

# Biographies of the Members and Citizen Members of the Virginia Disability Commission

## MEMBERS:

Delegate Kaye Kory, Chair

Senator Barbara A. Favola, Vice Chair

Delegate Dawn M. Adams

Delegate Patrick A. Hope

Delegate Robert D. Orrock, Sr.

Senator Ghazala F. Hashmi

## CITIZEN MEMBERS:

Conner Cummings

Teresa Elder

Amy Laufer

John Tolleris

John Toscano

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## Members

**Delegate Kaye Kory** and her husband, Ross, have lived in Fairfax County for over 35 years. She has a B.A. degree in English from the Miami University of Ohio and has done graduate work in public policy at the University of Iowa and George Mason University. Kaye gravitated to the educational arena while seeking pre-K options when her three children were young. She was a frequent and vocal critic of many Fairfax County School Board and school administration policies. In June 1999, she won a special election for the Mason District seat on the School Board. After that first special election, Kaye won three regular elections by some of the largest margins for Democrats across both the Mason District and Fairfax County. Kaye routinely turned out crowds to observe and testify at School Board meetings and work sessions. Though Kaye has achieved prominence in Education, her activist roots run broad and deep.

Previously, Kaye served as a counselor for troubled youth at “Runaway House” in our 38th District. She also worked with the Grey Panthers in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, under the auspices of the activist Catholic Diocese. Additionally, Kaye was the Program Manager for a Community Agency on Aging and the Executive Director for Saunders B. Moon Senior Citizens

Center in the Gum Springs neighborhood of Fairfax. As Program Analyst for the Fairfax County Department of Community Action, Kaye did program assessment and grant writing for such programs as Head Start and the Medical Care for Children Program (*nationally recognized by the Kennedy School at Harvard for public sector innovation*). Kaye has also been an active leader in a diverse range of community organizations including: the Annandale Chamber of Commerce; the Virginia League of Conservation Voters; and, the NAACP. She has been a sustaining member of the Fairfax County Democratic Committee since 2001. Kaye has served on numerous Fairfax boards and committees including: the Fairfax County Community Action Advisory Board; the Board (as *member and President*) of the Montessori School of Northern Virginia; the Fairfax County Partnership for Youth; the Fairfax County Association for the Gifted; the J.E.B. Stuart Educational Foundation (*founding President; renamed Justice High School Fund*); the Fairfax County Boys and Girls club; and, the Hampton Court Homeowner's Association.

Delegate Kaye Kory was elected as the State Delegate for the 38th District in November 2009 and was sworn in on January 6, 2010. She currently serves on the following legislative House Committees:

- Chair — Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns
  - *Ad Hoc Subcommittee*
- Committee on Finance
  - *Finance Subcommittee #1*
- Committee on Labor and Commerce
  - *Special Subcommittee on Energy (Subcommittee #1)*
- Committee on Militia, Police, and Public Safety
  - *Public Safety Subcommittee*

Delegate Kory is the Chair of the following Caucuses, Commissions, and Committees:

- House Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns
- Animal Welfare Caucus
- Joint Women's Health Care Caucus
- Disability Commission

Her standing committees, commissions, and other appointments include:

- Autism Advisory Council
- Commission on Civics Education
- Disability Commission
- Joint Commission on Health Care
- Joint Committee of the House Health, Welfare & Institutions and Public Safety and Senate Judiciary & Rehabilitation and Social Services to Study Staffing Levels, Employment Conditions, and Compensation at the Virginia Department of Corrections
- National Council of Insurance Legislators, *Special Committee on Natural Disaster Recovery*
- School Readiness Committee
- State Board of Education Advisory Committee on Adult Education and Literacy
- Virginia Wireless Communications Infrastructure Group

Kaye is honored to continue to serve the residents of Virginia's 38th District and looks forward to continuing to push progressive legislative priorities that help all Virginians.

**Senator Barbara Favola**, prior to her election as a State Senator, served on the Arlington County Board for fourteen years (1997-2011) and chaired that body three times. During her service with the County, Senator Favola was the Board's leading advocate for children, youth, and families, and her contributions to the community include establishing mental health services in the public schools.

Throughout her public life, she has been a vigorous supporter of universal human rights. In the Virginia Senate, Barbara is focusing her legislative efforts on women's reproductive rights, health care access, K-12 education funding, workforce training, safety net programs, helping foster children, preventing domestic violence, and sensible environmental policies.

Senator Favola is a whip in the Virginia Senate Democratic Caucus. She chairs the Virginia Senate's Rehabilitation and Social Services Committee, as well as serving on the Local Government Committee, Transportation Committee, Rules Committee, and Agriculture, Conservation, and Natural Resources Committee. She is a member and former Chair of the Virginia Advisory Committee for Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence, Chair of the Senate Women's Health Care Caucus, and a member and former Chair of Virginia's Commission on Youth.

