

Shelly Simonds

Virginia House of Delegates District 94

ABOUT THE CANDIDATE

Shelly Simonds is an educator and a community leader in Newport News. A former teacher, Shelly is a member of the Newport News School Board with a passion for excellence in education.

Shelly ran for this seat in 2015 and 2017. The 2017 election saw an unexpectedly massive post-Trump “blue wave,” which brought the Democrats within one seat of taking control of the Virginia House of Delegates—an achievement not thought possible before Election Night. Shelly’s race came within just a few votes, triggering a mandatory recount.

The process took nearly two months, with the entire Commonwealth (and much of the country) on the edge of their seats, wondering if the recount would end in Shelly’s favor and mean the Democrats could finally take control of the House. Ultimately, the race was determined to be a tie, and the winner was picked at random. Shelly saw a heartbreaking loss to the Republican incumbent.

The mother of two school-age daughters, she is heavily involved in Newport News Public Schools. She supports advancements in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) curriculum and is an active voice in education reform. Committed to connecting students to careers, Simonds serves as Vice-Chair of the Board for New Horizons Regional Education Centers and participates in the Career and Technical Education Advisory Board for the school district.

Shelly met her husband, an aeronautical engineer, while earning a master’s degree in communication from Stanford University.

She completed her undergraduate degree at Bucknell University majoring in International Relations and earning Phi Beta Kappa academic honors. She speaks fluent Spanish after living in Spain, Costa Rica and Chile, and has taught Spanish at Hilton Elementary School, a public school in Newport News.



LEARN MORE

SHELLY SIMONDS

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INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/shelly_simonds

DATA ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Population	Households	Over 65	White	Black	Latinx	Median Income	Below Poverty Line	Unemployed	College Grads	HS Grads	No HS Grad
80825	29796	13.30%	59.60%	24.10%	8.20%	62136	9.80%	3.90%	41.50%	49.80%	8.70%

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PAST RACES

Congressional Districts

Nested Congressional Districts: CD3 (Cook PVI: D+16)
Learn more about Cook Political Ratings (Partisan Voting Index):
<https://cookpolitical.com/ratings>

2017 House of Delegates Election Results

Shelly Simonds	48.59%	11,608
David Yancey (Incumbent)	48.59%	11,608

2017 House of Delegates Fundraising

* Via Virginia Public Access Project (VPAP)

Democrat	\$570,609
Republican	\$638,619

2016 President

Hillary Clinton	49.56%	17,985
Donald Trump	44.01%	15,971

2012 President

Barack Obama	51.90%	19,420
Mitt Romney	46.60%	17,435

ON THE ISSUES:

JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

As Delegate, Shelly's number one priority will be creating a Virginia economy that works for everyone. Too many of our citizens miss out on the American dream, which is why Shelly is dedicated to bringing good, well-paying jobs to Newport News and strongly supports raising the minimum wage. Economic growth should benefit everyone. And to turn that belief into a reality, Shelly is committed to:

Developing our Workforce

Shelly's plan to improve Virginia's economy starts with investing in our workforce. We need to be prepared for the 10,000 new manufacturing and shipbuilding jobs coming to Newport News over the next few years. As Delegate, Shelly will increase opportunities for career and technical training while strongly advocating for apprenticeship programs that give students hands-on education in areas like plumbing and pipefitting, electrical contracting, industrial insulation and cosmetology.

Investing in Working Families

Only three countries in the world have no laws guaranteeing paid maternity leave: Lesotho, Papua New Guinea, and the United States. As Delegate, Shelly will work hard to bring paid maternity leave to Virginia so that our working mothers can afford to take time off to spend with their newborns. She will also fight for families' right to paid sick leave, so that everyone can afford to take time off to care for their sick loved ones.

Strengthening Small Businesses

As an entrepreneur who owns rental properties in Newport News, Shelly understands the important role small businesses play in our economy. That's why she's committed to working with Republicans to introduce new reforms in taxes and regulation. Her goal is to make it easier for small businesses to flourish, creating more jobs and strengthening Virginia's economy for everyone.

Women's Economic Agenda

Virginia's economy can only reach its full potential when women succeed. In Richmond, Shelly will fight for equal pay for equal work, which disproportionately affects women of color. As a mother, Shelly knows how much caring for children can impact a woman's ability to work. That's why she'll work to make sure every mother in Newport News has access to affordable childcare and quality Pre-K. She'll also fight to introduce school days that line up with the work day and increase funding for summer learning programs.

