



November 8, 2023

Fate of Industry Issues Problematic as Democrats Hold Senate; Take over House

In 2024, Democrats will control both branches of the Virginia General Assembly, likely by a single vote: 21-19 in the Senate and 51-49 in the House. Fighting against "jobbers are refiners" and keeping skill games operating just became more difficult. Readers will remember that the state Senate passed the "jobbers are refiners" bill on a party line vote of 20-18, where it was later defeated in a House committee. The two Democrats who will take over committees overseeing gaming bills have already come out in opposition to legislation to allow continued operation of skill games.

When looking at the reasons behind yesterday's results you don't have to look any further than the US Supreme Court. In voting to overturn Roe vs Wade and return authority to individual states to regulate the procedure, Virginia became the last southern state without significant restrictions on abortion. That opened the floodgates of national contributions- much of them from dark money groups based outside of the Commonwealth who don't have to report where their contributions come from.. Whether or not you agree with their tactics, it was a very disciplined and effective effort, and certainly made the difference in putting the Democrats in charge in January.

Next year we will have a new House speaker, the fourth in six years. The likely pick, Delegate Don Scott from Portsmouth, has only been in the House for four years and has not served on committees we traditionally work with. Our strength of membership traditionally has been in rural and suburban Virginia, but the next General Assembly will see over 40 percent new members - most of them coming from the population centers in Northern Virginia, Richmond and Hampton Roads.

In 2020 under Democratic control the General Assembly passed a law mandating that we comply with California clean car standards and banned the sale of internal combustion engines after 2035. That law will now likely go into effect as scheduled, with collateral damage likely inflicted on Virginians who can't afford EV's.

In closing, we need to remember that Glenn Youngkin sits in the governor's mansion for two more years. We will not be seeing a repeat of the one party rule we saw in 2020-2021. Should negative legislation emerge from the General Assembly, we hopefully will have the opportunity make our case to the governor's office and for that we should all be thankful.