CRAGGIO CONSULTING, LLC

VIRGINIA POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE PORTAL

virginia.gop

A Party Website That Asks for Money First and Helps Voters Last

A critical analysis of the Republican Party of Virginia's website: what a voter can and cannot do there, how current it is, how fast and accessible it is, how it ranks for visitors, and what has changed since November 7, 2026

0	14 sec	0	1
links on the homepage to Virginia's own Department of Elections	for the homepage's main content to show on a phone (middle of 3 tests; Google calls 2.5 seconds good)	news posts from July through October 2026, the fall campaign	event on the statewide calendar from Nov 11, 2026 through the end of 2027

November 11, 2026

Words used in this paper

A few terms come up again and again. Here is what each one means in plain English.

Term	What it means
RPV	The Republican Party of Virginia, the state party that runs virginia.gop.
RNC	The Republican National Committee, the national party in Washington. It runs a separate site called vote.gop.
ELECT	The Virginia Department of Elections, the state agency that runs voter registration, polling places and absentee ballots. Its site is elections.virginia.gov.
Homepage	The first page you see when you type virginia.gop into a browser.
First screen	What shows on your screen before you scroll down at all.
Click count	How many times you have to click or tap, starting from the homepage, to get something done.
Lighthouse	A free testing tool made by Google and built into the Chrome browser. It loads a page the way a mid-range phone on a slow cell connection would, then gives scores from 0 to 100. Google's own scale: 90 to 100 is good, 50 to 89 needs work, under 50 is poor.
Speed score	Lighthouse's score for how fast a page loads and becomes usable.
Main-content load time	How long until the biggest picture or block of text on the page shows up. Google calls it "Largest Contentful Paint." Google says 2.5 seconds or less is good and more than 4 seconds is poor.
Real-visitor speed data	Google collects load times from real Chrome users (the "Chrome User Experience Report," also called Core Web Vitals field data). We could not get this data for the site; see "How we checked."
Disability access (accessibility)	Whether people who are blind, have low vision, or cannot use a mouse can still use the site, for example with a screen reader that reads the page out loud. The common rulebook is WCAG, the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.
Screen reader	Software that reads a web page aloud for a blind or low-vision person. It needs labels on buttons, links and pictures to work.
axe	A free, widely used automated checker that tests a page against the WCAG rulebook and counts each element that breaks a rule.
SEO	Search engine optimization: how easy it is for Google and other search engines to read a page and send people to it.
HTTPS and the security certificate	The padlock in your browser. It means the connection is encrypted. TLS is the technical name for that encryption.
Security headers	Short instructions a website sends to your browser to block common attacks, such as fake copies of the page inside another site.
WordPress	The free software the site is built on. It keeps its own record of when each page was published and last edited.
Similarweb	A private company that estimates how many people visit websites. Its free page shows rough numbers; they are estimates, not counts.
Tranco	A university research list that ranks the world's most visited websites by combining several traffic sources. Number 1 is the most visited site on the internet; a bigger number means fewer visitors.
Wayback Machine	The Internet Archive's free service that saves copies of web pages over time.

Executive Assessment

Bottom line. The Republican Party of Virginia's website is built to collect money and contact information, not to help a voter vote. On a phone, the entire first screen is a gala banner and five donation buttons. The "Vote" button hands you to a Republican National Committee form that requires your name, home address, email and mobile number and signs you up for recurring texts, and the homepage has zero links to Virginia's Department of Elections [1][2]. The only page about congressional candidates still shows the 2022 slate and has not been edited since July 21, 2022 [3][4]. The party posted no news at all from July through October 2026, the months of the fall campaign, and its statewide calendar lists exactly one event between today and the end of 2027 [4][5]. On a phone, the homepage's main content took about 14 seconds to appear in two of three Google tests, more than five times Google's "good" line [6]. Nothing we flagged on November 7 has been fixed [7].

This is a critical paper, so it is built to be checked. Every number traces to a numbered source at the end. Where a number is an outside estimate, we say so and name who made it. The party's own visitor counts are not public. The site does run Google Analytics, so the party has real numbers; we do not [8].

What the low marks do not mean: they do not mean the site is empty or abandoned. It has a long directory of county party chairs, a working events calendar with search, a real candidate-training curriculum, a current November 6 election statement, and a page for reporting election problems [7]. The problem is that the things a voter needs most, where to vote, who is on the ballot, what to do this weekend, are either missing, out of date, or behind a sign-up form.

Eight findings, each sourced.

1. **The Vote button is a sign-up form, not voting help.** Two clicks from the homepage (Take Action, then Vote) lead to vote.gop, "Paid for by the Republican National Committee." The first screen requires 8 fields before any information appears, the State box starts blank with all 50 states, and the mobile number field joins a recurring text-message program. Not one link on that page or on the virginia.gop homepage goes to elections.virginia.gov [1][2]. Figure 1.
2. **The candidate page is four years old.** virginia.gop/congressional-candidates/ is titled "Meet your 2022 Congressional Candidates!", was last edited July 21, 2022, and still lists the 2022 slate. Nothing on the homepage or anywhere else on the site links to it. The only 2026 candidate information is a single May 28, 2026 news post [3][4]. Figures 2 and 3.
3. **The news went quiet during the campaign.** The site published 68 news posts in 2025 and 11 in 2026 through November 11. After June 17, 2026, the next post was the November 6 election-results statement: zero posts in July, August, September and October [4]. Figures 4 and 5.
4. **The calendar is party business, and it has run dry.** Of 148 events listed for 2026, 135 (91%) are party nominating meetings or conventions. The calendar shows zero events in October 2026, and from November 11, 2026 through December 31, 2027 it lists one event: a Fifth District convention on November 14 [5]. Figure 6.
5. **Stale pages are still live and still asking.** The resume bank opens "As we look ahead to November 2025" (last edited June 29, 2025). The Virginia Victory page still recruits volunteers

for the 2025 statewide ticket "this November" (last edited July 23, 2025). The redistricting page still says "If their rigged maps pass," six months after the party's own May 8, 2026 statement on the court ruling (last edited March 20, 2026) [4][9].