EDUCATION

As a Newport News School Board member and former Spanish teacher, Shelly has the passion for ensuring the highest quality education for our children and the experience to make it happen. She is a longtime advocate for excellence in public schools and will double down on her fight to bring bold ideas and meaningful programs to our children's education. Shelly is focusing her efforts on:

Investing in Schools

Excellence in Virginia public schools begins with excellent teachers. That's why Shelly strongly believes we must raise teacher pay so that it's no longer stuck at pre-recession levels. Teacher pay in Virginia is currently at \$7,900 below the national average, and we're losing out on top-quality teachers as a result. Shelly also has bold vision to improve school infrastructure across Virginia. Many of our students are studying in overcrowded classrooms and run down buildings built before the 1950s. Investing in school infrastructure will bring jobs to our district and create a learning environment worthy of our children.

Connecting Students to Careers

As Chair of the Board of the New Horizons Regional Education Center, Shelly has a proven record of connecting students to careers. During her tenure on the School Board, graduation rates have risen to 92%, and Newport News School students have earned over 2,000 career and technical certifications, preparing them for the jobs of today and tomorrow. The number of students receiving career and technical certifications has doubled under Shelly's School Board membership. She is also a strong advocate for investing more state funds in STEM education and will fight to ensure every school in Newport News is preparing its students for graduation and beyond.

Closing the Achievement Gap

As an educator, Shelly is passionate about closing the achievement gap and making sure all our kids get the same benefit from our school system, not just children from wealthy families. As a member of the

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School Board's Challenged Schools Taskforce, Shelly helped secure \$2,000,000 for low-income students to attend summer school programs. Over the past two years, the number of students attending these programs has risen more than 300%. Summer school programs are vital to ensuring that kids from all backgrounds start the new school year ready to succeed. As Delegate, Shelly will bring more programs like these to Newport News and fight for a school system that levels the playing field in the classroom and in life.

HEALTHCARE

Shelly believes healthcare is one of the defining issues of our time. Too many Virginians don't have access to the care they need, which is why as Delegate, Shelly will fight to:

Defending Healthcare from Republicans' Mismanagement

The Trump administration has shown America what Republicans really care about when it comes to healthcare. Rather than find ways to improve existing law, Republicans tried to rip away healthcare from millions of Americans and create a system worse than the one that existed before the Affordable Care Act. Shelly's top priority as Delegate will be to ensure that Republicans no longer have a chance to mismanage healthcare in Virginia.

Increasing Access and Expanding Coverage

Republicans in Richmond—including Shelly's opponent David Yancey—have voted multiple times to block Medicaid expansion in Virginia. Thousands of hardworking people in Newport News that could have access to healthcare don't because of Republicans' reckless and partisan decisions. As Delegate, Shelly would vote yes on Medicaid expansion so that hundreds of thousands of Virginians can access the care they need and deserve. Shelly will also be a determined advocate for expanding the number of community clinics across the commonwealth and fight for higher quality school clinics. She will defend rural hospitals from defunding so that every Virginian has access to healthcare, no matter where they live, and she will advocate to use state purchasing power and regulations to bring down drug costs.

Protecting Women's Rights

A longtime member of Planned Parenthood and lifetime defender of women's rights, Shelly will always fight for women's reproductive health. She believes the government has no business interfering in a woman's private medical decisions. Shelly knows every woman in Virginia must have access to cancer screenings, prenatal health, and family planning services. Our whole society suffers when women can't get the reproductive healthcare services they need.

ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Shelly got her start in politics as an environmental activist working with the League of Conservation Voters. As Delegate, Shelly will be a staunch defender of our environment and will fight to make Newport News a green city with a bright future. She will focus her efforts on:

Healthy, Sustainable, Green Communities

Shelly has always been an advocate for land conservation and will fight to improve Newport News' land use accessibility for all residents. As Delegate, she will protect the James River from toxic substances like coal ash disposal, and she will demand monitoring of air quality in southeast Newport News to ensure that residents aren't breathing polluted air. She

will protect the Chesapeake Bay by funding land conservation and Best Management Practice agricultural programs.

Clean Energy

Shelly knows the threats climate change pose to coastal Virginia. We need to act now. That's why she'll always support solar and offshore wind energy generation, and will lead the charge in making Virginia a truly green, renewable and sustainable state. She will always oppose the expansion of fracking and uranium mining in the Commonwealth.

City Farm

Shelly is a champion for Riverview Farm Park. As Delegate, she will fight to bring state funding to City Farm to expand the park to the James River while defending the land against developers. Protecting City Farm will ensure all Newport News residents have public access to the riverfront and will drive economic growth in the area.

