Dataset Measures and Methodology

All 100 members of the 2020 Va. House were included in this dataset, listed 1-100 by district. Information about delegates was collected from pre-existing databases and compiled into the dataset; demographic information on delegates was collected from the Virginia General Assembly's House member listings[1], and information on bills and votes was collected from the Virginia Legislative Information System (LIS)[2].

Delegate Demographics

Demographic information for the members of the 2020 Va. House of Delegates was collected from the listing of 2020 House members on the Virginia General Assembly's website[3], under each delegate's self-reported "personal information." Some members did not provide information on certain factors (e.g. no birth year provided) or were unclear (e.g. for education, a college/university was listed but the level of the degree was not). This information was not included in the dataset so as to not make assumptions regarding any delegate's demographic identifiers, as well as to maintain consistency in the data as being self-reported; unavailable demographic data was coded as "XXXXX."

Political affiliation. Democrat or Republican. Delegates identified as one or the other.

Gender identity/sex. Female or male. Delegates identified as one or the other.

Race. African American, Asian American, Hispanic/Latino White/Caucasian, or Other[4]. Delegates could identify with one or multiple races. If a delegate identified with multiple racial backgrounds, their race identification was coded as "multiple race identifications."

Religious affiliation. Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Non-denominational, or

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[1] Virginia House of Delegates Member Listings.
[2] Virginia Legislative Information System: 2020 Session.
[3] https://virginiageneralassembly.gov/house/members/members.php
[4] Racial identities used by House Delegates on the Virginia House of Delegates Member Listings.

"multiple religious affiliations." Subsects of Christianity (Baptist, Catholic, Episcopalian, Methodist, Presbyterian, Protestant, Quaker, Unitarian) were grouped together under Christian affiliation in the dataset[5], with a breakdown of affiliation across subsects of Christianity among Christian members of the Va. House included in a separate column. For non-Christian religions, "NA" was recorded under the column for Christian subsects.

Highest level of education. (Lowest) High School, Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's Juris Doctor, Doctorate (Highest). The highest level of diploma/degree reported to have been complete was recorded as each delegate's highest level of education. Medical doctoral degrees were coded as Doctorate degrees in this study. A Doctorate was considered to be higher than a Juris Doctor, as the U.S. Census Bureau[6] records Doctorate degrees as higher than professional degrees and includes Juris Doctors under the professional degree designation.

Age. Delegates could report their birth year. Their birth year was recorded, as were the potential "high" and "low" ages based on that birth year (e.g. a delegate born in 1970 was also recorded as having a potential "high" age of 50 and "low" age of 49, based on their birth year).

House Bills

Slightly over 1,700 House Bills were proposed in the Va. House of Delegates during the 2020 General Assembly session[7]. A sample of House Bills were selected for this study from the Virginia Legislative Information System (LIS) in accordance with the following methodology and exclusions.

⇒ Only House Bills which saw a floor vote were considered. Bills that did not make it to the House floor from committee were not recorded in the dataset. These bills were not

[5] Many delegates self-reported as being affiliated with their respective subsect of Christianity. Subsects of Christianity were grouped together under Christian affiliation for ease of analysis of religious affiliation.
[6] United States Census Bureau.
[7] Virginia Legislative Information System: 2020 Session.

considered because without a floor vote, voting behavior of all delegates cannot be collected on these bills. Reasons that bills did not make it to a House floor vote included being stricken from the docket, continued to a later legislative session, left in committee, or incorporated into another bill.

⇒ House Bills that were a part of a block vote were not considered for purposes of this study. This is because in a block vote, multiple bills are voted on together rather than individually. Because bills are voted on as a group (a "block") rather than individually, block votes do not necessarily lend individual consideration to bills, as was preferred for this study.

⇒ If a bill was voted on to be reconsidered, the most recent/final act on the bill was included. If a bill was reconsidered and subsequently met one of the aforementioned criteria (i.e. no floor vote or included in a block vote), then the bill was appropriately excluded from the dataset. If a bill was reconsidered and subsequently subject to a floor vote, that most recent/final floor vote was recorded. This is because these were the final acts by the House on said bill.

⇒ In some cases, there were floor votes on whether a bill reported from a House committee ought to be engrossed[8]. In the case that this vote on a bill's engrossment was the final floor vote on said bill (i.e., engrossment of the bill was rejected by a House floor vote), this vote was still considered and recorded because (1) as a floor vote, all members of the House voted and (2) it would be the final action by the House on the bill.

⇒ Only actions by the House were considered for purposes of this study, as the focus of the study was on the House of Delegates irrespective of their interactions with the Virginia

[8] Engrossment is the formal reprinting of the bill in the form in which it will be considered for final vote of passage. A vote on a bill's engrossment is essentially a vote on whether to accept that particular version of the bill.