6. **It is slow on a phone and heavy everywhere.** Google's Lighthouse gave the homepage a phone speed score of 59 out of 100 (middle of three runs) against 77 for Virginia Democrats. The homepage weighs about 3.5 megabytes on a phone; Google estimates about 1.6 megabytes of that could be saved just by sending pictures in a better size and format [6]. Figures 7 and 8.
7. **Blind and low-vision visitors hit walls.** An automated disability-access scan found 202 rule failures across 10 party pages. The county directory alone has 125 links a screen reader cannot name, and 122 of its 123 email links are bare envelope icons with no label [10]. Figure 9.
8. **The traffic is small, and visitors leave fast.** Similarweb estimates about 10,300 visits to virginia.gop in October 2026, against about 13,500 for Virginia Democrats. The average visit lasted 40 seconds, less than half the Democrats' 86 seconds. The Tranco research ranking puts the site at number 966,509 among all websites on November 10, slightly ahead of Virginia Democrats (1,326,297) [11][12]. Figures 10 and 11.

The scorecard

This table sums up how the site does on each job a voter or supporter might bring to it. "Clicks" counts from the desktop homepage on November 11, 2026.

Job	Clicks	Result on Nov 11, 2026	What it actually means
Find where and how to vote	2	RNC sign-up form, 8 required fields	No Virginia voting information on the site; you must hand over contact details first [1][2]
Register to vote	1, after scrolling about 1.5 screens	Same RNC form	Same as above [2]
See who is on my ballot	No menu route	2022 candidates page; one May 28, 2026 news post	No current candidate guide exists [3][4]
Find an upcoming event	1	1 event listed through 2027	Nothing to attend after November 14 [5]
Volunteer	2	Contact form, phone required	No choice of task, place or time [13]
Find my local party	1	123 localities, 2 vacant, 72 with a website link	Works, with some dead links [14]
Search the site	Not possible	No search box on the homepage	You cannot type a question [2]
Donate	1, no scrolling	10 donation or store links on the homepage	The easiest thing to do on the site [2]

Part 1. Can a voter actually use it?

We started where any voter would: the homepage. On a desktop screen, the first view is a banner for the party's December 4–6, 2026 Annual Advance gala at the Hyatt Regency in Tysons, followed by a "Donate Today" bar with buttons for $50, $100, $250, $500 and $1,000 [2]. On a phone it is worse: the logo, the gala banner and five stacked donation buttons fill the entire first screen (Figure 1). There is no voting information anywhere you can see without scrolling.

Of the 43 links on the homepage, 10 go to donation or store pages. None goes to the Virginia Department of Elections, which is the only place a Virginian can actually check registration, find a polling place, request an absentee ballot or track one [2][15].

The Vote button. "Vote" sits inside the Take Action menu. Clicking it sends you to gopvote.co/VA, which forwards to vote.gop. At the bottom of that page: "Paid for by the Republican National Committee." The form requires first name, last name, home address, city, state, ZIP code, email and mobile number. Next to the phone box: "By providing your phone number, you are joining a recurring text messaging program." The State menu starts empty and lists all 50 states, even though the visitor came from a Virginia page [1]. The "Register to Vote / Learn More" link further down the homepage goes to the same form. We did not fill in the form, so we cannot say what a voter sees after handing over their information. What we can say is that virginia.gop itself offers no voting help, and its only voting path requires joining a national party texting list first.

