



POLITICS

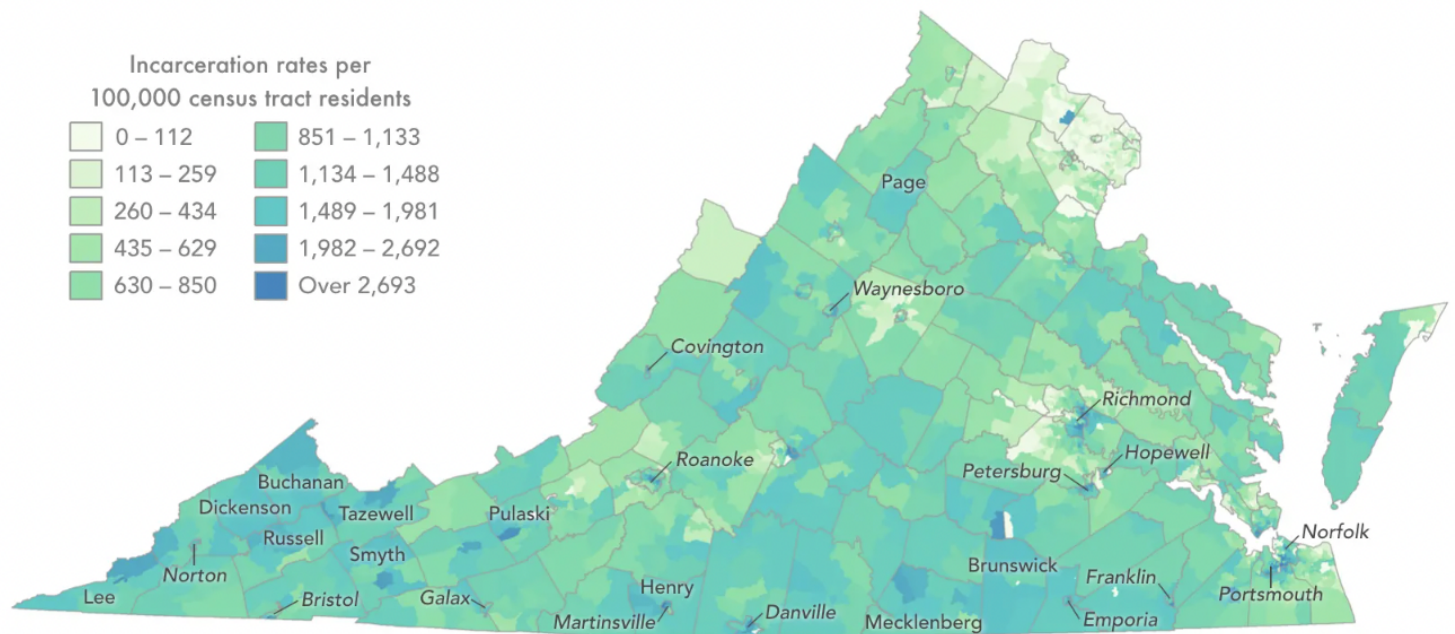
# Southwest leads with highest incarceration rates, new study finds

*The high impact on rural areas is due to prescription drug epidemic, officials say.*

by **Markus Schmidt**  
September 6, 2022

## Among Virginia's 95 counties and 38 cities, 26 are missing at least 1% of their population to incarceration

These 26 named counties and cities account for 14% of Virginia's population, but are home to 33% of the state's incarcerated population.



Courtesy of the Prison Policy Initiative.

Many of the state's least populous counties, including Buchanan, Brunswick, Lee and Dickenson, have among the highest incarceration rates in the commonwealth, according to a new study using statewide data published in July.

While some of the state's largest cities, such as Norfolk and Richmond, are sending the highest numbers of people to prison, it is smaller communities, many of which are located in Southwest Virginia and Southside, that are missing a larger share of their population to incarceration. In total, among Virginia's 95 counties and 38 cities, 26 are missing at least 1% of their population due to being incarcerated, [the survey](#) found.

