

Virginia Viewpoint: Reconvened Session Update

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As the dogwoods bloom, so did debate in the Capitol — where Governor Glenn Youngkin's amendments and vetoes took center stage.

On Wednesday, the Virginia General Assembly reconvened in Richmond to consider the Governor's changes to legislation and the state budget. Legislators worked into the evening, reviewing 205 budget recommendations, 8 line-item vetoes, 157 legislative vetoes, and 159 bill amendments.

Most of Governor's Recommendations Rejected; Two Vetoes Overridden

The Democratic majorities in the House and Senate largely pushed back on the Governor's proposals. Although most vetoes were upheld due to the two-thirds threshold needed to override, the House successfully overrode two budget line-item vetoes after a procedural ruling by Speaker Don Scott (D-Portsmouth).

Speaker Scott declared the Governor's vetoes — which sought to remove funding for a manufactured home acquisition program and a mortgage assistance program — out of order, arguing they attempted to strike language already embedded in the adopted two-year budget. As a result, both programs will remain funded in the budget that is sent back to the Governor for his final review.

All other vetoes, including those considered to be major Democratic priorities, were sustained. These included but are not limited to:

- Raising the minimum wage
- Establishing a paid family and medical leave program
- Creating a retail marijuana regulatory framework
- The full list of vetoes can be found [here](#).

Taxation

During the regular session, lawmakers approved raising the standard deduction and expanding the refundable Earned Income Tax Credit, but this week they rejected the Governor's proposal to make those changes permanent.

Senate Majority Leader Scott Surovell (D-Fairfax) cautioned that making the provisions permanent could lead to instability amid possible future federal budget cuts. Republicans countered that making these items permanent would offer lasting tax relief to working families.

Nevertheless, one-time tax rebates of \$200 for individuals and \$400 for joint filers remain in the budget. While Governor Youngkin initially proposed eliminating the car tax back in December, he ultimately supported the rebates as a meaningful step toward tax relief.

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Legislators upheld the full \$222.9 million allocation to eliminate the cap on school staffing support, rejecting the Governor's proposed \$138.2 million reduction. In doing so, they also rejected his proposal to redirect a portion of those funds toward new and existing lab schools and the establishment of a Virginia Opportunity Scholarship program.

However, the General Assembly did approve the Governor's proposed \$50 million for school construction, which was restored after being removed in the conference report from February.

Other key provisions that remain intact in the budget include \$1,000 teacher bonuses and \$52.78 million in special education funding, which the Governor had already accepted last week from the General Assembly's conference report.

Disaster Relief

The General Assembly approved Governor Youngkin's amendment that provides \$50 million for disaster relief following Hurricane Helene and expands the scope of recipients who are eligible for the funds.

What's Next

The budget that legislators sent back to the Governor retains the core of the bipartisan February conference agreement while reflecting a mix of concessions to the Governor and pushback on several of his proposals. Governor Youngkin now has three choices:

1. Sign the budget as passed (or let it pass without his signature)
2. Veto the entire budget
3. Extend negotiations in a special session

If a compromise cannot be reached, Virginia could continue operating under the existing biennial budget adopted last year. The Governor has until May 2 to make his final decision.

Assembly backs 33 of Youngkin's 205 proposed budget changes

By Michael Martz, Richmond Times-Dispatch (Paywall – 7 free articles per month)

General Assembly approves budget amendment to expand flood relief, fund school construction

By Elizabeth Beyer, Cardinal News

Virginia lawmakers buck Youngkin budget amendments in one-day session

By Olivia Diaz, ABC 7 News

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