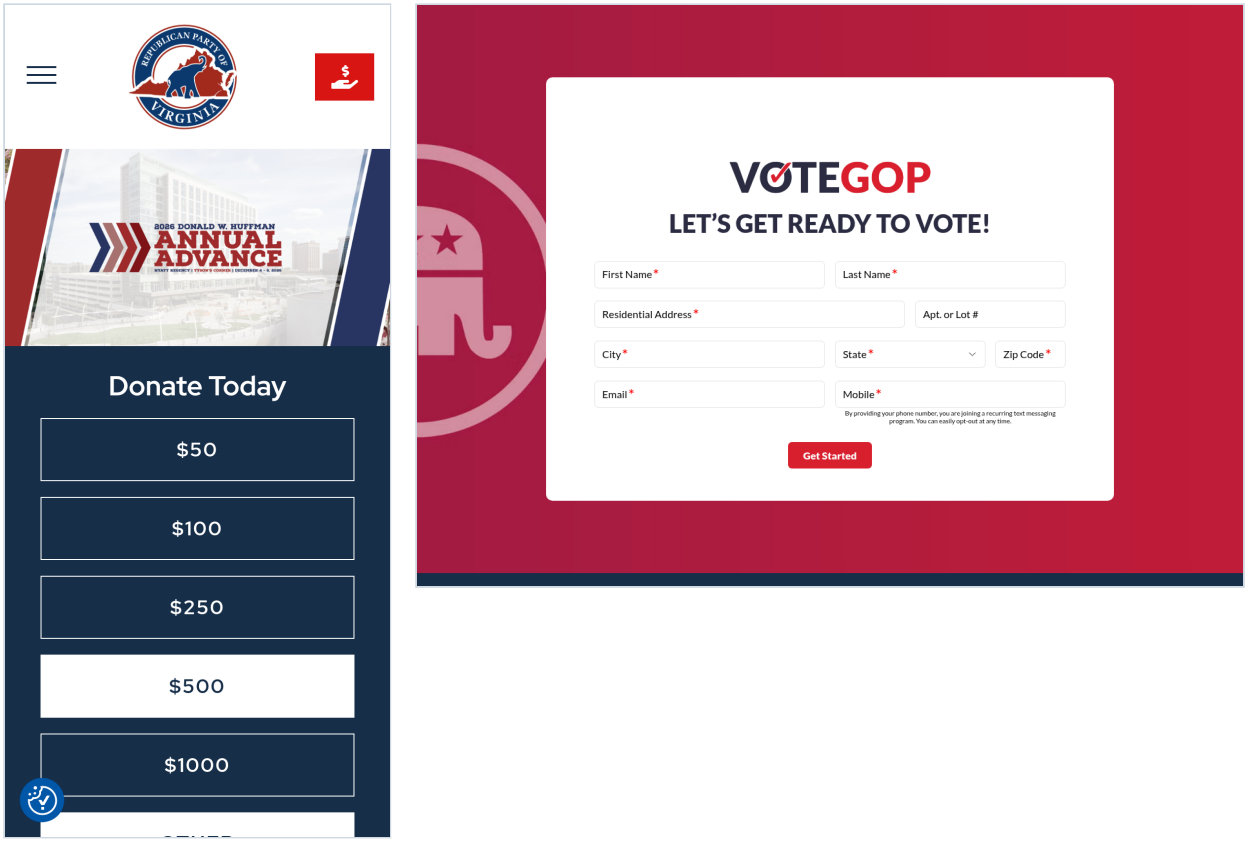


Figure 1. Left: virginia.gop on a phone-sized screen, first screen, November 11, 2026, about 4:37 PM ET. Right: where the Vote button lands, vote.gop, about 4:40 PM ET. What it shows: the phone's first screen is a gala banner and donation

buttons; the Vote page requires eight fields. What it is not: a test of what happens after the form is sent, which we did not do.

Who is on my ballot? Nothing current. The site's own list of pages shows one page about congressional candidates: virginia.gop/congressional-candidates/. Its headline is "Meet your 2022 Congressional Candidates!" The site's records show it was created and last edited on July 21, 2022 [3][4]. It still shows the 2022 slate: Rob Wittman, Jen Kiggans, Terry Namkung, Leon Benjamin, Bob Good, Ben Cline, Yesli Vega, Karina Lipsman, Morgan Griffith, Hung Cao and Jim Myles [3]. It also carries a copy error that has sat there for four years: Karina Lipsman is listed under an "8th District" heading, while her biography says "Seventh" [3].

No page on the site links to it, and it is not on the homepage or in either menu. A voter would only land there from a search engine or an old bookmark, and then they would be reading about the 2022 election. The only 2026 candidate information on the whole site is a single news post from May 28, 2026, "Republican Party of Virginia announces candidates for U.S. House seats," which describes an August 4 primary that has since passed [4][7]. There is no current 2026 candidates page, no "who is on my ballot" lookup, and no list of state legislators or local candidates [2][4].



Figure 2. virginia.gop/congressional-candidates/, November 11, 2026, about 4:36 PM ET. What it shows: the only congressional candidates page on the site, still headed 2022. What it is not: the party's 2026 nominee list.