She served on Governor McAuliffe's Climate Change and Resiliency Update Commission and served on the Disability Commission and the Joint Committee to Study the Future of Public Education. Senator Favola serves on the Advisory Board of Virginia Tech's School of Public and International Affairs and on the Board of the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind.

Prior to Senator Favola's elected life, she served as a Presidential Management Intern and senior policy advisor at the Federal Department of Health and Human Services. She also served on the House Budget Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives.

In addition to her Senate duties, Senator Favola also serves on numerous Boards and Commissions, including the Advisory Committee for the Arlington YMCA and the Fairfax CASA Board.

**Delegate Dawn M. Adams** is a doctorally prepared nurse practitioner with nearly thirty-five years of diverse clinical and administrative health care experience. Dawn was first elected to the Virginia House of Delegates in 2017. She is the first (and only) openly lesbian legislator and openly LGBT representative from outside of Northern Virginia in the Commonwealth's 400 year history. Her legislative focus is Healthcare, particularly around issues affecting elderly and vulnerable populations, and creating solutions to increase access and drive down the cost of care.

**Delegate Patrick A. Hope** is a Member of the Virginia General Assembly as the Delegate from the 47th District of the Commonwealth of Virginia and was re-elected for his sixth term in 2019. Delegate Hope currently serves as Chair of the House Public and Safety Committee and also sits on the House Health, Welfare and Institutions Committee as well as the House Courts of Justice Committee. He is a health care attorney with over 20 years of experience working for Virginia and has been recognized by numerous organizations including the 2010 Legislator of the Year by both the VA Transit Association and the VA Academy of Family Physicians.

He was also awarded the Virginia Elder Rights Coalition's (VERC) 2011 Annual Elder Rights Award, named after longtime Arlington County residents and elder rights advocate, Erica F. Wood. Patrick was honored for sponsoring bills in the 2011 General Assembly aimed at strengthening the rights of nursing home residents.

Patrick was born in San Antonio, Texas. A high school graduate of Castle Hills First Baptist School in San Antonio, Hope received his Bachelors of Arts degree in History from St. Mary's University in San Antonio ('93), then received his Master's of Arts degree in Congressional Studies from The Catholic University in Washington, DC ('96), and then received a Juris Doctorate degree from The Catholic University Columbus School of Law in Washington, DC

('01).

After spending several years working on Capitol Hill for Senator Bob Kerry (D-NE) and Representative Henry B. Gonzalez (D-TX), Patrick worked for various health care organizations working to improve access and care for patients. He currently is the Executive Director of the Medical Imaging & Technology Alliance. He also is an Adjunct Professor at Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Patrick also has a very strong record of community leadership. Patrick was the founder and first president of the Buckingham Community Civic Association (2003-2009) and chaired the Arlington County Community Services Board (2005-2008). He also was co-chairman, Arlington Implementation Task Force to End Homelessness (2008-2010), and Commissioner for the Arlington County Commission on Aging (2002-2007).

In addition, Patrick belongs to numerous organizations and causes: Arlington County Bar Association, Virginia State Bar Association, Friends of Clarendon House, Arlington Gay and Lesbian Alliance, Arlington Special Olympics, Arlington Committee of 100, Leadership Arlington (2010), and Arlington Kiwanis.

Patrick lives with his wife Kristen and their three daughters – Emma, Patty, and Lilly – in the Buckingham community of Arlington. They have lived in the Buckingham neighborhood since the year 2000.

**Delegate Robert D. “Bobby” Orrock, Sr.**, is a lifelong resident of Caroline County, Virginia, and has represented the 54th District in the Virginia House of Delegates since 1990. He currently serves on three House Committees: Health, Welfare & Institutions, Finance, and Privileges & Elections. In addition, he works on the Joint Legislative Audit & Review Commission (JLARC), the Disability Commission, the Certificate of Public Need Commission, the Joint Commission on Health Care, the MEI Project Approval Commission, the Rappahannock River Basin Commission, and the Joint Subcommittee to Evaluate Tax Preferences.

A graduate of Virginia Tech, Bobby retired in May 2019 after nearly 40 years as a high school agriculture teacher in Spotsylvania County. Bobby has also served as a member of the Ladysmith Volunteer Rescue Squad, and a Virginia Game Commission-certified hunter safety instructor certified by the Virginia Game Commission. He is married to Debra Orrock, and is the proud father of three (Robby, Lila and Welford) and grandfather of four (Abby, Walter, Zane and Charlotte). He is in his third decade of hosting the Sunday Morning Gospel show on the radio, and is an active deacon in Bethany Baptist Church where he was raised.

Delegate Orrock has been recognized by many organizations for his contributions to the 54th District and to the Commonwealth in both his position as delegate as well as a public school teacher. These include (but are not limited to) being recognized by the VA Vocational Association (Legislator of the Year), VA Association for Parks (Legislator of the Year), VA Orthopaedic Association (Legislator of the Year), the Virginia Jaycees (Outstanding Young Virginian), and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (Outstanding Educator).