"The myth that mass incarceration is just a problem that harms big cities has been clearly busted by all the data that we have been looking at. It's an issue that unites urban and rural areas, as they both are suffering from this problem of mass incarceration," said Mike Wessler, the communications director for the nonpartisan Prison Policy Initiative, an advocacy organization working to expose the broader harm of mass criminalization. The group conducted the study in collaboration with New Virginia Majority, a Richmond-based nonprofit advocating for social justice causes.

Although the data doesn't give a clear picture of exactly what the causes are, the drivers of incarceration have long been identified and are pretty universal throughout the country, Wessler said. "They tend to be mental health, related to substance abuse disorder, poverty, housing insecurity and patterns of over-policing in certain areas. For example, we know that police are more likely to arrest, stop and detain people of color," he said.

The new data shows that the counties with the highest state prison and local jail incarceration rates are Buchanan (1,246 per 100,000 residents), Brunswick (1,167), Lee (1,155), Dickenson (1,132) and Tazewell (1,105). In each of these counties, at least 1% of residents are currently behind bars. The minority population in all the Southwest counties is smaller than the state average.



Mike Wessler. Courtesy of Prison Policy Initiative

For comparison, with just 70 people per 100,000 residents, Arlington County has the lowest prison incarceration rate. And Fairfax, the state's most populous county, has 80. The statewide average is 485.

The data also shows that some of Virginia's smaller cities with fewer than 100,000 residents have some of the highest incarceration rates. With a population of less than 14,000, Martinsville, for example, has the highest incarceration rate in the state with 1,787 people in prison per 100,000 city residents – a total of 243 city residents that are currently behind bars. Roanoke – Virginia's 18th largest locality by population – has 1,045 of the city's slightly more than 100,000 residents behind bars (an incarceration rate of 1,038).

Compare this with the two most populous cities that incarcerate less people per capita. Virginia Beach, with a population of almost 460,000 according to the 2020 census, has 1,823 incarcerated residents (396 per 100,000 residents). Chesapeake, a city of close to 250,000, has 1,516 incarcerated residents, for an incarceration rate of 611 per 100,000.

Overall, the 10 cities with the highest incarceration rates are home to less than 3% of the statewide population, but are home to more than 6% of incarcerated Virginians.

“I think that often in public discourse, the issue of mass incarceration is usually just framed as an issue that impacts big cities and urban centers. But the report makes clear that this is an issue that impacts every county, every city and every locality across the state,” said Kenneth Gilliam, policy director with Virginia New Majority. “And when you think about the share of the total population of the somewhat smaller cities and counties as a shared population, they are losing bigger parts of their population to incarceration.”

Both Gilliam and Wessler said that their study was the first to provide an accurate picture of mass incarceration in Virginia because it was the first done after Virginia stopped counting incarcerated people as residents of their prisons or jails, instead counting them as residents of their home communities.

Kenneth Gilliam. Courtesy of New Virginia Majority.

This means that until recently, those people were counted during each census where they are incarcerated — skewing population data, which affects how voting districts are drawn. Also in Virginia, incarcerated people lose their constitutional right to vote while they are serving their sentences.

Following the 2020 legislative session, the commonwealth joined a growing number of states to end the so-called prison gerrymandering. Last year's statewide elections were supposed to be the first to be held using adjusted population data for redistricting, but because of a delay caused by the pandemic, the 2020 census data used wasn't available in time to draw new maps by election day.

Wessler said that the report was possible only because Virginia has addressed the issue of prison gerrymandering. "We managed to take the data that the state produced to do their reallocation and their redistricting, then we compared it to the raw census data to figure out what the difference was, where people were actually reallocated to and where they came from," he said.

Before the new data was available, one could only have a limited understanding of where incarcerated people were from. "You could look at data from courts, at arrest records, you could see some patterns, but there were a lot of gaps in what you could draw from that," Wessler said.

