

A Resource For Reporters

Covering the 2013
Virginia General Assembly

Produced by



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www.vapress.org

About the VCCA

The Virginia Capitol Correspondents Association is among the nation's oldest organizations advocating for journalists who cover state legislatures.

The VCCA is a not-for-profit organization based in Richmond, Virginia, made up of **print, broadcast and on-line professional journalists** whose primary responsibility is to cover state government and the General Assembly. Its members reach millions of viewers, listeners, and readers daily throughout Virginia and beyond through their reporting.

The association's primary purpose is to represent the interest of its journalist members in the pursuit of their duties in reporting on state government and to advance the ideals of free and responsible news media.

The VCCA also makes recommendations governing press credentials to the General Assembly for media access to the House and Senate floors and the legislative press galleries, as well as for assigning available space in pressroom facilities on Capitol Square.

(VCCA bylaws available at www.virginiapress.org.)

About Capitol Square

The Capitol and the buildings that comprise the seat of government and the campus on which they stand in downtown Richmond are commonly known as Capitol Square.

Nearly all the news to be covered will be chiefly in three buildings.

THE CAPITOL. The original central portion, designed by Thomas Jefferson, was completed in the early 19th century and once housed the Confederate Congress. Its wings were completed in the early 20th century. The East Wing serves the House of Delegates. The West Wing serves the Senate. The legislature holds its floor sessions in these chambers.

In 2007, construction was completed on what is known as the Extension. It is beneath the South Lawn of the Capitol grounds and contains two large meeting rooms (House Room 3 and Senate Room 3) as well as a café, a gift shop, interpretive displays for tourists and visitors and, on the plaza level, the primary media filing room. The entrance is the public entryway to the Capitol, with doors on Bank Street.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUILDING. This 11-story building, known as "the GAB," occupies the northwest corner of Capitol Square

(intersection of 9th and Broad streets). It houses the offices of House and Senate members, the staffs for legislative committees and legislative agencies such as the Department of Legislative Automated Services. Most legislative committee meetings are held in this building, chiefly on the bottom floor (Senate Rooms A and B; House Rooms C and D). Important meetings of money committees are held on the 9th Floor (House Appropriations) and the 10th floor (Senate Finance). In the basement of the GAB is a second press filing room.

THE PATRICK HENRY BUILDING. Once the home of the Library of Virginia and the Supreme Court of Virginia, this cube-shaped structure sits on the northeast corner of Capitol Square. It serves as the executive office building for Virginia government. On the third floor is the office of the governor and some of his key cabinet members. There is a conference room on that floor where many of the governor's news conferences are held. On the ground floor are two large meeting and multi-purpose rooms that were once state library reading rooms and served as chambers for the House and Senate in 2006-2007 when the Capitol was being renovated.

2013 Session Timeline

Monday 12/17/2012	Wednesday 1/9/2013 *	Friday 1/18/2013*	Tuesday 2/5/2013*	Wednesday 2/6/2013*	Wednesday 2/13/2013*	Saturday 2/23/2013*	Wednesday 4/3/2013*
<i>Gov. Bob McDonnell presents budget amendments to the House and Senate money committees, 9:30 a.m., House Room D, General Assembly Building.</i>	<i>The General Assembly convenes at noon in the Capitol. McDonnell delivers his State of the Commonwealth in the House chamber at 7 p.m.</i>	<i>Deadline for filing bills is 3 p.m.</i>	<i>Crossover, the deadline for each chamber to finish action on its own legislation.</i>	<i>The Annual Virginia Capitol Correspondents Association Dinner. Venue and speakers to be announced. 6 p.m.</i>	<i>Scheduled start of the House and Senate conference on the budget bill.</i>	<i>Scheduled adjournment sine die. VCCA adjournment celebration in Capitol press room shortly afterward, time permitting.</i>	<i>One-day reconvened session to consider the governor's amendments and vetoes to legislation passed in the 2013 session.</i>

* Tentative; dates subject to final approval on Dec. 17 by the Joint Rules Committee.

Protocols for Journalists

The House and the Senate set conditions for journalists covering their chambers. They are enforced by sergeants at arms and doorkeepers of the respective houses, and vary according to medium. Here are a few major points.

ACCESS: Press corps access cards are available through the Department of General Services. The card is necessary for access in many places on Capitol Square, including the Capitol Press Room. A card does not entitle its holder to work space in the Capitol Press Room. The card is necessary for access to the Capitol and the GAB after hours. They are valid for one year. An application form is on Page 5. If you have questions, please contact Jay Braxton, room 424-A in the GAB, at (804) 698-1552. Other phone numbers and e-mail addresses are available on the application form. **ACT BEFORE JANUARY** to ensure you have your pass by the session's start.