As a true public servant, Bobby's objective in the House of Delegates has always been to provide common sense conservative legislation that impacts the 54th District directly. He is an exceptionally accessible legislator with an openness to hear from all of his constituents, no matter their point of view, and a promise to treat them with the same southern hospitality that he was raised to provide to all of his neighbors and—since 1990—his constituents.

**Senator Ghazala Hashmi**, PhD, serves in the Virginia General Assembly, representing the 10th Senatorial District which includes parts of Richmond City, Chesterfield County, and all of Powhatan County. She sits on the following Senate committees: Education and Health; Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources; General Laws and Technology; and Local Government. Senator Hashmi also chairs the Senate Subcommittee on Public Education. As an experienced educator and advocate who spent nearly 30 years working within Virginia's college and university system, she identifies education, equity, the environment, and healthcare access as top legislative priorities. Senator Hashmi was elected to office in November 2019. Prior to her election, she served as the Founding Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning (CETL) at Reynolds Community College in Richmond, Virginia. She is the first Muslim American to serve in the Virginia Senate.

### **Citizen Members**

**Conner Cummings** is 29 years old and proud to be autistic. Conner is a professional photographer, managing editor and columnist for Zoom Autism Magazine (digital). Conner is a self-advocate who has a law named after him...Conner's Law. In 2015, Conner won 'Advocate of the Year' by the Autism Society of America. In 2016, he won the Temple Grandin Award. In 2017, he was honored for his advocacy work with commendations from both the Virginia House and Senate.

Conner did not speak until he was 7 years old and now, he speaks his own written words which is his communication style. Conner enjoys every moment with his mom, photography where he has been a Still Photographer for 3 movies filmed in Virginia, playing the piano where he has taught himself by ear, studying languages, practicing at the ice-skating rink for his 4th Special

Olympics Gold medal, traveling especially to the Disney parks or writing for his growing Facebook page 'Conquer for Conner-My Special Love.

**Amy Laufer** is from Albemarle County and is currently a member of the Department of Social Services Board of Albemarle County, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Science Museum of Virginia, and a board member and founder of VA List. She formerly served as chair of the Charlottesville City School Board, ran for a seat in the Virginia State Senate, taught middle school math and science. She is a parent of three teenagers.

**John Tolleris** graduated from Lafayette College in 1975 with a B.A. degree and from New York University School of Law in 1978 with a JD degree. After graduating from law school, he worked as an attorney for the Office of Chief Counsel, IRS in Washington DC for almost 33 years before retiring.

During his last year in law school, Mr. Tolleris worked part time for the newly established New York State Office of Advocate for the Disabled. A major part of his work was to find, compile and summarize New York state statutes relevant to people with disabilities. His and others' work led to the publication in 1980 of the "Digest of Consolidated Laws for the Disabled" by the State of New York.

During his work with IRS Chief Counsel, Mr. Tolleris was appointed in the mid 1980s to serve for about 10 years in the IRS National Office Disability Program Committee, including one year as its chair. This committee promoted recruitment, hiring and accommodation of employees with disability and organized an annual educational program during the annual Federally promoted "National Employ the Handicapped Week".

**John A. Toscano**, MSW, MBA, was the President and Chief Executive Officer of Commonwealth Autism from 2002 - 2018 and continues to serve in a consulting capacity as Director-Emeritus, supporting the new CEO and the organization.

Prior to coming to Virginia, John Toscano spent three years working internationally in autism – starting a multi-service organization in Malaysia and working as an executive for an autism organization in England. He started his work in autism in 1981 and helped develop a large residential and day service for adults in New York.

Concurrent with his work in autism, he was a professor of social work for 18 years in New York at the State University of New York at Albany and at Siena College. John Toscano has also

traveled extensively observing and consulting with autism services and has spoken at numerous local, state, national and international conferences.

His areas of interest include macro service system change and capacity growth, non-profit organizational management and program design and implementation. He has held statewide appointments in Virginia (Virginia Board for People with Disabilities and now the Virginia Disability Commission). He also served as an adjunct faculty member at Virginia Commonwealth University in the schools of Social Work and Public Administration (2008-2021).

John Toscano earned his MSW degree from Adelphi University in 1975 and his MBA from Sunderland University, England in 2000. Up until the pandemic, he volunteered at the NICU (Chippenham Hospital) rocking babies and at the Richmond Animal League (RAL) as an adoption coordinator.

John Toscano is married to Nancy (President & CEO at UMFS), and they have a 17-year-old son Jack, who is a high school senior. John Toscano is also the father of two adult children and a grandfather of six. His oldest grandchild, Joey, is a 22-year-old with autism, who John Toscano identified at age 2 after 20 years in the field.