

# Daily Press

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## Voters say 'yes' to redistricting

Decision will reshape maps to favor Dems; issue still faces GOP-led legal challenge

By Natalie Anderson  
STAFF WRITER

Democrats hoping to flip Republican control of the U.S. House of Representatives in this year's midterm elections scored an advantage Tuesday with Virginia's approval of congressional redistricting likely to net them four additional seats.

approved a ballot referendum that allows for mid-decade redrawing of congressional maps following a contentious, months-long battle that drew political heavyweights from across the nation. Associated Press called the election just before 9 p.m. Tuesday. With 97% of all votes counted, unofficial results show 51.4% in support of the referendum and 48.6% against it. Upwards of 3 million people out of Virginia's 6.4 million registered voters cast ballots in the election.

Under the maps approved Tuesday, 10 of Virginia's congressional districts would favor Democrats and one would favor Republicans. Democrats currently hold six

congressional seats and Republicans have five. The temporary measure will be in effect for the midterm elections before resuming Virginia's standard redistricting process — led by an independent commission — following the 2030 census.

Various groups campaigning on the issue spent millions to sway voters, deploying a steady deluge of mailers and TV ads.

For Democrats, the referendum was a national fight for "fair elections" and to "level the playing field" in response to recent redistricting in other states that's favorable to



A yard sign in support of voting yes for redistricting is seen in the Ghent area of Norfolk on March 17. KENDALL WARNER/THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

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Virginia Beach police officers talk to pedestrians on Atlantic Avenue on Friday about where they are allowed to travel during the all ages curfew at the Oceanfront. PETER CASEY/THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

## What experts say can, and can't, curb violence at the Oceanfront

Violence interruption program advocates see initiative as complement to policing

By Nori Leybengrub  
STAFF WRITER

Over 20 people have been injured across three shootings in Virginia Beach this spring.

In his sixth year heading the city's police force, Police Chief

Paul Neudigate said it's become an expectation to see a rise in shootings, assaults, gun seizures and arrests during March and April at the Oceanfront.

It's why he urged city leaders to consider implementing a curfew for all ages last week, and why a

majority of City Council members decided to pass it.

Practically everyone was prohibited from being out at the Oceanfront after 9:30 p.m. last Friday and Saturday nights, and youth can't be out without an adult beginning at 7 p.m.

No shootings were reported. But criticism of the curfew — from business owners to residents — have caused many in Virginia

Beach to start asking what the city can do to prevent the seasonal surges in violent crime.

DISRESPECT ISN'T A CRIME, BUT ...

Darrell Redmond heads Portsmouth United — a community-based initiative that trains and deploys community members

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## Lawmakers reject gun, cannabis amendments

Spanberger still has veto power on legislation

By Kate Seltzer  
STAFF WRITER

RICHMOND — The General Assembly effectively rejected a number of Gov. Abigail Spanberger's proposed amendments to key policies, including the creation of a legal retail cannabis market, a ban on assault weapons and allowing public sector employees to collectively bargain. The legislature reconvened Wednesday to take up the governor's proposed amendments and vetoes.

Both the Democrat-controlled House of Delegates and the Senate voted to pass by those amended bills and others. That means the bills as they initially passed the legislature will head back to Spanberger's desk for take-it-or-leave-it signing or vetoes — she'll either have to accept versions of the legislation she was initially unhappy with or risk angering her own party with outright rejections. The governor will have another 30 days to make the decision.

Here are some amendments the legislature shut down Wednesday.

### CANNABIS

Spanberger's rewrite of the retail cannabis legislation introduced new criminal penalties and scrapped language specifying how tax revenue generated from sales would benefit historically disadvantaged groups. The bill's sponsors initially said they could live with the changes but cautioned there were concerns about fairness and public safety.

If Spanberger vetoes the legislation without the amendments, Virginians' ability to legally buy and sell cannabis would be pushed off yet again. The commonwealth has existed in a legal limbo since decriminalization was passed in 2021, insofar as Virginians can possess small quantities of cannabis but not buy or sell it.

Likewise, the legislature passed by an amended bill that would create a process for people previously convicted of cannabis

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## Iran fires on ships as diplomacy stalls

By Jon Gambrell and David Rising  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iran fired on three ships in the Strait of Hormuz and seized two of them Wednesday, intensifying its assault on shipping in the key waterway. The attacks came a day after

President Donald Trump extended a ceasefire while maintaining an American blockade of Iranian ports.

Iran taking control of two ships didn't violate truce terms because "these were not U.S. or Israeli ships, these were two international vessels," White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt told Fox News Channel.

Leavitt also told reporters that Trump hasn't set a deadline for receiving a proposal from the Iranians.

The standoff between the U.S. and Iran has effectively choked off nearly all exports through the strait — where 20% of the world's

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21-year-old woman charged after car wreck at Oceanfront. Page 2

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Our view: Redistricting vote outcome will resonate beyond November midterms. Opinion, Page 11

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