

SPANBERGER FOR GOVERNOR

GROWING VIRGINIA PLAN



**“I want to protect
the financial security
and opportunities
of everyone who calls
our Commonwealth
home.”**

ABIGAIL SPANBERGER

A message from Abigail Spanberger.

As a proud Virginian, I want to build an economy where every Virginian can earn a good living, afford to take care of their families, and know they'll have a secure retirement — and where businesses know that the next generation of Virginians is prepared for 21st-century jobs.

To achieve these goals, I will use the full power of the Governor's office to grow our workforce, grow trade opportunities, and grow business investment in Virginia. Together, we will protect the Commonwealth from the chaos of Washington, cultivate a supportive business environment, and better equip the next generation of Virginians with the tools they need to succeed.

Enclosed is my plan to grow Virginia's economy the right way and put Virginia on the path toward reclaiming our place as "America's Top State for Business."

Whether we agree or disagree on every issue, I hope all Virginians can agree on the need to keep Virginia's economy competitive. Protecting Virginia's economy should be a bipartisan priority.

Together, we can get our economy back on track, lower costs for families and businesses, and create more opportunity for all Virginians.



Growing Virginia's Workforce.

As a proud product of Virginia public schools, Abigail believes that all Virginians should have access to the education, training, and mentorship they need to succeed in the 21st-century economy. She also knows that Virginia businesses need to have reliable access to the talent required to maintain a competitive advantage over their rivals across the country and around the world. Abigail believes in building an economy where every Virginian can earn a good living, take care of their families, and know they'll have a secure retirement — and where businesses know that the next generation of Virginians is prepared to fill vacancies in growing industries.

Boost pathways to registered apprenticeship programs for middle and high school students.

Increase awareness of registered apprenticeships for students in middle and high school. Bring nonprofit organizations, unions, skilled trades, community leaders, business owners, and school divisions together to expand pre-apprenticeship programs that give students hands-on experience and create pathways to registered apprenticeship programs, which lead to family-sustaining careers in Virginia.

Provide students with meaningful, career-ready experiences by expanding access to paid internships and other work-based learning opportunities.

Increase access to paid internships for Virginia students in high school, community college, and four-year colleges and universities. Establish a statewide, work-based learning strategy in partnership with businesses of all sizes to increase access to paid internships for the next generation of talent. Direct the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) to work with institutions on partnering with businesses to facilitate the creation of on-campus internship centers, particularly for colleges in rural or



underserved communities. Direct SCHEV, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) to work with businesses of all sizes, local governments, and school divisions to create online resources that easily connect students in high school and postsecondary school with internship opportunities.

Expand opportunities for high school students to earn college credits in high school and accelerate pathways to jobs. Work with community colleges and K-12 schools to expand the availability of free dual-enrollment courses for high school students, particularly in courses for industries experiencing workforce shortages, like early childhood education and healthcare.

Prepare students in middle and high school with real-world applications of skills in high-demand and emerging industries. Leveraging input from school divisions with successful programs, direct VDOE to create a toolkit for school divisions to expand career academies and other career and technical education programs. Encourage collaboration among school divisions, local businesses, community colleges, and regional partners to connect students with jobs in high-demand fields in their region.

Prepare the next generation of Virginians for 21st-century jobs. Develop a plan for school divisions, research institutions, and businesses to collaboratively prepare students by leveraging artificial intelligence and emerging technologies for jobs of the future. Make sure our education system is able to stay flexible and meet employer demands by streamlining regulatory approval for new academic programs to better align with changing workforce needs.

Make it easier for Virginians to map potential career paths and connect with employers. Promote greater transparency and information on the availability, cost, skills, and demand for credentials available to workers in Virginia. Support the streamlining of workforce development initiatives to make it easier for employers and job seekers to connect.



Reduce barriers to work and support the creation of quality jobs. Establish a statewide paid family and medical leave program, enforce Virginia's prevailing wage laws, increase supply of and access to affordable housing, utilize Project Labor Agreements for large state-funded projects, guarantee paid sick leave, raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, and increase reliable access to affordable childcare.

Address current workforce shortages, particularly in the areas of manufacturing, healthcare, education, and other high-demand occupations. Make it easier for students educated in Virginia to train in Virginia, particularly for areas suffering from critical shortages like mental health providers. Increase access to grow-your-own programs and teacher residency programs to mitigate teacher shortages. Strengthen the G3 and Fast Forward programs, which help low- and middle-income students earn credentials in high-demand industries.

Support Virginia workers impacted by chaos in Washington. Instead of mocking and blaming workers fired by DOGE, direct the full power of the Governor's office to fight for all Virginians when it comes to Washington, DC. Work with the Attorney General of Virginia to fight for legal protections for fired federal workers, contractors, and others. Direct the Virginia Board of Workforce Development, Virginia Works, and VEDP to develop recommendations for adjacent job opportunities for fired federal workers and contractors based on transferrable skills, current workforce shortages, and growing industries in Virginia. Improve access to and awareness of one-on-one career mentoring services for impacted Virginians.

Growing business investment in Virginia.

Abigail wants to bring Virginia back to its rank as "America's Top State for Business." In Congress, Abigail built a record of working with both Democrats and Republicans to invest in Virginia's physical infrastructure, create a competitive business climate, and equip the next generation of workers with the tools they need to succeed. As the next Governor of Virginia, Abigail will lead efforts to champion each of Virginia's unique regions, bring new economic investment to Virginia, and grow businesses in Virginia. She knows that businesses considering starting or expanding in Virginia need reliable and predictable governance. She

also knows that each of Virginia's regions have their own unique strengths and challenges – there isn't a one-size-fits-all solution to economic development in the Commonwealth.

