

**\*MEDIA ALERT\***

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**Delegate Hope heralds progress on legislative session**

Arlington, Virginia --- Delegate Patrick Hope of Virginia House District 47 (D-Arlington), Chairman of the House Public Safety Committee, reflected on the conclusion of the Special Legislative Session on Sunday saying, **“We have made tremendous strides toward making this a more just, safe, and equitable Commonwealth. I am proud of the progress we have made and optimistic about all the progress we will continue to make for Virginians in the future.”**

Delegate Hope went on to highlight some of the important accomplishments by the General Assembly, including:

The passage of a budget providing targeted economic relief to families and businesses suffering most as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes funding public schools, pay increases for essential public employees, strategic investments in higher education, health and human resources, and equity in employment.

Investing \$173 million in healthcare, directed at providing long term care for the most vulnerable populations, expanding paid sick leave, increasing the Auxiliary Grant that supports individuals in assisted living facilities, and increasing funding to Developmental Disability waiver slots.

The continued efforts to combat the COVID-19 crisis by investing \$89.3 million to boost Virginia’s vaccination efforts and providing \$47 million to support disease surveillance and investigation, testing, and contact tracing to better protect citizens across the Commonwealth. Additionally allowing businesses to tax deduct, or be forgiven on up to \$100,000 of Paycheck Protection Plan loans and Rebuild Virginia Grants.

Further investments into expanding access to public transportation, and addressing the affordable housing crisis in Virginia, by expanding funding for the Virginia Affordable Housing Trust Fund, the Virginia Eviction Prevention and Diversion Program, the WMATA, and the Virginia Railway Express Manassas Line.

Advancing Virginia’s efforts to be more environmentally sustainable by establishing a Clean Car Standard to increase access to electric vehicles, as well as banning styrofoam containers.

Passing common sense gun safety legislation that prohibits domestic abusers from possessing a firearm, banning guns in the Capitol and at polling places, and extending the length of time to conduct a background check.

Reforming our criminal justice system through an abolition of the death penalty, legalizing marijuana, expungeemnt of certain criminal records, and a Constiitutional Amendment to restore rights.

Delegate Hope concluded by saying **“The voters elected a Democratic majority to enact positive, progressive change. I am proud of the many successes we have achieved and looking forward to the future!”**

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