

Delegate Fowler – General Assembly 2021 UPDATES

PUBLIC SAFETY

Unfortunately, the Democratic assault on public safety has stretched over two sessions. During the 2020 Special Session, House Democrats hammered law enforcement with restrictions that put them and the public in danger, and supported changes to law that could lead to law enforcement officers losing their homes to frivolous lawsuits, and generally made it easier to be a crook than a cop.

- Their focus shifted to coddling criminals in 2021, voting to reduce sentences and let more and more felons out of prison and make it harder to keep dangerous suspects behind bars.
- Democrats repealed the death penalty in Virginia for all killers, including mass murderers, terrorists, and those who kill law enforcement officers.
- Democrats also voted to make it easier for those accused of violent crimes such as rape and murder to get out of jail on bond. And if later convicted, their new parole laws put them back in your neighborhoods sooner.
- Democrats passed legislation that prevents a law enforcement officer from “pulling over” a motor vehicle with defective equipment. That’s any driver! These stops are a public service that inform motorists of safety problems and will expedite needed repairs. This legislation will definitely make Virginia roads **less safe**, and I am certain will increase the death toll on our highways.

We did win on one key issues, defeating legislation that would have reduced sentences for a number of crimes, including murder, rape, abduction, child pornography and more.

- Democrats had sought to remove almost all mandatory minimum sentences, and then give offenders a new hearing -- dragging witnesses back into court

to relieve their nightmares if they wanted to keep their assailants in jail.
Fortunately, this was defeated in the State Senate.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Continuing to clean up our streams, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay.

As a lifelong sportsman and outdoor enthusiast, the protection of Virginia's land, air, and waters for future generations is a public trust I take seriously.

On the environment, The Budget Increased funding \$69.4 million for implementing "Agricultural Best Management Practices" which will reduce stormwater run-off and improve the Water Quality of our lakes, streams, rivers, and Chesapeake Bay.

In addition, one of the largest polluters are Virginia's outdated, municipal water treatment and sewage systems. I am happy to report that the Budget also provides \$50 million in General Funds, and \$50 million in Bonds for modernizing outdated Water Treatment Plants. This will go a long way toward continuing the progress already being made. I was proud to support these budget amendments.

BROADBAND

HB 1923 Broadband capacity; expands existing pilot program, municipal broadband authorities.

Electric utilities; broadband capacity pilot program. Expands an existing pilot program under which Dominion Energy and Appalachian Power are authorized to provide or make available broadband capacity to Internet service providers in areas of the Commonwealth that are unserved by broadband to include municipal Internet service providers. The current program is restricted to nongovernmental Internet service providers. This bill is identical to [SB 1334](#). **GOOD BILL!**