

SENATE OF VIRGINIA

SCOTT A. SUROVELL
MAJORITY LEADER
34TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT
PART OF FAIRFAX COUNTY

P.O. BOX 289
MOUNT VERNON, VIRGINIA 22121



COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
COURTS OF JUSTICE, CHAIR
COMMERCE AND LABOR
FINANCE AND APPROPRIATIONS
REHABILITATION AND SOCIAL
SERVICES
RULES

August 28, 2025

Honorable Glenn Youngkin
Governor of Virginia
Patrick Henry Building
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

re: Appointments to Boards of Visitors

Dear Governor Youngkin:

We write to you as the leadership of the Virginia Senate to express our serious concerns regarding your recent appointments to the Boards of Visitors of Virginia's public universities and to respectfully request that you suspend any further appointments to the boards of the University of Virginia, George Mason University, and Virginia Military Institute.

Over the past two months, the Senate has been compelled to reject twenty-two of your nominees to these critical governing bodies. This unprecedented level of rejection reflects not partisan obstruction, but genuine concerns about the qualifications, backgrounds, and intentions of your appointees. The pattern of inappropriate nominations and acquiescence to outside political influence has created significant uncertainty and instability within our higher education system at a time when these institutions need steady, qualified leadership.

Our universities face mounting challenges, including potential federal investigations and pressure from the new Trump Administration's Department of Justice, threats to our international student admissions, and research dollars. There is now a vacancy as the presidency of the University of Virginia due to its board's failure to defend the school. Rather than providing these institutions with the stable, experienced governance they desperately need to navigate these turbulent waters, your appointments have often introduced additional controversy and division and abdicated their responsibilities. At this critical juncture, our universities require board members who can unite rather than divide, who possess relevant experience in higher education governance, and who are committed to protecting academic freedom and institutional integrity.

The continuing cycle of nominations and rejections serves no one's interests. It wastes valuable time and resources, creates ongoing uncertainty for university administrators, faculty, and students, and undermines public confidence in our higher education system. Most importantly, it leaves these vital

institutions vulnerable at a moment when they need strong, consensus leadership to protect their missions and values.

Future board members should participate in that decision and we also intend to propose significant reforms to how Visitors are nominated and confirmed in the 2026 Regular Session and further appointments to these boards in the interim would be unwise.

We therefore respectfully request that you suspend further appointments to these boards pending meaningful consultation with Senate leadership. We stand ready to work with you to identify qualified nominees who can earn broad support and provide the stable governance our universities deserve. Virginia's higher education system is too important to become a casualty of political discord.

We look forward to your response and to working together in the best interests of Virginia's students and institutions of higher learning.

Respectfully,



Senator Scott A. Surovell
34th District
Senate Majority Leader



Senator L. Louise Lucas
18th District
Senate President Pro Tempore



Senator Mamie E. Locke
23rd District
Senate Democratic Caucus
Chairman

cc: Senator Ghazala Hashmi, Chairman, Senate Education and Health Committee
Senator Aaron R. Rouse, Chairman, Senate Privileges & Elections Committee
Speaker Don L. Scott
Majority Leader Charniele D. Herring
Delegate Sam Rasoul, Chairman, House Education Committee
President Paul F. Mahoney, University of Virginia
President Gregory Washington, George Mason University
Superintendent David Furness, Virginia Military Institute