)
Asian American	3 (100%)	0 (0%)
White/Caucasian	28 (39%)	44 (61%)
Hispanic/Latino	2 (66%)	1 (33%)
Other	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
Multiple Race Identifications	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
<u>RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION</u>	---	---
Buddhist	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Christian	40 (47%)	45 (53%)
Jewish	4 (100%)	0 (0%)
Muslim	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
Non-Denominational	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
Multiple Religious Affiliations	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	5 (100%)	0 (0%)
<u>EDUCATION</u>	---	---
High School	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Associate's	1 (20%)	4 (80%)
Bachelor's	13 (41%)	19 (59%)
Master's	15 (63%)	9 (37%)
Juris Doctor	18 (64%)	10 (36%)
Doctorate	5 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	2 (40%)	3 (60%)
<u>AGE</u>	---	---
53 and older (1966 and earlier)	19 (42%)	26 (58%)
53 and younger (1967 and later)	24 (59%)	17 (41%)
N/A / Not Specified	11 (79%)	3 (21%)



Table 5. House Bill 734 Vote Counts and Percentages.

	<b>YEA</b>	<b>NAY</b>
<u><i>PARTY</i></u>	---	---
Democrats	55 (100%)	0 (0%)
Republicans	33 (73%)	11 (24%)
<u><i>GENDER/SEX</i></u>	---	---
Female	29 (97%)	1 (3%)
Male	59 (84%)	10 (14%)
<u><i>RACE</i></u>	---	---
African American	17 (100%)	0 (0%)
Asian American	3 (100%)	0 (0%)
White/Caucasian	60 (83%)	11 (15%)
Hispanic/Latino	3 (100%)	0 (0%)
Other	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
Multiple Race Identifications	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
<u><i>RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION</i></u>	---	---
Buddhist	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Christian	73 (86%)	11 (13%)
Jewish	4 (100%)	0 (0%)
Muslim	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
Non-Denominational	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
Multiple Religious Affiliations	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	5 (100%)	0 (0%)
<u><i>EDUCATION</i></u>	---	---
High School	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Associate's	4 (80%)	1 (20%)
Bachelor's	28 (88%)	4 (12%)
Master's	22 (92%)	2 (8%)
Juris Doctor	24 (86%)	3 (11%)
Doctorate	5 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	4 (80%)	1 (20%)
<u><i>AGE</i></u>	---	---
53 and older (1966 and earlier)	37 (82%)	7 (16%)
53 and younger (1967 and later)	37 (90%)	4 (10%)
N/A / Not Specified	14 (100%)	0 (0%)

Table 6. House Bill 980 Vote Counts and Percentages.

	<b>YEA</b>	<b>NAY</b>
<u><i>PARTY</i></u>	---	---
Democrats	52 (95%)	1 (2%)
Republicans	0 (0%)	44 (98%)
<u><i>GENDER/SEX</i></u>	---	---
Female	23 (77%)	6 (20%)
Male	29 (41%)	39 (56%)
<u><i>RACE</i></u>	---	---
African American	14 (82%)	1 (6%)
Asian American	3 (100%)	0 (0%)
White/Caucasian	28 (39%)	43 (60%)
Hispanic/Latino	2 (66%)	1 (33%)
Other	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
Multiple Race Identifications	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
<u><i>RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION</i></u>	---	---
Buddhist	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Christian	38 (45%)	44 (52%)
Jewish	4 (100%)	0 (0%)
Muslim	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
Non-Denominational	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
Multiple Religious Affiliations	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	5 (100%)	0 (0%)
<u><i>EDUCATION</i></u>	---	---
High School	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Associate's	1 (20%)	4 (80%)
Bachelor's	11 (34%)	20 (63%)
Master's	15 (63%)	7 (29%)
Juris Doctor	18 (64%)	10 (36%)
Doctorate	5 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	2 (40%)	3 (60%)
<u><i>AGE</i></u>	---	---
53 and older (1966 and earlier)	19 (42%)	24 (53%)
53 and younger (1967 and later)	23 (56%)	17 (41%)
N/A / Not Specified	10 (71%)	4 (29%)

Table 7. House Bill 1211 Vote Counts and Percentages.

