

Some folks have been asking me about the upcoming election. Election Day is November 3, 2026. Below are the candidates I will support. Roughly a 3-minute read (with links to additional information). —Suzanne

FYI: You can vote early **NOW** at Courthouse Plaza, Walter Reed Community Center or Langston-Brown Community Center. Find the dates/times that work for you at these early-voting polling locations: <https://vote.arlingtonva.gov/Early-Voting?emci=4dc44155-a2b2-f111-a6a7-0022482a9a8d&emdi=2fb558c6-c7b2-f111-a6a7-0022482a9a8d&ceid=8295541>.

NOTE: If you have a mail ballot but want to vote early in person instead, bring your mail ballot with you when you go. (They will ask you to turn in your unused mail ballot.)

Races, Constitutional Amendments and Bond Referenda on Arlington's Ballot

U.S. Senate: I will vote for incumbent **Sen. Mark Warner**. In addition to having served as Virginia's governor, Warner has seniority in the U.S. Senate and served as Chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee in 2021. Should Democrats take over the Senate, Warner would almost certainly regain his position as Chair. See more about Warner here: <https://www.warner.senate.gov>.

U.S. House of Representatives: I will vote for incumbent **Rep. Don Beyer**. Learn more about Beyer here: <https://beyer.house.gov>.

Arlington County Board: I will vote for **Audrey Clement**. Though Clement has been mocked as a "serial" Independent candidate, she is a long-time civic activist who knows LOCAL government and understands LOCAL issues far better than her opponents. Audrey also is the only true independent who isn't hamstrung by a party or an ideological litmus test. Even though we are allowed to vote for 3 ranked choice candidates, I will only list Audrey as my #1 choice and will leave the other two slots blank.

Here's why: De Ferranti's (the incumbent) embarrassing performance on the County Board speaks for itself. Newcomer David Sisson is a stealth YIMBY candidate. Whereas Sisson hedges about his support for county-wide density increases, he works for a "boutique real estate consulting firm" — meaning he has a vested financial interest in pushing more density and redevelopment: <https://nvaha.org/ourteam/david-sisson/>. His campaign website clearly shows his alignment with YIMBY activists: <https://www.davidsisson4arlington.com/meet-david>.

Arlington School Board: I will vote for Dr. James "Vell" Rives, an Independent candidate who is a physician who served for 7 years on the Arlington School Health Advisory Board. He is the father of a Wakefield High School graduate and a Wakefield sophomore. Unfortunately, seeking Arlington's Democratic Party endorsement comes with strings attached. Having a diversity of perspectives and thinking in the decision-making process is crucial to maintaining a functioning democracy.

Vell's campaign priorities include school safety, academic rigor, supporting classroom teachers, and fiscal stabilization. A recent ARLnow article (based on the Civic Federation's Sept. 8 Candidates' Forum) highlights the contrasts between Vell and the incumbent: <https://www.arlnow.com/2026/09/11/school-board-candidates-debate-aps-safety-and-support-for-teachers/>.

State Constitutional Amendments: Three amendments to Virginia's constitution are on November's ballot.

• **Question 1** — After the gutting of Roe v. Wade, these amendments guarantee women's right to make their own choices in seeking reproductive healthcare services, protects healthcare providers from being punished for the choices women make, and allows for some restrictions on 3rd trimester abortions (months 7, 8 and 9). See the question's wording here: <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/election-law/proposed-constitutional-amendment-question-1/?emci=4dc44155-a2b2-f111-a6a7-0022482a9a8d&emdi=2fb558c6-c7b2-f111-a6a7-0022482a9a8d&ceid=8295541>

• **Question 2** — Would amend Virginia's constitution by removing the ban on same-sex marriage; affirming that two adults may marry regardless of sex, gender, or race; and treating all legal marriages equally under the law. See the question's wording here: <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/election-law/proposed-constitutional-amendment-question-2/?emci=4dc44155-a2b2-f111-a6a7-0022482a9a8d&emdi=2fb558c6-c7b2-f111-a6a7-0022482a9a8d&ceid=8295541>

• **Question 3** — Would amend Virginia's constitution to give Virginia citizens the explicit right to vote. It also would revise voter qualifications to prevent those serving a felony sentence from voting during incarceration but restores voting rights upon release from incarceration. And it would update the prohibition that prevents citizens found to be mentally incompetent from voting and would instead apply only to those citizens found to be lacking the "capacity to understand the

act of voting.” See the question’s wording here: <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/election-law/proposed-constitutional-amendment-question-3/?emci=4dc44155-a2b2-f111-a6a7-0022482a9a8d&emdi=2fb558c6-c7b2-f111-a6a7-0022482a9a8d&ceid=8295541>

I am inclined to vote for Questions 1 and 2 to amend Virginia’s constitution, and I am continuing to ponder the Question 3 and have not yet come to a firm decision.

