By Mark J. Rozell

Virginia is one of two states (the other being New Jersey) with an “off-year” election to pick its governor. On November 7 (for those who did not vote early) Virginians also will elect their lieutenant governor and attorney general.

Although the odd-year election cycle takes Virginia out of the orbit of presidential and congressional campaign politics, voter turnout tends to suffer. The result is that we see the gubernatorial candidates putting a very heavy emphasis on motivating their strongest supporters to come out and vote.

That is one reason why the intensity of these campaigns, especially as we get closer to the Election Day, always seems much greater than the generally more restrained temperaments of the two major candidates for governor, Republican Ed Gillespie and Democrat Ralph Northam.

Is it possible to project a likely outcome in this election? Here I urge the greatest caution, as voters historically have had a way of defying what experts tell us is likely to happen.

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Nonetheless, it is possible to offer some evidence of general trend-lines that provide insight into the opportunities and challenges faced by both of the gubernatorial candidates. So here it goes:

Since 1977, with one exception, the incumbent President’s Party loses the Virginia gubernatorial election the next year. Just as voters typically turn out many of the presidential party’s members of Congress in the midterms, the Virginia gubernatorial race has been an early indictor of this trend. That would suggest a big advantage for Democrat Ralph Northam.

But the lone exception actually was the latest election for governor in 2013 when Democrat Terry McAuliffe defied the trends of history and won in a year when his party held the White House. There is no reason to suggest Ed Gillespie cannot do the same. Gillespie is a solid candidate who in 2014 almost beat the very popular incumbent U.S. senator Mark Warner.

President Donald J. Trump has a roughly 33% approval rating in Virginia. This poses a challenge to Gillespie as he tries to both win over Trump enthusiasts and broaden his appeal among voters who dislike the president.

Democrats have won the Virginia governorship six of the latest nine election cycles, beginning with the election of Charles Robb in 1981 who led a newly multi-racial Democratic Party that was also able to attract the votes of moderate upper-income suburban whites. During this period, Republicans generally won during periods of economic anxiety (1993, 2009) or with a strong populist message (the anti-car tax pledge in 1997). Gillespie has thus focused on claims that the state economy is underperforming under Democratic leadership as well as a more populist message regarding so-called sanctuary cities (that actually do not exist in Virginia).

Republicans have not won any statewide race in Virginia since the anti-Obama wave in 2009. The fastest growing segments of the state population are minority voters who heavily lean Democratic right now. These trends certainly look positive for Northam but again are no guarantee.

And finally, most of the public opinion polls show Northam with a lead at the time of this writing. It is important not to look upon polls are predictive – they tell only how the electorate was leaning at the time the poll was taken. Things often change from the time a poll is taken Election Day. Sometimes there is a late surge for a candidate that no poll detects. Polls four years until ago showed a very big lead for Terry McAuliffe. He won by a narrow margin.

Bottom line: history and the polls give Northam an edge. But only the voters decide what really happens.

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The Thomas Jefferson Institute for Public Policy will hold its 3rd Annual Conference on the future of Virginia’s economy as President Trump and Congress move ahead with the proposed reforms to overhaul US tax code. Pakistan American Business Association, which has been working with the Thomas Jefferson Institute for several years, is one of the organizations which are supporting this important conference to discuss what proposed tax reforms mean for Virginia, its people, businesses and for the nation. Noted economic experts and scholars will discuss the impact of tax reforms and explore which policy initiatives work and what is needed to create the strongest economic growth. Following are the details of the program:

**Speakers:**

- **Moore**  
  Stephen Moore: Heritage Foundation, architect of Trump’s tax proposal  
- **Dunkelberg**  
  William Dunkelberg: Chief Economic, NFIB  
- **Miller**  
  Matthew Miller: V.P., Business Roundtable  
- **Cassaday**  
  Stephan Cassaday: Cassaday and Company  
- **Davis**  
  Tom Davis: Former Congressman and Director at Deloitte

**Register:** thomasjeffersoninst.org  
**Date:** Friday, November 10, 2017  
**Time:** 9:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.  
**Venue:** George Mason University  
“The Hub” Fairfax Campus
A delegation from the National University of Science and Technology, NUST, Pakistan’s leading public research university recently visited George Mason University in Virginia to explore avenues for cooperation between the two institutions.