WORK SPACE: The clerks of the House and Senate delegate to the VCCA the responsibility allocating work space for journalists in the Capitol and the GAB. To request space, contact the VCCA president. *(Currently Anne Marie Morgan. See the VCCA Web site.)*

DRESS: Rules of both the House and the Senate require business dress for admittance to the floor by all journalists, writers or photographers. Men and women are expected to wear a blazer. A collared shirt with a tie are required for men in the Senate. Blue jeans are not permitted. Reporters who do not meet those dress requirements may be seated in the House or Senate gallery if space is available. House and Senate sessions may also be viewed in both press rooms and in committee rooms on the first floor of the capitol directly below each chamber.

SEATING: On the House floor, a few seats are reserved for journalists around the rear walls of the chamber. In the Senate, about eight spaces are available at two tables to the right or left of the dais in the well of the chamber. They are available on a first-come, first-serve basis in either chamber to credentialed press.

INTERVIEWS: Interviews are not to be conducted in either the House or Senate while either is conducting business. Interviews may be conducted in the House in approved areas at the rear or the chamber or outside the chamber after the House is in recess or is adjourned for the day. Journalists may not walk down any aisle to approach a member at his or her desk in the House. In the Senate, interviews with senators are off-limits until at least five minutes after the Senate has adjourned or until the senator has left the chamber. Interviews may not obstruct flow in hallways leading into or out of the chamber.

PHOTOS/VIDEO: Photographers' rules vary. Details and maps of areas accessible to photographers and other issues are in the Media Guide and Directory. Guides are available online. **See below for a link.**

http://hodcap.state.va.us/publications/09_media_guide.pdf

Become Part of the VCCA

For generations, the VCCA has acted as an advocate for journalists who cover the Virginia General Assembly and an intermediary working constructively with lawmakers and the House and Senate clerks and their staffs. If you're covering the Capitol this year, particularly if you're new, let us help you.

TO JOIN:

Annual cost of membership is \$55, which includes the cost of the VCCA dinner and other events, inclusion on the Website, notification of events and information and representation to outside groups and government. 2012-2013 dues must be paid by Feb. 15.

THE DINNER:

The VCCA's annual dinner is a milestone in every legislative session. It marks the midway point of every General Assembly, falling each year on the Wednesday after Crossover. The 2013 dinner is Wednesday, Feb. 6, in downtown Richmond. The dinner also will include the election of association officers and the recognition of inductees into the VCCA's Hall of Fame, which honors journalists who have excelled in coverage of state politics and government. The cost is \$55 for members of the media and \$65 for all others. Location: To be determined.

Wear your colors!

VCCA LOGO T-SHIRTS NOW ON SALE

The VCCA is selling white short sleeved T-shirts with the official VCCA logo on the front and "Covering Virginia government since 1619."

Buy now at \$15 each!

Available in M, L and XL sizes.

To order, contact

Anne Marie Morgan at ammcapitol@yahoo.com.



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PRESS Identification/Access Card Form

For state employees to receive a new access card, change access level, update employee information, or replace a card, please complete and submit this form to your Agency Card Coordinator.

EMPLOYEE Information		
Last Name:	First Name:	MI:
Position Title: Press		Reporter/Crew
News Outlet:		
Building Name/Address: State Capitol and General Assembly Building		Floor/Room Number: Press Room
Email:		Work Phone:

The undersigned acknowledges receipt of the Identification/Access Card supplied by the Department of General Services. By accepting this Card, I agree that I will:

- Use the card only for my identification and authorized access to state facilities,
- Safeguard the Card and not allow it to be used by anyone else,
- Notify the Agency Coordinator immediately if the Card is lost or stolen,
- Pay the \$15.00 fee if my Card needs to be replaced, and,
- Return the Card to the Agency Coordinator immediately upon termination of my employment.

Employee Signature:	Date:
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ACTION REQUESTED				
New Employee Start Date: New: Rehire: Transfer:		Access Level Change:		
Termination : Effective Date:		Replace Card Broken: Lost: Stolen: Name Change:		
Building No.:	Access Group:	Access Level:	Effective Date:	Expiration Date:
741	Loading Dock and Perimeter	7x24	Current	
738	H6	7X24	Current	

Signature of Agency Supervisor:	Date:
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Signature of Agency Head or Designee: (Designees must be on file with DGS)	Date:
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Access Card Number:	Date:
Access Card Number:	Date:

APPRECIATION

Thanks for their help and cooperation in this effort go to the offices of

The Clerk of the House of Delegates

G. Paul Nardo

and

The Clerk of the Senate

Susan Clarke Schaar

This publication is authorized and published by the Virginia Capitol Correspondents Association.

Its officers through Feb. 6, 2013 are:

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