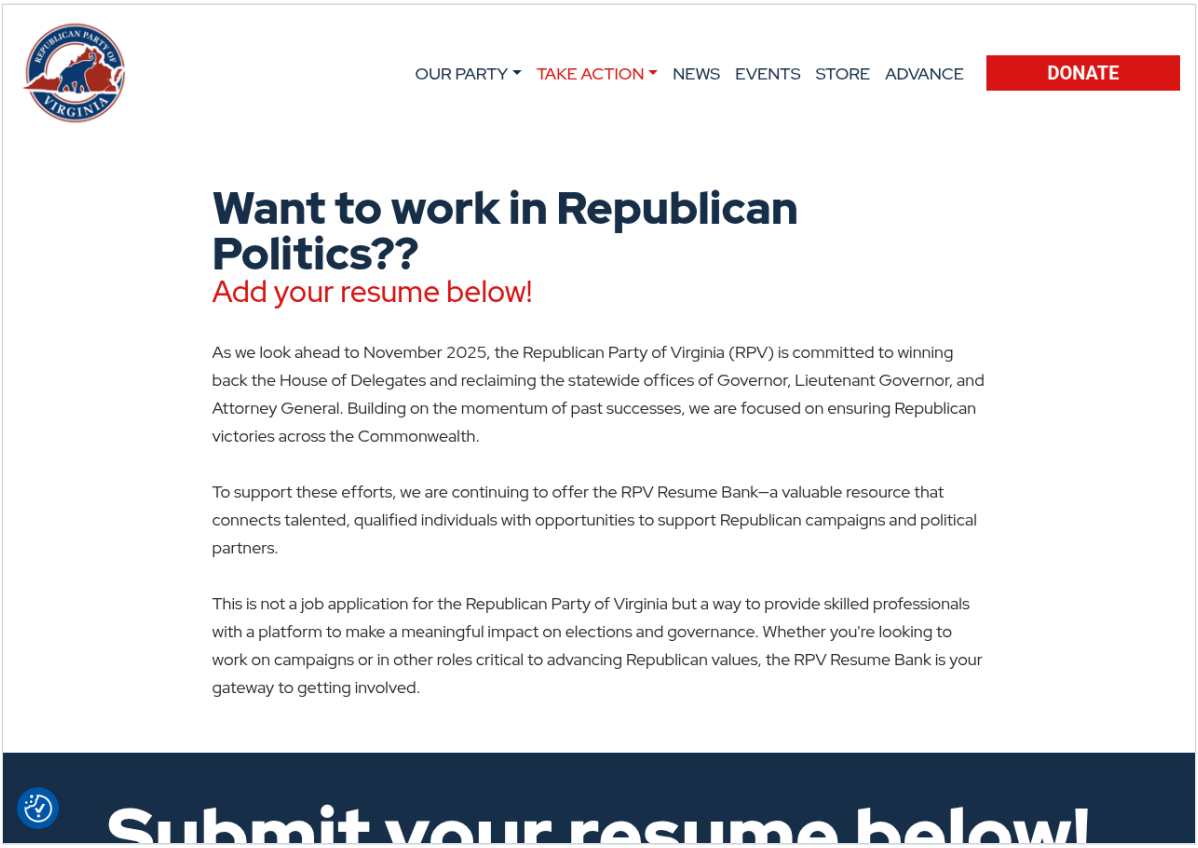


Figure 3. virginia.gop/resume-bank/, November 11, 2026, about 4:36 PM ET. What it shows: a recruiting page that still "looks ahead to November 2025." What it is not: proof that nobody at the party reads it.

Volunteering. Take Action, then Volunteer, gets you a form: first name, last name, email, phone (marked required) and ZIP code, with the promise that "someone from our team will reach out as soon as possible." There is no list of jobs, no way to pick door-knocking over phone calls, no dates, no place [13]. The site's records show the volunteer page was last edited January 7, 2022 [4]. A neighbor with one free Saturday has no way to find out what they could do that Saturday.

Events. The calendar works, has a search box and lets you switch between month, list and map views [5][7]. But look at what is in it. Of the 148 events listed for 2026, 135 are party nominating meetings, "mass meetings," "party canvasses" (a party term for a nominating vote, not door-knocking) or conventions. Among the rest are local committee meetings, one rally and one film showing [5]. October 2026 has no events at all. From today through the end of 2027, there is one: the Fifth District convention on November 14. The party's own Advance gala on December 4–6 is not on the calendar [5].

Finding your local party. This is the site's best voter tool. One click on "My County Leaders" opens a list of 123 counties and cities with a chair's name, and 72 of them have a "Visit Site" link [14]. Two localities, Galax and Highland County, are marked VACANT. A few links are broken: the Salem link is typed wrong and leads to a "Page not found" page on virginia.gop itself, and the Bristol link leads to a "not found" error [14]. Of the 72 website links, 38 still use old unencrypted "http://" addresses [14]. 80 of the 123 chair email addresses are personal Gmail, Yahoo, Verizon and similar accounts rather

than party addresses [14]. That is common for volunteer committees, but it means the list goes stale every time a chair changes.

The phone number. The homepage footer shows the headquarters number as 804-780-0111. Tap it on a phone and it dials 804-780-011, one digit short, because the link behind it is missing the last 1 [2]. This was flagged on November 7 and is still broken.

Part 2. How current is it?

WordPress, the software the site runs on, keeps a public record of when each page and post was published and last edited. We pulled the full list: 44 pages and 287 news posts [4].

