



TO: **Interested Parties**  
FROM: **Interim DLCC President Heather Williams**  
DATE: **June 16, 2023**  
RE: **The DLCC's Strategy to Flip the Virginia House and Defend the Senate**

There are no off years in state legislative politics, and **the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee is heading into the 2023 election season focusing on defending our majority in the Virginia Senate and taking back control of the Virginia House.** While important elections in 2024 loom on the horizon, the work at our level of the ballot is happening now, the stakes are sky-high, and there will be dire consequences if the Democratic Party neglects these critical 2023 races.

In the 2022 cycle, not only did the DLCC protect every Democratic majority, we flipped four chambers from red to blue and fundamentally shifted the legislative political landscape for this new decade. **The DLCC gave Republicans a reality check by running on protecting abortion access and creating a winning blueprint for state Democrats. Despite this, the GOP continues to double down on its losing strategy and remains dead-set on ripping reproductive rights away.** The Republican Party has continued to propose abortion bans in nearly every state, and it's clear that the only way to guarantee reproductive rights remain safe and legal in Virginia – and to protect a vital access point for millions across the South – is to win back the House and defend the Democrats' majority in the Senate.

The DLCC is committed to showing Virginians that our fundamental freedoms are on the line and our momentum has only picked up since the midterms: Democrats have landed a series of critical special election wins this year, including flipping a Virginia Senate seat in January. **This fall will be the first time Virginians are voting for a full state legislature since Roe was overturned as well as their first time voting on new district lines.** The DLCC has the strategy to win and keep the momentum for Democrats as we head into 2024.

However, big wins in state legislatures require big investments. Republicans know what is at stake and are gearing up to flood the state with spending. If we're going to win against Governor Youngkin and the MAGA GOP's massive war chest, we need to increase our level of resources. **When we have the support we need, we've proven we can beat the odds, win elections, and expand Democratic power.**

Starting with Virginia in 2023, the DLCC's bold [Path to The Majority](#) strategy to win back America's state legislatures will set the tone for 2024. There's no time to waste as Democrats have critical opportunities to win this year in Virginia and beyond. **We cannot do this alone, and we will need the full support of the Democratic Party behind us.**

## Defend the Virginia Senate

Virginia Senate Democrats successfully used their slim majority last session to block Republicans' attempts to restrict voting rights, ban abortion, and roll back critical climate actions. With only a two-seat margin in the forty-seat Virginia Senate, we are fighting to defend the Democrats' majority as a safeguard against Governor Youngkin and the MAGA GOP's destructive agenda for the Commonwealth.

The Virginia GOP continues to ignore the priorities of Virginia voters, instead choosing to attack LGBTQ+ protections, threaten reproductive rights, and hyper-politicize education. With what we know now, the path to defending our majority includes protecting our incumbents and mounting challenges with competitive candidates in districts across the state.

Top priorities for the DLCC will include protecting incumbents like **Sen. Aaron Rouse in SD-22** and **Sen. Monty Mason in SD-24** as well as supporting candidates like **Del. Schuyler VanValkenburg in SD-16** and **Del. Danica Roem in SD-30** who, after several terms in the House, are stepping up to run for the Senate in this crucial year.

## Take Back the Virginia House of Delegates

In 2021, Virginia Democrats fell just three seats shy of the majority in this 100-seat chamber. Winning this year is key for holding Governor Youngkin and his Republican allies accountable for his extremist policies that put Virginian families at risk.

Virginia House Democrats are ready to join the Senate in leveling the playing field for working families, cutting costs, and fighting tooth and nail for Virginia's workers. The contrast could not be more clear with the current Republican majority that spent the last session attempting to roll back workers' rights, putting the one percent over hardworking families, and attacking our fundamental freedoms.

In 2021, the margins were narrow with several districts being decided by just a few hundred votes. To flip the House of Delegates, the DLCC is working hand-in-hand with our state partners in key races including to help experienced legislators like **Del. Rodney Willett in HD-58** and former **Del. Joshua Cole in HD-65**; as well as strong candidates like **Joshua Thomas in HD-21** and **Michael Feggans in HD-97** to get a Democratic majority across the finish line.