Rector NUST, Lt. Gen. (retired) Naweed Zaman led the four-member delegation which met GMU President Ángel Cabrera, Provost Dr. S. David Wu and other faculty members. The visit was facilitated by Mr. M. Siddique Sheikh, the Chairman of Pakistan American Business Association, (PABA). Mr. Sheikh has served on GMU’s Board of Visitors for four years. He is currently the International Member of NUST.

NUST and GMU have held cooperation agreements since 2012 and a number of NUST students are currently undergoing different degree programs at GMU. The top officials of the two universities held discussions to explore areas of potential research collaboration and student/researchers exchange programs.

Mr. Sheikh informed the visiting delegation that PABA was actively working to promote people-to-people contacts between Pakistan and the United States in areas of business, economy, trade and education. The delegation thanked Mr. Sheikh for facilitating the visit and lauded his efforts to promote linkages between the two universities.

NUST was ranked among 500 world top universities by the UK-based Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) in June this year. The University was ranked 437th in the world, 91 places higher than its previous world Universities Ranking.
With all the financial decisions that need to be made when purchasing a home, choosing the options that make the best sense for you can seem overwhelming. Given the uncertainty of interest rates and the security of lenders, deciding what type of mortgage to choose and from whom to borrow can be a difficult and time-consuming task.

One of the most important decisions is what type of mortgage to choose. The choice between a fixed rate and variable rate mortgage can be an intimidating task if you are not armed with the facts, so here are a few things to consider before making a decision.

What Is Your Current Financial Situation?

One of the most important considerations to take into account before choosing a fixed rate or variable rate mortgage is knowing your current, short-term, and long-term financial outlook. Historically, those who choose a variable rate mortgage end up on the winning end of the deal. Since rates fluctuate with the economy, and fixed rates are in most cases higher than variable rates (depending on when you took out your mortgage), the saving in the long term can be quite considerable. If you are in a current financial situation in which your budget cannot handle the potential ups and downs of a variable rate, and a regular monthly payment makes more sense, then a fixed rate is probably a better choice.

What Is Your Long-Term Financial Outlook?

Another decision to make when selecting a loan is the amortization period and the length of your current mortgage interest rate agreement. If your current financial outlook is very similar to your long-term financial outlook, then you may want to consider a longer term, variable rate loan. If, however, you are likely to have a considerable change in your income through expected promotion, retirement, or one income being lost, then choosing a shorter term, fixed rate may be the better choice.

Regardless of your financial situation, it is always important to get the advice of a qualified financial adviser, and ensure that you get your mortgage through an established and reputable lender.
New Fairfax County Public Safety Headquarters Opened

The new Fairfax County Public Safety Headquarters is now open after many years of planning and building. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held this morning to mark the official move from the Massey Building to the new facility on Government Center Parkway.

The Massey Building has served as the headquarters for the Fairfax County Police and Fire Departments for over 40 years. The new Public Safety Headquarters is an eight story, 274,000 square foot building, and will house nearly 400 police department employees.

It will also be home to public resources, including our department’s Central Records, Fingerprinting, and the False Alarm Reduction Unit. Employees and visitors can expect to see enhanced security measures that will safeguard the public, and the men and women who work in the building.

All the bureaus and divisions within the police department are slowly phasing over to the new building through the end of the year. During the week of December 15th, our Central Records will be moving into the Public Safety Headquarters. This section offers many resources for citizens in need of copies of police reports, as well as of fingerprinting, criminal record checks, and expungement requests.

The new site is also home to police and fire memorials. They are prominently displayed in front of the building to honor the men and women who have fallen in the line of duty. The side-by-side memorials signify the unity and brotherhood with our public safety partners.