	YEA	NAY
<u>PARTY</u>	---	---
Democrats	55 (100%)	0 (0%)
Republicans	2 (4%)	42 (93%)
<u>GENDER/SEX</u>	---	---
Female	24 (80%)	6 (20%)
Male	33 (47%)	36 (51%)
<u>RACE</u>	---	---
African American	17 (100%)	0 (0%)
Asian American	3 (100%)	0 (0%)
White/Caucasian	30 (42%)	41 (57%)
Hispanic/Latino	2 (66%)	1 (33%)
Other	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
Multiple Race Identifications	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
<u>RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION</u>	---	---
Buddhist	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Christian	43 (51%)	41 (48%)
Jewish	4 (100%)	0 (0%)
Muslim	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
Non-Denominational	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
Multiple Religious Affiliations	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	5 (100%)	0 (0%)
<u>EDUCATION</u>	---	---
High School	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Associate's	1 (20%)	4 (80%)
Bachelor's	13 (41%)	18 (56%)
Master's	17 (71%)	7 (29%)
Juris Doctor	18 (64%)	10 (36%)
Doctorate	5 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	3 (60%)	2 (40%)
<u>AGE</u>	---	---
53 and older (1966 and earlier)	20 (44%)	24 (53%)
53 and younger (1967 and later)	26 (63%)	15 (37%)
N/A / Not Specified	11 (79%)	3 (21%)

Table 8. House Bill 1428 Vote Counts and Percentages.

	YEA	NAY
<u>PARTY</u>	---	---
Democrats	55 (100%)	0 (0%)
Republicans	1 (2%)	44 (98%)
<u>GENDER/SEX</u>	---	---
Female	24 (80%)	6 (20%)
Male	32 (46%)	38 (54%)
<u>RACE</u>	---	---
African American	17 (100%)	0 (0%)
Asian American	3 (100%)	0 (0%)
White/Caucasian	29 (40%)	43 (60%)
Hispanic/Latino	2 (66%)	1 (33%)
Other	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
Multiple Race Identifications	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
<u>RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION</u>	---	---
Buddhist	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Christian	42 (49%)	43 (51%)
Jewish	4 (100%)	0 (0%)
Muslim	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
Non-Denominational	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
Multiple Religious Affiliations	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	5 (100%)	0 (0%)
<u>EDUCATION</u>	---	---
High School	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Associate's	1 (20%)	4 (80%)
Bachelor's	13 (41%)	19 (59%)
Master's	17 (71%)	7 (29%)
Juris Doctor	18 (64%)	10 (36%)
Doctorate	5 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	2 (40%)	3 (60%)
<u>AGE</u>	---	---
53 and older (1966 and earlier)	20 (44%)	25 (56%)
53 and younger (1967 and later)	25 (61%)	16 (39%)
N/A / Not Specified	11 (79%)	3 (21%)

Table 9. House Bill 1508 Vote Counts and Percentages.

	<b>YEA</b>	<b>NAY</b>
<i><u>PARTY</u></i>	---	---
Democrats	55 (100%)	0 (0%)
Republicans	28 (62%)	16 (36%)
<i><u>GENDER/SEX</u></i>	---	---
Female	30 (100%)	0 (0%)
Male	53 (76%)	16 (23%)
<i><u>RACE</u></i>	---	---
African American	17 (100%)	0 (0%)
Asian American	3 (100%)	0 (0%)
White/Caucasian	55 (76%)	16 (22%)
Hispanic/Latino	3 (100%)	0 (0%)
Other	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
Multiple Race Identifications	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
<i><u>RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION</u></i>	---	---
Buddhist	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Christian	68 (80%)	16 (19%)
Jewish	4 (100%)	0 (0%)
Muslim	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
Non-Denominational	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
Multiple Religious Affiliations	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	5 (100%)	0 (0%)
<i><u>EDUCATION</u></i>	---	---
High School	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Associate's	4 (80%)	1 (20%)
Bachelor's	21 (66%)	10 (31%)
Master's	22 (92%)	2 (8%)
Juris Doctor	26 (93%)	2 (7%)
Doctorate	5 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	4 (80%)	1 (20%)
<i><u>AGE</u></i>	---	---
53 and older (1966 and earlier)	34 (76%)	10 (22%)
53 and younger (1967 and later)	36 (88%)	5 (12%)
N/A / Not Specified	13 (93%)	1 (7%)

