

From my 2019 General Assembly Newsletter, sent out August 2019 (emphasis added)

### TOP STATE FOR BUSINESS

For the 4<sup>th</sup> time in 13 years, Virginia was ranked by CNBC as the #1 State for Business in the combined weighting of ten factors.

Virginia's top rankings were both related to education. We ranked *first in the nation in the quality of our workforce and first in our education program* from kindergarten through research and advanced degrees. Our lowest rankings across the 10 categories were in the cost to do business and the cost-of-living.

In past years, we had dropped to as low as 11<sup>th</sup> place overall because of the effect of federal budget cuts on our economy. Although recent defense spending is spurring our economy, there's wide recognition that we need to diversify our workforce from being 30% tied to federal spending. Amazon's decision to locate headquarter offices in Virginia underscores two points:

- ▶ Virginia's commitment to enhance higher education STEM degrees was the right incentive, not trying to out-bid others in cash giveaways;
- ▶ Amazon's decision sent a message to other major employers to look closely at Virginia. Strengthening higher education programs only enhances that appeal. Jobs are needed throughout Virginia, especially in urban cores, down-state, and Appalachia.



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The \$750 million referred to in the attack mailer is the total amount that can be paid over a 10-year period. \$550 million of the amount is tied to 25,000 permanent full time jobs paying over \$150,000 (escalated 1.5% per year for inflation) and \$200 million additional may be paid if there 12,850 more full time jobs.

Even before I was elected, as a citizen I was highly suspicious of payments to lure employers. Too often, employers could move on before the tax revenue they generated equaled the incentive they got. The Virginia/Arlington package is much better than most I've seen. Therefore, I voted to ratify the agreement (HB2356 and SB1255), mostly because it is a significant step in moving Virginia's economy away from its over-dependence on jobs tied to federal spending.

I regret that I did not have the opportunity to vote on any aspect of the initial agreement about Amazon contributing to transportation and to affordable housing, which are my main, ongoing concerns about what Arlington and the Commonwealth of Virginia negotiated.

**No business is free of controversy, which is what the attack mailer demands.  
The issue is whether the jobs they bring  
and the conditions of their decision to locate here  
will serve the Commonwealth's overall economic development.  
We have the opportunity and now we have the responsibility  
to assure Amazon HQ2 is a net gain.**