Visitors can also spend time in our police museum which is incorporated throughout the building. It offers an unique experience with artifacts and historical memorabilia that memorializes our robust history of public service.

Along with the move comes some new green features integrated into the building. Officers, staff, and visitors will see green roofs, eco-smart environmental controls, rain water harvesting, and energy efficient LED lighting throughout the building.
*More than 8200 Pakistani Companies Registered in FY-17*

The improving security and economic situation helped accelerate economic activities in Pakistan in the financial year 2017. According to the Security Exchange Commission of Pakistan as many as 8286 companies were incorporated in FY 2017 compared to 6200 companies in FY 2016. The incorporation of companies has seen tremendous increase of 109.24% growth during 2013-2017. This trend continued during current fiscal year as Q1 FY 2018 has seen 64% growth compared to the corresponding quarter last year.

*Foreign Companies Invested in 562 Pakistani Companies*

Foreign Investment was reported in 562 new companies, including 33 from China, according to the official statistics. Most of these investments are due to the ongoing multibillion dollar China Pakistan Economic Corridor. The new trend is in contract to the performance of the previous years in the direct foreign investment which suffered mainly due to the security situation in Pakistan which has improved significantly in recent years due to the several military operations, mostly in the tribal region.

*Introduction of New 2D Bar-Codes to Eradicate Fake Drugs*

Pakistan has introduced new 2D bar-coding of drugs to eradicate counterfeit and spurious drugs. Pharmaceutical manufacturers are required to emboss 2D Barcode data matrix on their registered drug products from all batches manufactured by December 15, 2017. Barcodes will be according to the standards of GS-1 embedding Product identification code (GTIN), Expiry Date, Batch Number and Price on the secondary packaging of drugs. Companies will maintain database of bar-coding information of their products and will also submit it to the relevant authorities.

*Standard & Poor’s Affirms Pakistan’s 'B/B' Ratings with Stable Outlook*

The global rating agent Standard & Poor's Global Ratings (S&P) in its latest report has affirmed Pakistan's 'B' long-term and short-term sovereign credit rating. The outlook for the long-term ratings remains stable. S&P further expects Pakistan's GDP to grow at an average of 5.7% in the period 2017 - 2020. The report acknowledges that the present government has improved security situation in the country, narrowed infrastructure and energy gaps and reduced power shortages in the country. The report points to higher than expected current account and fiscal account deficits in the fiscal year ended June 2017.

*Largest Italian Energy Company Evince Interest in Pakistan*

Mr. Giuseppe Zampini, the President of ansaldo energia, the largest Italian company in power engineering and fourth largest in the world, recently visited Pakistan and discussed business opportunities in Pakistan. Ansaldo Energia is a leading international player in the power generation industry, to which it brings an integrated model embracing turnkey power plants construction, power equipment manufacturing and services and nuclear activities.

*Pakistan, EFTA States Discuss Trade Opportunities*

Pakistan and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) States agreed to explore future bilateral trade and investment opportunities. The first meeting of the Joint Committee of Pakistan and EFTA member states was held in Geneva. EFTA is free trade association of four member states comprising Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. Bilateral trade and investment between the two sides hold enormous potential.
The Pakistan American Business Association was established in 1986 to bring together business people of diverse occupations, providing opportunities for them to flourish and help others grow.

Through our board, active members and leadership in the United States of America and in Pakistan, PABA has been able to achieve many successes at local, national and international level. PABA nurtures business opportunities between Pakistan and the United States and enables its members to develop new businesses and promotes dialogue between Pakistani and American government officials.

What we have done

♦ Local, state, national and international conventions
♦ Job fairs for aspiring business people
♦ Relief efforts for Katrina Hurricane and 2010 Pakistan Flood victims
♦ International Trade Conference in Pakistan in 2004
♦ Raised Funds for Shaukat Khanum Hospital in 1995
♦ And much more,,,,,,,,,

PABA To Host International Trade Show in Washington D.C. Soon

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