TRANSPORTATION

Without access to adequate transportation services, too many Newport News residents struggle to commute. In Richmond, Shelly will work hard to reduce traffic and make transit a more affordable and accessible experience. She will advocate for increased funding for better pedestrian and bike access across the peninsula, and she will ensure our tax dollars on transportation are well spent. Shelly strongly opposes unaccountable and wasteful spending like the recent Peninsula Airport Commission controversy.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Shelly knows criminal justice reform in Virginia needs to be a bipartisan effort, and she looks forward to getting to Richmond to work with Republicans on this crucial issue. Virginia has the 8th highest incarceration rate in America, with many people convicted for nonviolent drug offenses. We spend \$25,000 per inmate per year—money that could be used to fix our roads and bridges and invest in our children's future. We as a state can reduce crime and save money on incarceration if we work together on adopting reforms that have already worked in other states.

Preventative Reform

As Delegate, Shelly will be committed promoting preventative criminal justice reforms so that fewer people end up in prison and more people get the help they need to stay out. She'll start by advocating for rewriting school discipline law and mandatory reporting of misdemeanors to law enforcement so that school children don't get caught up in the criminal justice system. She'll work to reform mandatory minimum sentencing in Virginia to allow sentence modification for juveniles, and she will fight hard to increase funding for mental health and addiction services so that our prisons don't serve as makeshift treatment centers.

Strong Community Policing

Shelly is a strong believer in community policing and knows the General Assembly can do more to encourage strong bonds between the men and women that wear blue and the communities they serve. Shelly will fight to increase funds for police training and technical assistance in Newport News and encourage community policing everywhere.

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CIVIL RIGHTS

Shelly is passionate advocate for civil rights and will always stand up to defend vulnerable members of our community. We need stronger leadership in the General Assembly to stand up to hatred and bigotry now more than ever. Shelly is commitment to addressing:

Racism and Religious Bigotry

As a longtime member of the NAACP, Shelly knows we need a leader in Richmond who isn't afraid to stand up to racism in all its forms. At a time when racism and religious bigotry are on the march across America, getting too close to home, Shelly knows we need a Delegate who will stand up to prejudice, divisiveness and hatred. Shelly will always stand strong with our minority communities and will always vigorously oppose and protest efforts to sow division based on race or creed.

LGBTQ Rights

Shelly believes members of the LGBTQ community must have equal rights before the law. She'll always defend non-discrimination protections in the workplace. She knows how important it is that we work to create a society where our LGBTQ youth are happy and healthy, instead of disproportionately affected by mental health issues and suicide. In Richmond, she will support efforts decrease the number of homeless LGBTQ across the commonwealth.

ABOUT THE STATE

General Demographics

- Virginia is the 12th-most populous state, with over 8 million residents.
- Virginia's non-white citizens represented 38% of the population in 2017, up from 22% in 1990.
- As of 2015, the non-white voter population was 28%, suggesting that people of color are a growing segment of the general population but not growing as fast in the voting population.
- In the last four presidential elections, voter turnout has been greater than 70%. But in the last 4 elections held in the year just prior to the presidential election (which would be a predictor for 2019), turnout has hovered around 30%.
- Turnout among younger voters (18-29 years old) has steadily increased from 17% in 2009 to 26% in 2013 to 34% in 2017. This segment of the population voted heavily Democratic in 2017 --almost 70/30.
- The Commonwealth has elected Democratic governors in four out of the last five gubernatorial elections, and has not voted for a Republican President since 2004.

District Lines

District lines for Congress and state legislature are drawn by the General Assembly (state legislature). There is a bipartisan advisory commission, but the General Assembly is not required to take their recommendations. The governor has veto power over district lines.

The Commonwealth's district boundaries have been a hot topic of conversation in past years. Both Congressional and state legislative district lines in Virginia have been held unconstitutional by federal courts due to racial gerrymandering. Congressional districts were redrawn by court order in 2016, which increased Democratic representation. Currently, a number of districts in the lower chamber are the subject of ongoing litigation, which is currently being heard by the Supreme Court. The new maps for these lower chamber districts will be used in the 2019 general election unless the Supreme Court overturns the new maps. That decision is due over the summer. The redrawn districts (which more accurately reflect the population) lean more Democratic.

Citizens' groups in Virginia have been working to establish fairer districting processes, including pushing for a nonpartisan redistricting commission. In 2019, the General Assembly approved the "first read" of a constitutional amendment to create an advisory commission for Congressional and state legislative lines. The next step would be for the General Assembly to pass an identical resolution during the next legislative session – after the 2019 election. Then the measure would go onto the ballot in November 2020, at which point Virginians could vote to approve the independent commission.

Voter Suppression

Virginia currently has a voter ID law, passed by its Republican state legislature and governor in 2013. In 2016, the Fourth Circuit of Appeals upheld the Virginia Voter ID law, after a suit alleging it violated the 1965 Voting Rights Act. In addition, Virginia's GOP has made it more difficult to register people to vote. In particular, third-party voter registration requires groups receiving 25 or more registration forms to register with the state. Further, Virginia uses both the controversial Crosscheck and ERIC programs to determine if there are duplicate voter registrations.