The new study provides "the most crystal-clear picture ever possible," Wessler added. "The data allows folks to really understand in many different ways what's happening in their communities and hopefully develop solutions and interventions to break that cycle of mass incarceration."

Del. Will Morefield, R-Tazewell County, said that while he found the new study interesting, he was not surprised that high incarceration rates are similar between some urban and rural areas. "I believe this can be directly attributed to the economic condition in Virginia's most distressed localities," he said in an email.

With 941 residents that are currently incarcerated, Morefield's recently redrawn district, which has a population of about 87,000, ranks seventh among the 100 House of Delegates districts. The incarceration rate in his district is 1,091 per 100,000.

Del. Will  
Morefield, R-  
Tazewell County

Morefield said that he became aware of several similarities between rural and urban areas a few years ago when he was working on legislation that would attract companies to economically distressed localities.

"I was surprised to learn that cities like Petersburg and some localities in Southwest Virginia have more in common than most would think. They share similar population rate loss, poverty rates, and

unemployment rates,” Morefield said, adding that he believes that incarceration rates will continue to rise and will only fall if the economic situation improves in those localities. “Economic development must continue to be a priority in economically distressed localities or the financial burden on the commonwealth will continue to grow significantly,” he said.

Anthony West, the chief operations officer of Virginia CARES, a statewide network of community action agencies formed to address the successful reentry and de-institutionalization of felons in the commonwealth, said that besides economic despair, the opioid epidemic and the usage of drugs in Southwest and Southside Virginia are huge drivers of mass incarceration. “I also think that there is a lack of educational, employment and housing opportunities, and I think that there needs to be more funding directed to servicing these areas,” West said.

In Southwest, Virginia CARES partners with People Inc. of Virginia, an Abingdon-based civic group that has been active since 1964 to provide reentry services to the populace. “When a person is released, they have the option of enrolling in the Virginia CARES program at People Inc. Our staff is trained to assist returning citizens with whatever their needs are when released,” West said.

While these community action agencies are doing “a heck of a job” with their limited resources, West said that with additional funding, much more would get done. “Virginia CARES is always looking for more resources and partnerships to provide our services. We know reentry and what it takes for a returning citizen to be successful, we just need a little more in terms of funding to make it all a ‘sure’ reality,” he said.

West has an unlikely supporter in state Sen. Travis Hackworth, R-Tazewell County, whose redrawn Senate district ranks 10th out of 40 with an incarceration rate of 731, or 1,603 residents of the district’s population of roughly 200,000.

“It may sound strange coming from a Republican, but I would like for us to invest in work programs that if you have somebody who has a drug offense, but they don’t have violent record, they will be able to reenter the workforce, maybe with an ankle monitor, and become a productive member of society,” Hackworth said in an interview earlier this week.

As an example of such a program already in place, State Sen. Travis Hackworth, R-Tazewell County.

Hackworth cited Virginia's drug treatment

courts, which are specialized court dockets within the existing structure of the state's court system that offer judicial monitoring of intensive treatment and strict supervision of addicts in drug and drug-related cases. State law requires that local officials must complete a recognized planning process before establishing a drug treatment court program.

But Hackworth is willing to take it a step further and relocate former inmates where they can get a fresh start. "I feel like the only way to make this work is to change the environment, because it seems like a lot of people just don't seem like they can crawl out of the hole," he said. "Maybe we can give them housing or a handout and have the government step in for a limited time. We spend all kinds of money on prisons, why not take some of that and help relocate people so they don't fall back into their old habits?"

As a businessman from Richlands, Hackworth said that he has hired people from the drug court program. "I told them that when they come to work for me, they have a clean slate," he said. "If we can get employers and businesses, faith-based and civic organizations to step up and play a bigger role, maybe we can stop our prisons from being overcrowded."