Table 10. House Bill 1526 Vote Counts and Percentages.

	<b>YEA</b>	<b>NAY</b>
<i><u>PARTY</u></i>	---	---
Democrats	52 (95%)	2 (4%)
Republicans	0 (0%)	45 (100%)
<i><u>GENDER/SEX</u></i>	---	---
Female	24 (80%)	6 (20%)
Male	28 (40%)	41 (59%)
<i><u>RACE</u></i>	---	---
African American	17 (100%)	0 (0%)
Asian American	3 (100%)	0 (0%)
White/Caucasian	26 (36%)	45 (63%)
Hispanic/Latino	2 (66%)	1 (33%)
Other	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
Multiple Race Identifications	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
<i><u>RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION</u></i>	---	---
Buddhist	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Christian	40 (47%)	45 (53%)
Jewish	4 (100%)	0 (0%)
Muslim	0 (0%)	1 (50%)
Non-Denominational	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
Multiple Religious Affiliations	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	5 (100%)	0 (0%)
<i><u>EDUCATION</u></i>	---	---
High School	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Associate's	1 (20%)	4 (80%)
Bachelor's	13 (41%)	19 (59%)
Master's	15 (63%)	9 (37%)
Juris Doctor	18 (64%)	10 (36%)
Doctorate	4 (80%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	1 (20%)	4 (80%)
<i><u>AGE</u></i>	---	---
53 and older (1966 and earlier)	20 (44%)	25 (56%)
53 and younger (1967 and later)	22 (54%)	19 (46%)
N/A / Not Specified	10 (71%)	3 (21%)

Table 11. House Bill 1547 Vote Counts and Percentages.

	<b>YEA</b>	<b>NAY</b>
<i><u>PARTY</u></i>	---	---
Democrats	55 (100%)	0 (0%)
Republicans	1 (2%)	44 (98%)
<i><u>GENDER/SEX</u></i>	---	---
Female	24 (80%)	6 (20%)
Male	32 (46%)	38 (54%)
<i><u>RACE</u></i>	---	---
African American	17 (100%)	0 (0%)
Asian American	3 (100%)	0 (0%)
White/Caucasian	29 (40%)	43 (60%)
Hispanic/Latino	2 (66%)	1 (33%)
Other	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
Multiple Race Identifications	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
<i><u>RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION</u></i>	---	---
Buddhist	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Christian	42 (49%)	43 (51%)
Jewish	4 (100%)	0 (0%)
Muslim	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
Non-Denominational	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
Multiple Religious Affiliations	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	5 (100%)	0 (0%)
<i><u>EDUCATION</u></i>	---	---
High School	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Associate's	1 (20%)	4 (80%)
Bachelor's	13 (41%)	19 (59%)
Master's	17 (71%)	7 (29%)
Juris Doctor	18 (64%)	10 (36%)
Doctorate	5 (100%)	0 (0%)
N/A / Not Specified	2 (40%)	3 (60%)
<i><u>AGE</u></i>	---	---
53 and older (1966 and earlier)	21 (47%)	24 (53%)
53 and younger (1967 and later)	24 (59%)	17 (41%)
N/A / Not Specified	11 (79%)	3 (21%)