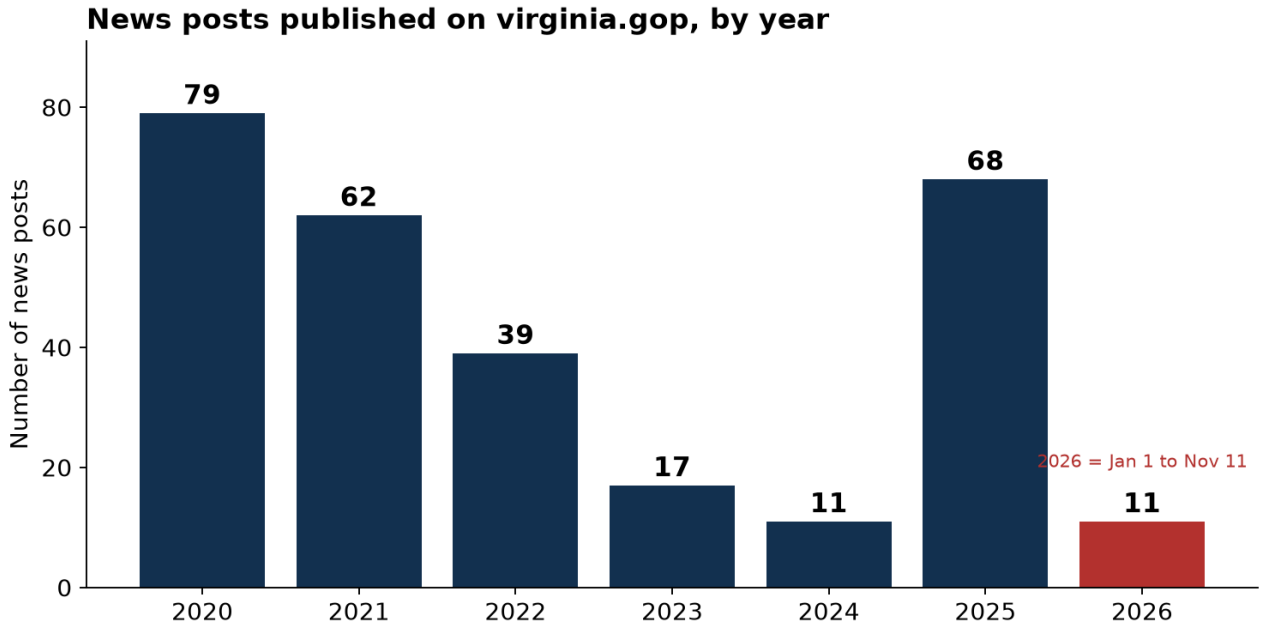


Figure 4. News posts published on virginia.gop each calendar year, from the site's own WordPress records. 2026 runs January 1 to November 11. What it is: how often the party posted news. What it is not: a count of social media posts, emails or press releases sent elsewhere.

The party posted 79 news items in 2020, 62 in 2021, 39 in 2022, 17 in 2023 and 11 in 2024. It ramped up to 68 in 2025, the governor's race year, with 15 to 18 posts a month from July through October 2025. Then it fell off a cliff [4].

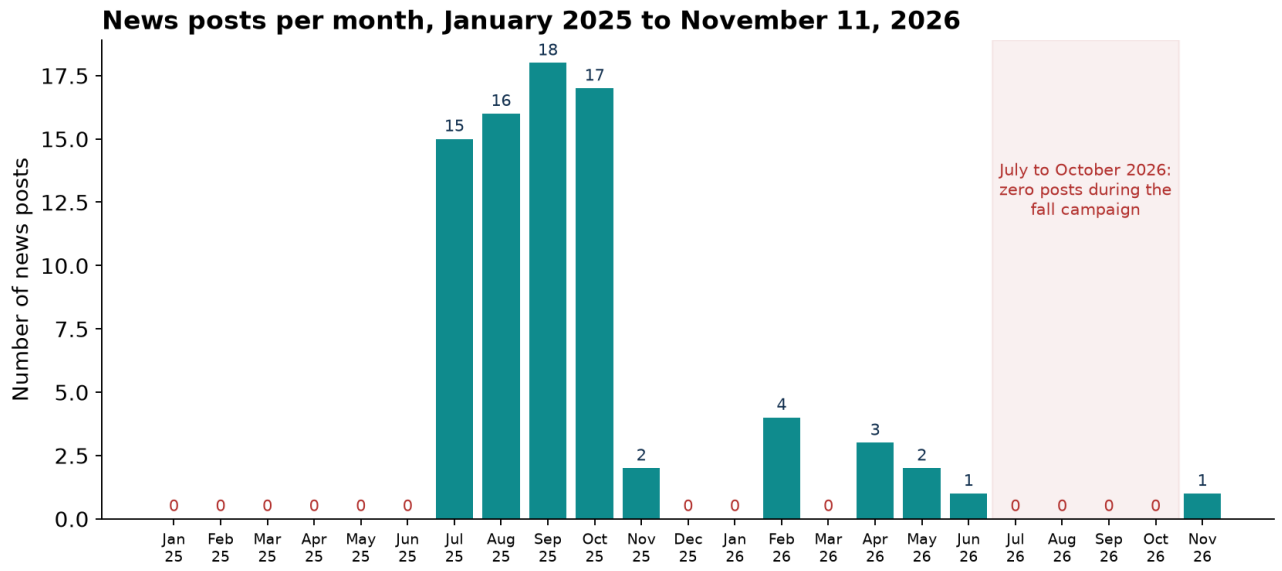


Figure 5. News posts per month, January 2025 through November 11, 2026, from the site's WordPress records. Grey bars are months with zero posts. What it is not: a measure of the party's activity off the website.

In 2026 the site posted 11 news items in total. The last one before the election was June 17, 2026, about a new Lynchburg city chair. The next was the chairman's statement on election results on November 6. In between, through the whole fall campaign for Congress and the U.S. Senate, the site posted nothing [4].