Senate or the Office of the Governor. Any Senate or Governor actions (e.g. proposed amendments, whether the bill ultimately passed or was rejected) were not considered. A consequence of this is that the vote recorded for a particular bill may not necessarily represent the final result of that bill's passing, and in the case of any amendments it may not necessarily represent a vote on the final version of the bill. This does, however, ensure that each bill considered was at the same stage as others considered when votes were collected – that is, votes on each bill were collected at the stage when the passage or rejection of the House version of the bill was under consideration.

House Bill Subjects

LIS features an index of bills coded by subject. Bills considered in this study were collected by subject and coded in accordance with the LIS index so as to maintain an objective standard in determining the subject of a given bill. Some bills are included under just one subject, while others may be included under multiple subjects, where appropriate. If a subject did not have any House Bills for the 2020 session, or if all of the bills in a particular subject were excluded, then that subject was excluded from the dataset. The following subjects were collected and included in the dataset:

- Administration of Government
- Agriculture, Animal Care and Food
- Alcoholic Beverage Control Act
- Appropriations
- Armed Forces
- Authorities
- Aviation
- Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
- Charters
- Civil Remedies and Procedure
- Commissions, Boards and Institutions Generally
- Commonwealth Public Safety
- Computer Services and Uses
- Conservation
- Contracts
- Counties, Cities and Towns
- Courts Not of Record
- Courts of Record
- Crimes and Offenses Generally
- Criminal Procedure
- Domestic Relations
- Eastern Shore of Virginia
- Education
- Elections
- Emergency Legislation
- Emergency Services and Vehicles

- Energy Conservation and Resources
- Financial Institutions and Services
- Fisheries and Habitat of the Tidal Waters
- Gambling, Lotteries, Etc.
- Game, Inland Fisheries and Boating
- General Assembly
- Governor
- Hampton Roads Area
- Hazardous Substances or Chemicals
- Health
- Highways, Bridges and Ferries
- Housing
- Hunting Laws and Permits
- Income Tax
- Insurance
- Judges, Justices and Other Elective Officers
- Labor and Employment
- Libraries
- Licenses, Business
- Military and Emergency Laws
- Mines and Mining
- Minors
- Motor Vehicles
- Narcotics and Drugs
- Northern Virginia
- Partnerships
- Pensions, Benefits and Retirement
- Personal Property and Personal Property Tax
- Persons with Disabilities
- Police
- Police, State
- Prisons and Other Methods of Correction
- Professions and Occupations
- Property and Conveyances
- Public Buildings, Facilities and Property
- Public Service Companies
- Real Estate and Real Estate Tax
- Sales and Use Tax
- Sporting Exhibitions, Events and Facilities
- State Corporation Commission
- Study Commissions, Committees and Reports
- Taxation
- Tobacco and Tobacco Products
- Trade and Commerce
- Transportation
- Unemployment Compensation
- United States Government
- Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area
- Waste Disposal
- Water and Sewer Systems
- Waters of the State, Ports and Harbors
- Weapons
- Welfare (Social Services)
- Wills, Trusts, and Fiduciaries
- Workers' Compensation

Delegate Votes

This study observed delegate votes of "YEA" and "NAY." In the dataset, votes were coded as "YEA" = 1 and "NAY" = 0. Only the most recent floor votes for a bill ("House: VOTE" on LIS) were considered (see above section on House Bills for clarification on the selection of bills for consideration and which House action was recorded in the dataset). In some cases, delegates were recorded as having "intended" to vote differently than how they did (e.g. a delegate may have voted YEA but be recorded as having "intended" to vote NAY). Delegates were recorded as they voted regardless of how they "intended" to vote because ultimately their actions – not intended actions – determine whether a bill passes or is rejected by the House. Additionally, if a delegate did not vote or abstained from voting on a particular bill that vote was not included and was coded as "9999" (excluded variable) in the dataset. Information for all other YEA- or NAY-voting delegates was recorded as appropriate.

Dataset Structure and Design

The dataset contains the information collected on delegate demographics and voting behavior, with information sectioned by columns. The first section lists the delegates by name and district. Following that is the section on delegate demographics, with information on political affiliation, gender/sex, race, religious affiliation (including Christianity subsect if applicable), highest level of education, and birth year (including a corresponding "high" and "low" age for that year. The following, and largest, section is that of House Bills and delegate votes. House Bills are separated by subject, in alphabetical order.

There is also a second sheet in which duplicate bills have been removed (some bills were indexed under more than one bill subject in the main dataset). The information on delegate demographics is identical to the main dataset on the first sheet. In the section on House Bills and

delegate votes, however, bills are not separated by subject, and each bill is only listed once. The corresponding information on delegate votes for each bill is identical to the first sheet.

Data was collected for each member of the 2020 Va. House of Delegates in accordance with the previously discussed conditions. Demographic data for each delegate was collected first, using members' personal/biographical information as reported on the Va. General Assembly's House of Delegates Member Listings. After all demographic data was collected, data on delegate votes was collected from Virginia's Legislative Information System by subject; all bills under a certain subject were identified, appropriate exclusions were made, and information on how delegates voted was collected.

Dataset information excerpted from:

2020 House of Delegates: Demographics and Voting Behavior

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