The Spanberger Administration's plan will not only champion economic development in every corner of Virginia, but it will stress the importance of factors that bring new businesses to Virginia and grow businesses in Virginia — including a skilled and prepared workforce, reliable infrastructure, affordable and quality healthcare, affordable childcare and housing for employees, and strong public schools.

Demonstrate to new or expanding businesses why Virginia is the best place to start or grow their operations.

Bolster marketing efforts within the Virginia Economic Development Partnership to more aggressively promote Virginia's strengths to entrepreneurs and businesses of all sizes. Encourage continued use of custom incentives like the Virginia Talent Accelerator Program, where the Commonwealth is expected to get a return on its investment due to the creation of new jobs and economic activity.

Make sure locations across Virginia are prepared for businesses interested in coming to or expanding in Virginia.

Strengthen the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program and related efforts to support statewide site development. Direct state



resources and support for localities and regions to get locations site-ready. Leverage private capital and major employers in co-funding site readiness improvements.

Leverage the unique strengths of each region of the Commonwealth to help bridge regional economic divides. Increase and protect investments in standard infrastructure like water, sewer, roads, and broadband internet in Virginia's rural areas. Encourage regional coordination among economic development associations. Review the GO Virginia program to increase flexibility and maximize impact. Work with energy companies and economic development agencies to encourage better alignment among energy needs, resources, and grid infrastructure.

Bolster partnerships between entrepreneurs, institutions of higher education, federal installations, and industries to spur innovation. Work with Virginia's world-class colleges and universities, the business community, and regional partners to commercialize research and development in emerging industries. Connect investors and the private sector to these innovations, to spur the use of groundbreaking research by Virginia companies.

Provide support for small businesses to start and grow in Virginia, including minority, women, and veteran-owned businesses. Direct the state to work with localities and the business community to establish an effective,

straightforward resource for small business owners to access assistance with grants, mentoring, and other support. Protect Community Development Financial Institutions amid the Trump Administration's attacks. Reform the Small, Women-Owned, and Minority-Owned Business Program (SWaM) certification process to make it easier for businesses to become SWaM certified and access state procurement opportunities.

Boost tourism in Virginia to stimulate economic growth and jobs. Attract visitors to Virginia by investing in programs and assets that drive tourism to the Commonwealth. For example, work with the General Assembly to provide funding for the Virginia Sports Tourism Fund, invigorate the Main Street Program to better serve participants and localities that would benefit from grant opportunities and assistance from the program, advertise Virginia's growing agritourism industry, promote Virginia's unique festivals and fairs, and protect investments in our parks and recreational facilities.

Review and streamline permitting processes to lower costs and incentivize investments. Direct state agencies and leverage the Office of Transformation to standardize timeframes for issuing permits, licenses, and certifications.



Growing trade opportunities.

Abigail knows that international trade will be a cornerstone for the Commonwealth's future economic growth. In Congress, Abigail was one of the most vocal Members of Congress in support of the passage of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), which facilitated stronger partnerships with two of Virginia's largest trade partners. During negotiations, she worked directly with the White House to bring the concerns and ideas of Virginia businesses and farmers to the table.

Now, in the face of destabilizing and unpredictable tariff policies that are driving up costs for Virginia businesses, Abigail knows that trust and steady governance will be critical for maintaining existing trade relationships, implementing Virginia's International Trade Plan, finding new markets for Virginia exports, and keeping Virginia affordable. Her administration will leverage Virginia's assets — including the Port of Virginia and Dulles International Airport — to embrace our Commonwealth's role as a gateway to global markets, even in a moment of significant uncertainty.



Support the Port of Virginia. Continue investments in the Port of Virginia, such as the recent dredging project, that increase the port's competitiveness and expand access to global trade opportunities. Maximize the effectiveness of the port by ensuring there is a strong regional transportation network to connect the port to warehouses and other hubs. Maximize the use of the Virginia Inland Port in Front Royal, and prioritize the continued evaluation of the business case for an additional inland port.

Help Virginia's farmers and number-one private industry, agriculture, expand their markets. Direct the Secretary of Commerce and Trade and the Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry to coordinate on strategies for increasing agricultural and forestry exports from the Commonwealth, both internationally and domestically.

Help Virginia small businesses owners market and sell their products abroad. Encourage coordination between the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity, and Virginia's Small Business Development Centers to coordinate on strategies for providing technical assistance, mentoring, and guidance for Virginia businesses interested in exporting their products abroad.

Amid tariff uncertainty, leverage all tools available to the administration to protect Virginia companies from chaos in Washington. Work with the Attorney General to fight unlawful actions by the federal government that hurt small business owners, our trading relationships, and Virginia's economy.

Commit to being a stable trading partner with other countries. Strengthen existing partnerships with our trade partners. Conduct more international trade missions to attract companies to Virginia and promote foreign direct investment. Enter into agreements with countries to expand trading relationships and opportunities for Virginia businesses.

Reinforce Virginia's role as a global leader in national security, defense, shipbuilding, and cybersecurity due to our significant military presence. Increase participation in air shows and other avenues to demonstrate to international defense companies why Virginia is the best place to manufacture their products. Make Virginia a leader in the production of dual use technologies that serve both military and civilian purposes, thus diversifying our supply chain while responding to global threats around the world.



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