One example is Buchanan County, which launched its drug courts program 12 years ago during the opioid and methamphetamine epidemics. But the arrival of fentanyl once again forced the county to adjust, said Commonwealth's Attorney Gerald Arrington.

"Our mountainous area has not been a place where cartels and gangs have looked to have a drug trade, and we were protected by our rural geography for a long time. But when unscrupulous doctors and big pharma became our drug dealers, that gave us a problem that we never had to deal with," Arrington said.

Despite the increase in drug related offenses, the county has worked to separate violent criminals and drug smugglers from addicts who mostly commit property crimes or are charged with possession. Four years ago, Buchanan created a community service program in which convicted offenders are given the opportunity to receive an equivalent sentence through working at different government locations in the county, allowing them to maintain employment and be home with their families.

"We are always looking for ways to divert as many of the deserving individuals as we can," Arrington said. "I don't think we will ever incarcerate our way out of the drug problem, but there also has to be a punishment for each crime, and we try to strike a balance between all of that by separating out offenders of violent crime and significant drug distribution."

In neighboring Dickenson County, the local prosecutor said that coal mining and the accompanying service industries are “dangerous and labor intensive,” resulting in injuries and disabilities that often lead to prescription drug addiction. “I believe the opioid epidemic over the last decade disproportionately affected our county and has had a cyclical effect going forward as other drugs, namely meth, have become prevalent,” said Commonwealth’s Attorney Josh Newberry.

But while Dickenson County also has what Newberry called “a very active drug court and a community work program” to which offenders are often sentenced, he added that he believes that county residents view criminal activity as “a more pressing concern than incarcerating those engaged in the same” – especially in light of the alternatives to incarceration available to qualifying individuals.

The representatives of the two nonprofits that conducted the study said that they hope that their analysis will help local law enforcement better understand the needs of their community.

“One of the things we have seen in other states when local county attorneys and prosecutors have accessed this data is that it enables them to do a little self-reflection on how they are handling people who are arrested and facing charges,” said Wessler, the Prison Policy Initiative spokesman.

The intent of the report is not to highlight the most dangerous cities or localities across the state, added Gilliam, the policy director with New Virginia Majority. “I think this is an opportunity for local and state lawmakers alike to really think about what role we can collectively play to improve our state and to make sure that no matter where we live, people have the resources they need, and that localities can change their criminal justice system at every entry point, from the initial hearing to people being released back into their communities,” Gilliam said.

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# Bill that would cap mandatory minimum sentences clears Senate panel

*Criminal justice reform groups are concerned current law leaves prosecutors and judges with little flexibility.*



by **Markus Schmidt**  
January 17, 2022





The State Capitol. Photo by Markus Schmidt.