The page records tell the same story. Of the 44 pages, 32 were last edited before 2026, and 17 have not been touched since 2022 or earlier [4]. Some examples that are still live today:

Page	Last edited	What it still says
/congressional-candidates/	July 21, 2022	"Meet your 2022 Congressional Candidates!" [3]
/volunteer/	January 7, 2022	A contact form with no roles or dates [13]
/check-back-soon/	January 18, 2022	"Please check back soon for Advance Registration Details!" under a 2022 Advance heading [16]
/vote-2-2/	August 24, 2021	A page titled "Vote" with nothing on it but the footer [16]
/resume-bank/	June 29, 2025	"As we look ahead to November 2025" [9]
/virginia-victory/	July 23, 2025	A sign-up to "win big this November" for the 2025 statewide ticket [9]
/stop-gerrymandering/	March 20, 2026	"If their rigged maps pass," months after the court ruling [9]
/candidate-training-school/	June 16, 2026	A June 20 to July 7, 2026 schedule, all past, with no next date [9]
/our-party/	September 10, 2024	Six broad principles; no issue positions [7]

The homepage itself was last edited November 4, 2026, and no page on the site has been edited since then, according to the site's own records [4]. The footer still reads "© 2021." That alone proves

nothing, but together with the rest it shows a site that gets attention before a gala and not much in between.

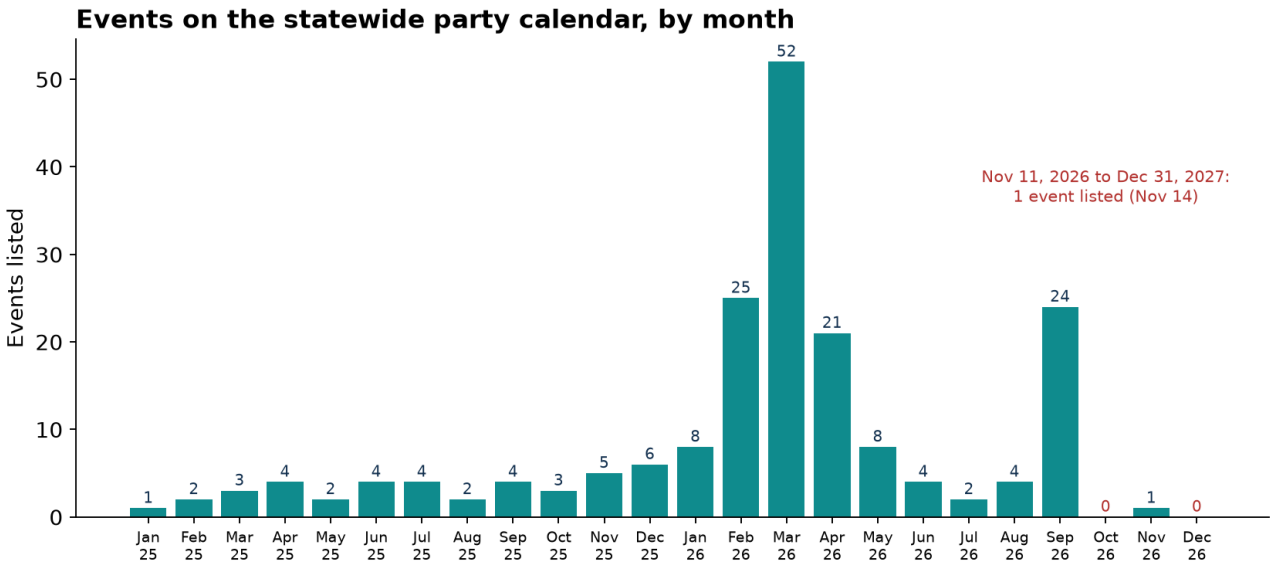


Figure 6. Events on the statewide party calendar by month, January 2025 through December 2026, from the calendar's own public data feed. November 2026 includes the one upcoming event (November 14). What it is: what the party chose to list. What it is not: every local committee event in Virginia.

Part 3. Speed on a phone

Most people who look up a party today do it on a phone. We ran Google's Lighthouse test on the homepage of virginia.gop and three comparison sites: Virginia Democrats (vademocrats.org), the Pennsylvania Republican Party (pagop.org) and the Maryland Republican Party (mdgop.org). Lighthouse pretends to be a mid-range phone on a slow cell connection. We ran the two Virginia sites three times each and report the middle result, because speed tests bounce around [6].

