

The 2019 General Assembly session will be remembered chiefly for the scandals that put Virginia in the national media spotlight, but lawmakers passed notable measures on topics ranging from casinos and college tuition to taxes and tobacco. We are still analyzing key issues impacting the construction industry. Here are several general reasons the session mattered to you:

### SOL – failed

Our Statute of Limitations bill was adjusted from the initial industry standard of 5 years to add an additional 5 years for latent defects not to exceed 10 years. Easily sailed through the Senate and moved along well in some House Committees until it met the House Appropriations Committee. Despite our efforts to discuss the issue with the Appropriations Committee key staff and leadership. None of the House Committee members were comfortable bucking the Chairman.

They did agree to allow DGS to study themselves during the summer. We are looking into commissioning a study to better determine the impact of any statute of limitations will have on state finances.

### ABC hours

Legislators approved measures to let state liquor stores open at 10 a.m. on Sundays, rather than at noon.

### Amazon

Gov. Ralph Northam signed legislation to carry out Virginia's promises to Amazon for up to \$750 million in cash incentives for the company's \$2.5 billion headquarters in the Crystal City area of Arlington County. The incentives would not be paid until four years after the company creates 37,850 jobs.

### Health Insurance - Autism insurance added

The House and Senate passed bills that would remove the age cap on required insurance coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism. Under current law such coverage must be provided for children ages 2 through 10.

### Casinos Halted

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, would review casino laws in other states and report back to lawmakers. No real action will happen at least until 2020.

### Coal ash

The General Assembly backed legislation to clean up the state's legacy coal ash as the result of a deal between Northam, environmental groups, lawmakers from both parties and Dominion Energy. The deal would require Dominion to excavate the ponds and recycle at least a quarter of

the 27 million cubic yards of existing coal ash. The rest would be moved into new, modern landfills.

#### College tuition may be frozen

Students and their families could see some tuition relief as a result of the state budget deal, which includes \$57.7 million for colleges and universities that agree to freeze their tuition rates next year.

#### ERA ratification failed

Virginia did not become the 38th state to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. The Senate passed a ratification measure, but it was defeated in a House committee. A procedural move aimed at bringing the ratification measure to the House floor was defeated late in the session.

#### Interstate 81 improvements failed

An end-of-session bid to fund improvements to Interstate 81 fell short. Lawmakers discussed alternatives such as tolls, taxes and fees, but could not reach an agreement on the mechanism.

#### License suspensions

The Senate passed a bill to repeal a requirement to suspend the driver's license of someone who hasn't paid fines and court costs, but Republicans on a House subcommittee voted to kill the bill.

#### Medical billing transparency failed

A measure aimed at ending "surprise billing" passed the House and Senate, but was referred back to the House Appropriations Committee and failed to make it to the governor's desk. Such billing occurs when a person is unknowingly given treatment that is out of network for his or her insurance company during an emergency or elective procedure — often resulting in a significant out of pocket charge.

#### Physician assistant supervision

The General Assembly removed the requirement that physician assistants work under the supervision of a licensed doctor of medicine, osteopathy or podiatry.

#### Redistricting Commission Created

Lawmakers struck a deal to create a 16-member redistricting commission that would redraw the state's legislative and congressional district boundaries after the 2020 census.

#### School facilities funding from state failed

A special committee was convened last spring to look at school facilities across the state. Recommendations from that committee have seen mixed results.

A bill that would have put a referendum on the statewide ballot in November to give voters the chance to weigh in on how the state should pay for improvements to school facilities died in committee. Another bill to allow private companies to lease buildings to school districts with an eye toward more renewable energy passed the Senate and House.

### Taxes

Northam signed emergency legislation in mid-February to conform Virginia's tax code to changes in federal tax law. Virginians will get additional refunds of \$110 per individual and \$220 per couple, on top of what taxpayers would be owed anyway. The governor's signature on the emergency bill enabled state tax officials to start processing a backlog of about 1 million filed returns.

### University boards

The House and Senate passed legislation to put in place a two-year waiting period before a member who is leaving a university's governing board could take a job at the university.

### Voting

Lawmakers are opening the door to no-excuse absentee voting, but the limited early voting window the General Assembly is advancing may not take effect until the 2020 election. Legislation that passed the House and Senate would create a seven-day window before an election in which voters could cast ballots in person without having to give an excuse.