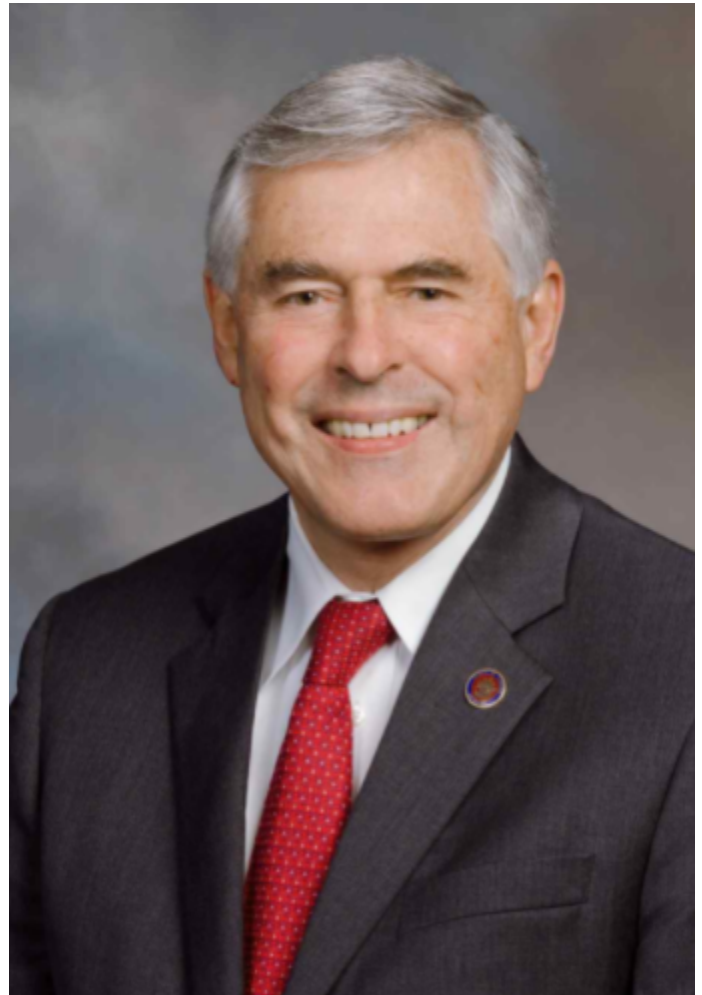
RICHMOND – A total of 224 criminal offenses currently carry mandatory minimum sentences under Virginia law, including 162 felonies and 62 misdemeanors. But a Senate panel on Monday approved legislation that would repeal these mandatory minimums, with the exception of one – the murder of a law enforcement officer, which is punishable by life in prison. The bill also directs the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security to establish a work group to evaluate the feasibility of resentencing of persons previously convicted of a felony offense.

The proposed legislation is based on a similar measure sponsored by state Sen. John Edwards, D-Roanoke, during the 2021 session. But Edwards' bill, and its counterpart in the House of Delegates, died in conference last year after the lawmakers failed to agree on finalized language, despite widespread efforts from the Democratic majorities in both chambers to advance issues related to criminal justice reform, including the repeal of the death penalty in Virginia.

Edwards brought his measure back this year and his proposal was merged with Senate Bill 104, a near identical measure sponsored by Sen. Joe Morrissey, D-Richmond, which the Senate Judiciary Committee – chaired by Edwards – on Monday advanced with a 8-7 vote.

Morrissey told the panel that the bill allows judges some flexibility to sentence individuals without the constraints of minimum sentences. “For far too many times there are circuit court judges that have said that they don’t want to do this, but this is a mandatory minimum sentence,” he said, citing a case where a juvenile was convicted to a mandatory 35 years for robbery charges that he had plead not guilty for. The defendant’s three adult associates, Morrissey said, received sentencing ranges between six and 12 years after pleading guilty.

Mandatory minimum sentencing laws have faced scrutiny in more recent years because they require judges to administer prison terms of a particular length for people convicted of certain federal and state crimes. Critics claim that mandatory minimums effectively remove any consideration of the unique



State Sen. John Edwards, D-Roanoke.

circumstances of the crime or defendant's history, mandating severe punishments, and it undermines judges' ability to do their jobs – to judge.

“Mandatory minimum sentences are often a very obtuse way of achieving a balanced policy outcome,” said Sen. Scott Surovell, D-Fairfax. “We elect these judges because we trust their judgment, their temperament, and we think that once they are given the right amount of information, they will reach the right outcome, and mandatory minimum sentences completely undermine that. And if they are bad policy for one crime, they are bad policy for pretty much all of them.”

While mandatory minimum sentencing laws were originally touted as a tool to deter serious crime and eliminate sentencing disparities, advocates for criminal justice reform are concerned that they lead to higher levels of incarceration. According to data compiled by the Vera Institute of Justice, Virginia in Virginia had locked up almost 60,000 offenders – an increase of nearly 300% since 1983. Virginia ranked first among Southeast states in jail population per capita and third in prison population per capita. African Americans made up 53% of the prison population, but just 20% of the population at large. For the above reasons, several states have repealed their mandatory minimum laws, particularly for non-violent drug offenses.

