

# 2023 Legislator Report Card



## Senator Mark D. Obenshain

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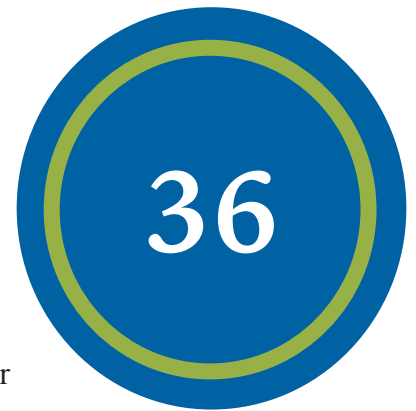
## How Legislators Made the Grade:

Ahead of the 2023 General Assembly session, Virginia Organizing developed four legislative priority areas for the upcoming year: 1) school funding; 2) housing; 3) mental health; and, 4) energy burden. In addition to those priority areas, Virginia Organizing also supports efforts to make our state income tax structure more progressive, protect abortion access, and increase investments in childcare access and affordability.

During the 2023 General Assembly session, we supported bills that met those priorities and opposed bills that undermined them. You can read more about those priorities and the bills on the reverse side.

From dozens of bills, we selected 19 with which to evaluate our representatives. Not all of the representatives we scored voted on each of the bills, because not all of the bills made it to the House or Senate floor for a full vote. On the reverse side, you can see whether this representative supported or opposed the bills they did have a say on.

We totaled those voting opportunities and then divided that number by the number of times they supported our position on a bill. This number is the score you see on the right. If a representative patroned a bill we supported, then we added one point to their score as “extra credit.” If they were a chief patron, we added two points. And if they patroned a bill we opposed, we subtracted a point. For a fuller picture of our scorecard and this process, you can use the QR code below to visit our website.



To get involved with Virginia Organizing, please contact us at [info@virginia-organizing.org](mailto:info@virginia-organizing.org) or 434-984-4655 x227.



# The Bills and How They Voted

An asterisk indicates the representative patroned the bill. Two asterisks indicate they were the Chief Patron.

<a href="#">SB1325</a> Student Support	<a href="#">SB1124</a> School Construction	<a href="#">HB1635</a> Uninhabitable Dwelling	<a href="#">SB1330</a> Extends Late Rent	<a href="#">HB1702</a> Notice of Rent Increase	<a href="#">SB802</a> Counseling Compact	<a href="#">SB1300</a> Trauma Learning Modules	<a href="#">SB1447</a> Shutoff Protections	<a href="#">SB1321</a> Affordable Energy	<a href="#">SB1333</a> Solar and Econ Development	<a href="#">SB1083</a> Shared Solar
Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No

*Virginia Organizing's efforts focused on four main legislative priorities:*

**Education:** As a member of the Fund Our School coalition, we supported full funding for the revised Standards of Quality, increased wrap-around services, additional school support staff, and better compensation for teachers and staff. We opposed the diversion of public school funding to private school vouchers and tax credits.

**Housing:** We also supported bills that provided more affordable housing and increased tenants' rights.

**Mental Health:** Mental health bills that increased the availability of quality, community-based care, that increased the number of qualified providers, and that ensured Virginians

experiencing mental health crises would not be subjected to the use of force by an untrained police response also received our support.

**Energy Burden:** Lastly, we supported bills that reduced energy burden as well as bills that protected households from utility shutoffs during weather extremes, over weekends and holidays, and for vulnerable household members such as those with a serious medical condition.

*Here is a brief summary of some of those bills:*

## Notice of Rent Increase

HB 1702 narrowly passed the House and Senate. It requires a landlord who owns more than four rental dwelling units to provide written notice to tenants notifying them of any increase in rent during the upcoming rental agreement term no less than 60 days prior to the end of the current rental agreement term. Virginia Organizing supported the bill.

## Shutoff Protections for Extreme Weather

HB2283 and its companion bill SB 1447 failed to pass. The former was defeated in committee, and the latter passed the Senate with bipartisan support before being defeated in a special House Commerce and Energy subcommittee. The bills would have directed the State Corporation Commission to prevent electric, gas, water, and wastewater utilities from shutting off customers for the nonpayment of bills during temperature weather extremes, or on a Friday,

weekend, state holiday, or day immediately preceding a state holiday. Virginia Organizing supported the bills and will continue to organize in support of such protections.

## Counseling Compact

HB 1433 and its companion bill SB 802 passed the House and Senate with broad support. The bills authorize Virginia to become a signatory to the Counseling Compact which permits eligible licensed professional counselors to practice in Compact member states, provided they are licensed in

at least one member state. Due to a continued shortage of qualified mental health professionals in the state, Virginia Organizing strongly supported these bills.

## Tax Credits for Education Improvement Scholarships

HB 1821 passed the House but was defeated in a Senate committee. The bill would have diverted funding away from public schools into the education improvement scholarships tax credit program. Virginia Organizing

## A New District

In 2021, the Supreme Court of Virginia drew new maps for congressional and state legislative districts. These new maps take effect this year for the upcoming elections. Many of our representatives will now be running in new districts. And in some new districts, incumbents will face each other in primaries. At right is a map of the new district for this representative.