Voter Registration and Day of Voting

You must provide a photo ID to register to vote and to vote physically at the polls. Acceptable IDs include:

- Driver's license
- US passport
- Tribal ID issued by one of the 11 tribes recognized by the Commonwealth of Virginia
- Student or employee ID from a public or private school in Virginia
- Virginia Voter Photo ID

If you do not have an ID, you may apply for a free Virginia Voter Photo Identification from any general registrar's office.

Last Day:

For the June Primary, you must register by Monday, May 20th, 2019.
For the November Election you must register by Tuesday, October 15th, 2019.

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Absentee Ballots:

For the June Primary, absentee ballots must be requested by Tuesday, June 4th, 2019.

For the November Election absentee ballots must be requested by Tuesday, October 29th, 2019.

You can also request a ballot by appearing in person - Request Absentee Ballot by appearing in person by: 5:00 p.m. Saturday, November 2, 2019.

June 11: Primary election

November 5: General Election

Current State Legislature

Virginia is currently under a divided government: the governor is a Democrat, while Republicans control both chambers of the legislature by an extremely narrow margin—just two seats each. The entire Virginia General Assembly is up for election in 2019, and these are all “Last Chance” races; the legislators elected in 2019 will be serving during the 2021 redistricting process. The state legislature draws district lines, and the governor has the power to veto district maps.

The state Senate is currently comprised of 19 Democrats and 21 Republicans, while the House of Delegates has 48 Democrats and 51 Republicans. Democrats have an incredible opportunity to flip both Virginia state legislature chambers in 2019. Demographic shifts in Virginia favor Democrats. And a number of badly gerrymandered House districts have recently been fairly redrawn upon federal court order (subject to Supreme Court review). This should give Democrats an opportunity to compete in a broader set of House districts this year.

2019 Executive Controversies

The current Governor, Lt. Governor and Attorney General are all Democrats, and none are up for election in 2019. However, each has been the subject of controversy in 2019. Governor Ralph Northam shocked the Commonwealth when photos surfaced of him in blackface during his years as a medical student. Lieutenant Governor Justin Fairfax seemed poised to transition into the Governor’s seat—until allegations of sexual assault in his past came to light. The third in line for the Governor’s seat, Attorney General Mark Herring, proactively admitted to dressing in blackface as a teenager himself. Ultimately, none of the men have resigned, despite calls to do so from numerous elected officials, organizations, and citizens groups.

At Sister District, these events have underscored the need to build a deep bench of diverse leaders and a strong Democratic majority in the state legislature. Without positive reinforcement from the Governor’s office this year, General Assembly candidates will certainly need our help.

CANDIDATE IN THE NEWS

94th District Shelly Simonds Legislative Map

<https://www.dailypress.com/news/virginia/dp-wns-94th-district-shelly-simonds-legislative-map-20190125-story.html>

In 2019 Let’s fight for every inch of the commonwealth

<https://bluevirginia.us/2019/03/in-2019-lets-fight-for-every-inch-of-the-commonwealth>

Democrat who lost random drawing for VA House seat opts against recount

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/virginia-politics/democrat-who-lost-random-drawing-for-va-house-seat-opts-against-recount/2018/01/10/92a4776a-f60c-11e7-beb6-c8d48830c54d_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.6ca50234fa6b

Virginia Democrat Shelly Simonds takes seat by one vote

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-42426404>

Republican Yancey picked in a random lottery declared winner of pivotal VA house race

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/virginia-politics/republican-yancey-picked-in-random-lottery-declared-winner-of-pivotal-va-house-race/2018/01/04/9c9caa5a-f0a1-11e7-b390-a36dc3fa2842_story.html?utm_term=.27d259f556d4

ABOUT THE OPPONENT

David E. Yancey is a Republican member of the Virginia House of Delegates, representing District 94. Yancey was first elected to the chamber in 2011. He tied with Shelly Simonds (D) in the 2017 race and won a random drawing to break the tie.

2018 Legislator Scorecard

In 2018, the Virginia General Assembly was in session from January 10 through March 10. Special sessions were held from April 11 to May 30 and from August 30 to October 30.

Virginia Chapter Sierra Club

Legislators are scored on their votes on bills related to the climate and energy. Yancey received an F grade for the 2018 session.

Virginia Education Association

Legislators are scored on their votes on bills related to public education. Yancey received a high score (100%) for the 2018 session.

Virginia League of Conservation Voters

Legislators are scored on their votes on environmental and conservation issues. Robinson has a career score of 64%.

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THE DISTRICT