Molly Gill, vice president of policy for Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM), a national group fighting to repeal all mandatory minimums, said these sentences are “one size fits all” approach. “Anyone who’s been in the justice system knows there’s been no two cases that are exactly the same, no two people that are exactly the same,” Gill said. “Courts need flexibility to consider differences that matter, like age, mental state, role in the offense, motive for the crime, the profit of the person – these are very important facts that mandatory sentences don’t let judges take into account, and they often send people straight to prison and don’t let courts to consider alternatives that make more sense and that save taxpayers more money,” Gill said.

And Ben Wong with the American Civil Liberties Union Virginia underscored that mandatory minimums have “little to no deterrence effect” on crime, but they “do undermine judicial discretion, they do contribute to our over-incarceration crisis, they do exacerbate racial disparities in sentencing and they do frustrate defendants’ constitutional rights.”

Ramin Fatehi of Virginia Progressive Prosecutors for Justice, a group of 12 commonwealth attorneys representing 42% of Virginia citizens, told the Senate panel Monday that mandatory minimum sentences tie the hands of prosecutors and judges, and “thwart the individualized justice” guaranteed under the Constitution. “The idea of flexibility in sentencing and lenience where appropriate, stiff punishments where necessary, is still the right way to go,” he said, adding that mandatories are irrelevant in cases of

violent crime where sentences tend to be much higher than the mandatories. “All they do is bind us and bind judges,” Fatehi said.

But not all prosecutors addressing the Senate panel Monday are backing the proposed legislation in its current form. Clarissa Berry, commonwealth’s attorney for Madison County and an advocate with the Virginia Association of Commonwealth Attorneys (VACA), said that while members support the general idea of addressing the problems of mandatory minimums, some prosecutors are concerned about doing so in a way that “does not take into account the underlying reasons for some of the minimum mandatories.” Berry said that while Edwards’ bill does contain some enhancements for gang recruitment, “it does eliminate some other ones, and those are issues that commonwealth attorneys do have concerns about.”

And Nathan Green, commonwealth’s attorney for Williamsburg and James City County, said that prosecutors are opposed to “wide-sweeping elimination” of all mandatory minimums. “Each one of those mandatory minimum sentences were taken up by the General Assembly individually, and the importance of that change of that mandatory minimum being established was addressed individually, and it’s our position that this should be the way that mandatory minimums should be removed,” Green said.

Law enforcement officers organized under Virginia Sheriffs Association are particularly concerned with the provision that eliminates the minimum mandatory sentence for assault and battery of a law enforcement officer, and for malicious bodily injury, which carries a minimum of just two years. “That gives our members a reason for pause,” said John Jones, the group’s executive director.

State Sen. Mark Obenshain, R-Rockingham County, said that he was worried about what the repeal of mandatory minimum sentences would mean for offenders violating protective orders, which the bill proposes. “We know from experience, they are going to go right back and re-offend again and again,” said Obenshain. “This bill repeals specifically that mandatory minimum, and in addition it repeals the mandatory minimums for sexual assault and forcible sodomy, among other offenses,” he said.

After voting in favor of Senate Bill 104, the Judiciary Committee referred the measure to the Senate Finance Committee.

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# Disabled woman files Fair Housing complaint against Del. March for removing her caregiving grandson from the property. March said his presence violates zoning laws.

*Floyd County Delegate Marie March says her tenant's grandson violated the lease because the property's zoning doesn't allow for more than one tenant. Her tenant says March removed her grandson as retribution for the tenant filing stalking charges against another tenant.*



by **Markus Schmidt**

December 22, 2022



Debra Long with her grandson, Daniel Price. Photo by Brooke Stephenson

*Want more news from Southwest and Southside? [Sign up for our free daily email newsletter](#). We have a weather email, too.*

A disabled Christiansburg woman who is renting an apartment in a boarding house owned by state Del. Marie March, R-Floyd County, has filed a complaint with the Virginia Fair Housing Board against March and her company, Big Bear Properties LLC.