Arlington County Bond Referenda/Questions: Voters can vote on five local bond referenda totaling **\$264 million** in new borrowing for capital projects (roughly equal to **\$1,082 per Arlington resident**): <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Budget-Finance/Bonds/2026-Bond-Referenda?emci=4dc44155-a2b2-f111-a6a7-0022482a9a8d&emdi=2fb558c6-c7b2-f111-a6a7-0022482a9a8d&ceid=8295541>.

It should be noted that the projects/uses listed in each bond question are for example only. Bond funds can be and often are reallocated to other projects/uses within the same category by the County Board, based on updated priorities in the approved Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Given that Arlington was already carrying net debt of **\$2.6 billion dollars** as of fiscal year (FY) 2025 — which includes \$1.4 billion in bonds and bond issues in anticipation of loans as of June 30, 2025 — I hesitate to pile on more debt that isn’t absolutely necessary: <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/budget/documents/fy-2025/fy-2025-adopted/28-fy25a-debt-service.pdf>.

Arlington’s total indebtedness equaled **\$10,803 per person (per capita)** at the end of FY2025: (Exhibit G) <https://www.apa.virginia.gov/local-government/reports?type=comparative-reports>. Compare this figure to the end of 2013, when Arlington’s debt equaled **\$4,082 per person**. This represents a **62% increase** (in dollar terms) over a 12-year span: https://www.insidenova.com/news/arlington/community-guide-too-much-government-debt-in-arlington-it-depends/article_47e4350e-3f43-11e4-8a64-5f17d12c9fed.html.

For more information on Arlington’s debt load, see pp.7–8 here: <https://www.civfed.org/newContent/2026-09/CivicVoice%202026-09.pdf>.

- **Metro & Transportation Bond Question (Amount: \$69,745,000)** — Borrow money to fund transportation, road, pedestrian enhancement and transit projects across the County, including \$46.3 million for Metro capital needs and \$15 million for street paving.
- **Local Parks & Recreation Bond Question (Amount: \$34,945,000)** — Borrow money to fund the cost of various capital projects for local parks & recreation, including \$10.4 million for Gateway Park (Rosslyn) and \$9.5 million for Arlington Boathouse construction (also Rosslyn).
- **Community Infrastructure Bond Question (\$58,825,000)** — Borrow money to fund the cost of a variety of County infrastructure projects, including \$10.0 million for the Ballston Public Parking Garage (which should be using revenue bonds, not general-obligation bonds), \$9.3 million for Critical Systems Infrastructure, \$8.5 million for the Facilities Maintenance Program, \$7.5 million for Arlington Central Library, \$7.2 million for the county technology projects, \$6.6 million for the Detention Facility, \$2.0 million for the Arlington Neighborhoods program, etc.
- **Arlington Public Schools Bond Question (Amount: \$80,000,000)** — Borrow money to fund the cost of Arlington Public Schools’ capital improvement program, including Jamestown Elementary’s \$29 million “refresh,” Oakridge Elementary’s \$31 million “refresh” and \$20 million in unspecified major infrastructure/system replacements/updates.
- **Utilities Bond Question (\$20,745,000)** — Borrow this amount to cover the cost of designing, expanding, improving, and renovating Arlington County’s Water Pollution Control Plant and the water and sewer systems.

I am inclined to vote for the Metro and Utilities bonds, as these bonds cover capital items to which Arlington is contractually obligated and/or are for essential infrastructure maintenance and repair. I am still considering whether to vote for the APS and Community Infrastructure bonds. I will **NOT** be voting to approve the Parks & Recreation bond, which represents new discretionary/nonessential spending rather than maintenance/repair spending for existing infrastructure and essential projects.