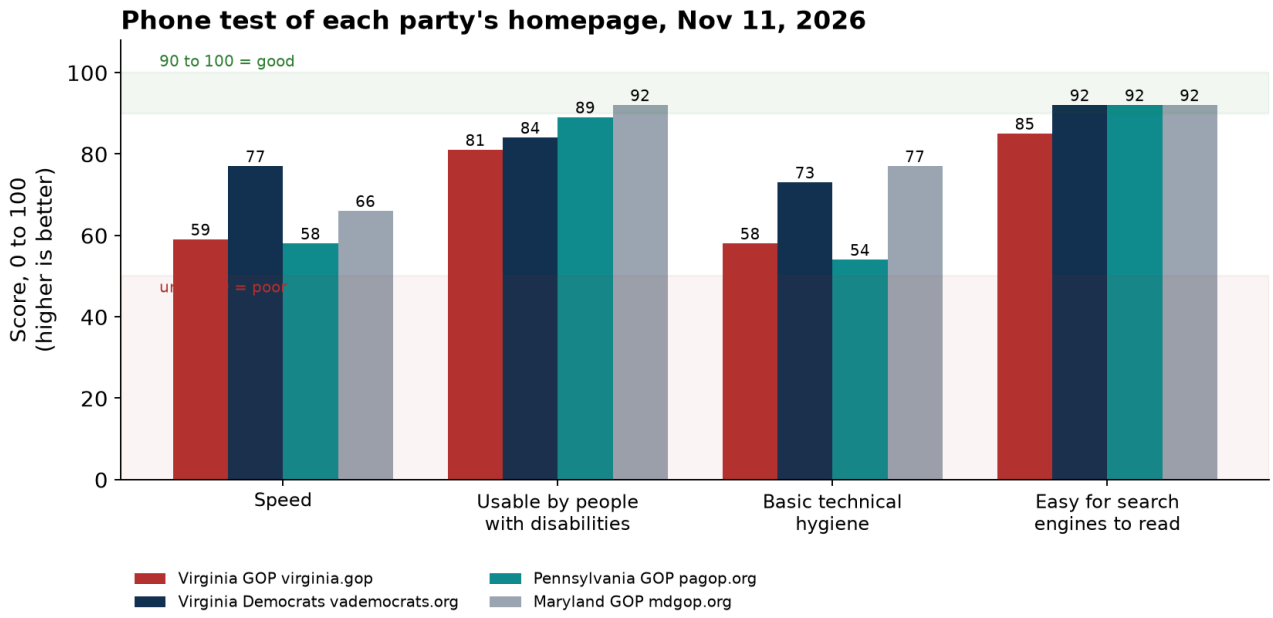


Figure 7. Google Lighthouse phone scores for each party's homepage, November 11, 2026, 4:33 to 4:35 PM ET. Each score is 0 to 100; 90 to 100 is good, under 50 is poor. Speed for the two Virginia sites is the middle of three runs. What it is: a lab test on one day. What it is not: what real visitors experienced, which we could not get.

Phone test (0 to 100, higher is better)	Virginia GOP	Virginia Democrats	Pennsylvania GOP	Maryland GOP
Speed	59	77	58	66
Usable by people with disabilities	81	84	89	92
Basic technical hygiene	58	73	54	77
Easy for search engines to read	85	92	92	92

The Virginia GOP homepage came last of the four in disability access and in search-engine readiness, and second to last in speed and in technical hygiene, ahead only of Pennsylvania [6].

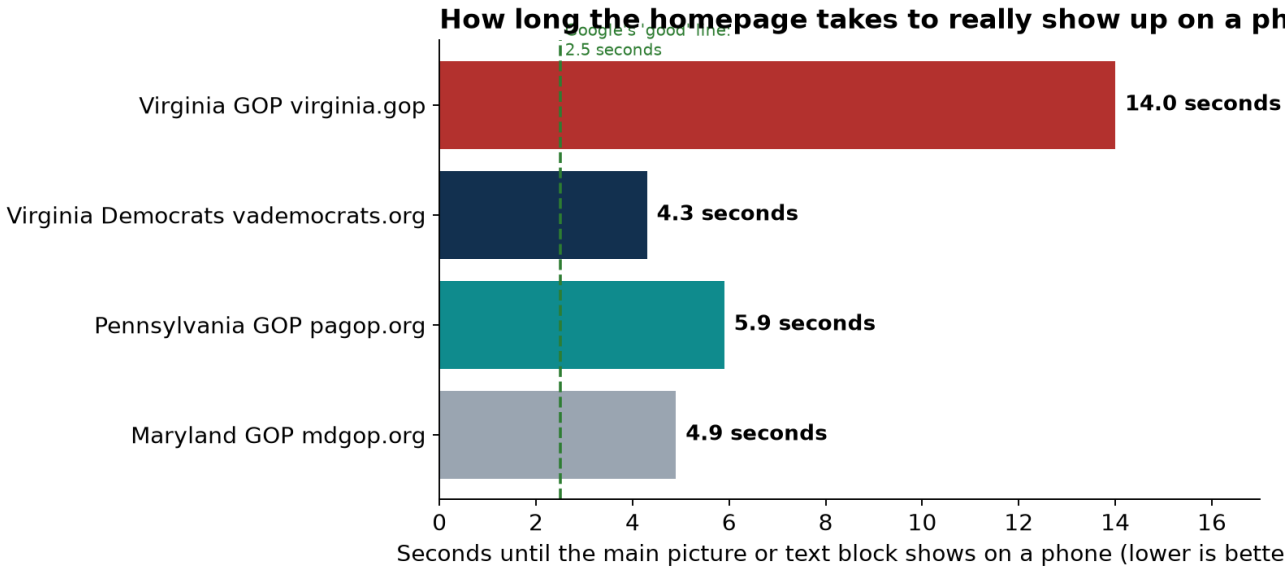


Figure 8. Seconds until the homepage's main picture or text block appears in Google's phone test (Largest Contentful Paint), November 11, 2026. Virginia figures are the middle of three runs. Google calls 2.5 seconds or less good and over 4 seconds poor.

In two of three runs, the main content of virginia.gop took about 14 seconds to appear on the test phone (14.1 and 14.0 seconds). In the third run it took 1.0 second, which shows how much the result swings; we report the middle value, 14.0 seconds [6]. Virginia Democrats came in at 4.3 seconds. The page is heavy: about 3.5 megabytes on a phone, 80 separate files. Google's test estimates 1.6 megabytes could be saved by resizing and compressing pictures, and 427 kilobytes of computer code loads that the page never uses. The big gala banner is a 2026 PNG picture file far larger than a phone screen needs [6].

Part 4. Can people with disabilities use it?

About one in four American adults lives with some kind of disability, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [20]. A blind voter uses a screen reader that speaks the page out loud, and it only works if every button, link and picture has a label. We ran the free axe checker against 10 party pages and the three comparison homepages, testing against the WCAG rulebook at its standard middle level (called "AA") [10].