Debra Long, a 65-year-old retiree who has relied on a wheelchair for decades, alleges that the lawmaker has “failed to make a reasonable accommodation” for her disability and has engaged in “intimidation, coercion and harassment” against her by having her adult grandson and state-paid caretaker removed from the property.

Long also alleges in her complaint, which was obtained by Cardinal News, that March refused to accommodate her request because Long had obtained a protective order and had sworn out a warrant on stalking charges against another tenant, whom she identified as the property’s maintenance manager.

March denied the allegations against her, stating in an email Thursday that Long's grandson was "living on the property illegally without a lease" because the property's by-right zoning doesn't allow for more than one tenant. She also denied that the tenant who Long alleges harassed her works as her property manager.

Long moved to Apartment 2 at 3215 Roanoke Street in Christiansburg in early March. The building is located next to the Bear Dance Market & CBD Cafe.



Del. Marie March, R-Floyd County. From campaign website.



The property at 3215 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg. Photo by Brooke Stephenson.

Shortly after moving in, Long and her grandson Daniel Price, who assists her with daily activities, caught a neighbor peeping in her bathroom window, the complaint said.

The incident was only the first in a series of actions that Long alleges amounted to stalking and sexual harassment by the man.

“It was from hundreds of phone calls to sitting outside of my apartment day and night, just all kinds of comments on my phone, asking me out,” Long said in a phone interview Wednesday.

A few months later, in May, the man exposed himself to her, Long alleges. “It was when it was warm weather, he rode his lawnmower up front my apartment door, and he just did it,” she said. According to the complaint, the man also made repeated sexual comments to Long and threatened to throw her grandson off the property.

Cardinal News reached out to the man’s attorney seeking comment, but he did not respond.

March denies that the accused was working for her at the time. “(He) is a tenant living on the property and is not my property manager,” she said in the email, adding that she won’t comment on Long’s allegations of sexual harassment and stalking.

“I don’t weigh in on allegations unless I’m directly involved or witnessed,” she said in the email. “We run clean drug-free properties and don’t tolerate blatant substance abuse/domestic violence/ stalking etc. on our properties. Our lease addresses this, but the landlord-tenant act requires that as a landlord I’m limited as to what I can do until this matter is settled in court.”

Long, however, said in the phone interview that the man had identified himself to her as the property’s maintenance manager when she signed the lease with him, and that she saw him do work around the property daily.

“He mows the lawn in front of the building, and he does all kinds of maintenance,” Long said. “He does the snow removal, and he came and fixed my commode, he repaired my air conditioner. They told me I could pay my rent to (him), but I never did that, I paid at the office.”

Debra Long speaks about her experience as Marie March's tenant.

Long said that she first told March of the man's behavior in July. "She just laughed and she made fun of me and my concerns," she said. March, Long said, never took any action to protect her tenant from her neighbor's unwanted advances.

March said in the email that the man rides a riding lawn mower "as transportation around the property" and to the coffee shop next door. "He has cancer and is very ill. I don't monitor his whereabouts or his day to day operations," she said.

In mid-August, Long texted March about changing the locks on her unit because the man had a key to her unit and she did not feel safe, the complaint said. But Long said she never got a response – even after she asked March personally – and she changed the locks at her own expense.

Concerned for her own and her grandson's safety, Long later that month sought help from the Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society, a nonprofit law practice providing free civil legal services to low-income residents of 17 counties and four small cities in southwestern Virginia.

The group advised her to seek a protective order for herself and Price, which the Christiansburg General District Court granted on Sept. 8 for a period of two years, prohibiting the man from seeking contact with Long. The order also prohibited him from parking in the parking areas in front of Long's apartment and from mowing the lawn when Long's vehicle is parked outside.



Long looks through the protective orders she has filed against the neighbor she accused of sexual harassment.

Long also reached out to March, asking to add Price's name to the lease, because she was dependent on her grandson's assistance with her daily needs, such as bathing and preparing meals. But according to Long's complaint, March denied her request, which Long said her landlord had previously "agreed to verbally" before she moved in earlier in the year.

On Aug. 31, an attorney with the Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society followed up on Long's behalf, seeking March's permission to allow Price access to the property overnight to assist Long with her daily needs, and to come to the apartment throughout the day as needed. The attorney also provided letters from health care providers verifying Long's need for overnight assistance, the complaint said.

On Sept. 9, March called the attorney representing Long. According to the complaint, March told the attorney that she had denied the request because she did not have to follow the housing code and that she was not "running a nursing home."

March reiterated Thursday that her property's by-right zoning only allows for one tenant. She also said in the email that there were "multiple allegations from various tenants" that Price, Long's grandson and caretaker, had "protective orders against him from other tenants."

Cardinal News was unable to verify March's claims Thursday, but court documents show that Price pleaded guilty to violating a protective order in July 2020. He was sentenced to a \$100 fine and 10 days in jail, with nine days suspended.

The dispute escalated on Sept. 12, when March visited Long's unit accompanied by Christiansburg police officers who served Price with trespassing papers and removed him from the property, according to the complaint, in which Long alleges that March had her grandson removed from her home "because of the protective order against" the neighbor she accused of sexual harassment.

Debra Long in the motel where she is currently staying.

Long said in the phone interview that the man has violated the protective order twice since it was issued in September, and that she moved into a motel in November because she didn't feel safe and she required the help of her grandson, who was no longer permitted to enter her apartment.

The neighbor now faces two stalking charges and is scheduled to appear before the Montgomery County-Christiansburg General District Court in early January. Long said that at a first hearing in November, March accompanied the man to court.

Long filed her complaint in November, after she had moved out of March's property. Kerri O'Brien, a spokesperson for the Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation, which oversees the Virginia Fair Housing Office, said in an email earlier this week that the agency won't comment on whether or not there is an open investigation, but that all complaints are taken very seriously.

"The Virginia Fair Housing Law makes it illegal to discriminate in residential housing on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, elderliness, familial status, disability, source of funds, sexual orientation, gender identity, or military status," O'Brien said, adding that once an investigation is closed, "the file becomes public record and anyone can request a copy of it."

Once the Fair Housing Office accepts a complaint for investigation, the complaint is assigned to an investigator who then interviews both the complainant and the respondent and any possible witnesses.

"During the investigation, there's usually an effort to coordinate a conciliation. This is a voluntary process where the parties attempt to resolve the complaint by agreeing to mutually acceptable terms. That can possibly include a settlement, education or new policies with regards to the property owners or management company," O'Brien said.

If conciliation is successful, the investigation will be suspended. If it's unsuccessful, or if one of the parties does not want to attempt conciliation, the investigation continues until it is complete, and a final report is then given to the Fair Housing Board.

"If the Board finds discrimination, the charge is referred to the Attorney General's Office for further action," O'Brien said.

Because her lease at the Roanoke Street apartment does not expire until March 31, Long said she has continued to make her monthly rent payments despite no longer living there. "I still have all my stuff there, I don't know what will happen to it," she said.

Close to running out of money, Long said she doesn't know how much longer she will be able to afford staying at the motel. "I'm just about out of funds, and I'm trying to get an apartment, but I don't know if I will get it in time. Me and my grandson may end up being homeless on the street. He was the only reason that I moved in down at the apartment, it was under the agreement that he could be there to take care of me, but Marie got really angry because I pressed those charges, and she did what she did, throw him off the property."

When asked what she wants to accomplish with her Fair Housing Board complaint against March, Long let out a deep sigh.

"I filed it because I felt like my rights had been violated, and she did not protect her tenants," Long said.

*Brooke Stephenson and Megan Schnabel have contributed to this story.*