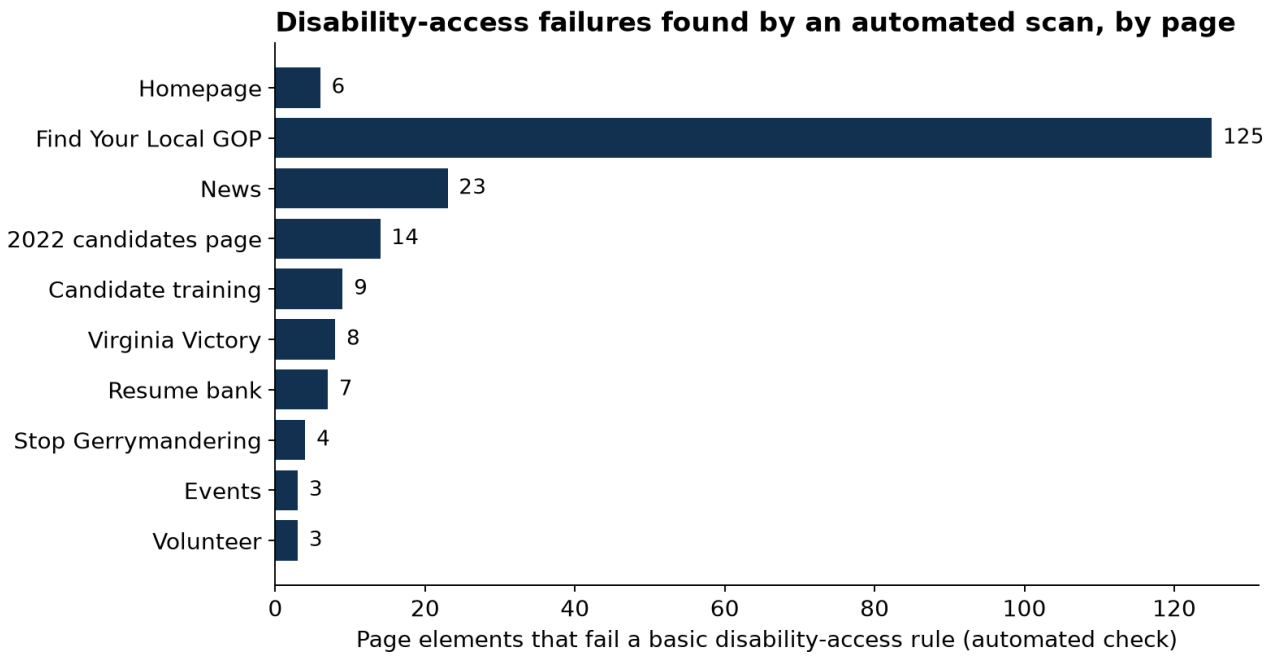


Figure 9. Page elements failing a WCAG rule in an automated axe scan, November 11, 2026, about 4:34 to 4:37 PM ET. What it is: problems a machine can detect. What it is not: a full disability review. Automated tools catch only some problems, and none of this was tested by a person using a screen reader.

Across 10 pages the scan found 202 failures [10]. The main kinds:

Problem	What it means for a visitor	Where we found it
Links with no name	A screen reader says only "link," so a blind visitor cannot tell where it goes	Every page tested; 125 on the county directory
Pictures with no description	A screen reader skips the picture or reads a file name	Homepage (2), 2022 candidates page (11)
Text too faint against its background	Hard to read for people with low vision, and for anyone in sunlight	News, resume bank, Virginia Victory, candidate training
Menus and buttons with no label	A screen reader cannot say what the control does	News (2 drop-down menus), redistricting page (1 button)

Lighthouse flagged the same problems on the phone homepage, plus tap targets too small or too close together for a thumb [6]. To be fair: the Virginia Democrats' homepage had more failures in this scan, 24 against 6 for the GOP homepage, mostly faint text [10]. But the GOP's county directory is the site's main voter tool, and it is where the problem is worst: 122 of its 123 email links are envelope icons with no text at all [14].

Part 5. Search engines, security and what it is built on

Search engines. Lighthouse scored the homepage 85 of 100 for search-engine readiness, against 92 for each comparison site [6]. The deductions are small but telling: two links that just say "LEARN MORE" (one of them is the Register to Vote link) and two pictures with no description. When the

homepage is shared on Facebook or X, its preview title is simply "Home" [2]. The site does let search engines in, and it publishes a sitemap, an index of its pages for search engines [17].

Security. The padlock is fine. The site uses a valid free Let's Encrypt certificate, issued November 9, 2026 and good until February 7, 2027, and it works with the two current encryption versions (TLS 1.2 and 1.3) [18]. It sends only one of six common security headers ("nosniff," which stops browsers from guessing file types). It does not send the ones that force encrypted connections every time, limit which outside code can run, or stop the page from being loaded inside someone else's site [18]. None of the three comparison sites sent those either, so this is a common gap, not a GOP-only failing. Google's test also counted 8 third-party tracking cookies on the homepage and 3 uses of outdated browser features [6].

What it is built on. From the page code: WordPress, using a lightly customized version of WordPress's free 2021 default design ("Twenty Twenty-One"); hosting by Kinsta behind Cloudflare; Gravity Forms for sign-ups; The Events Calendar Pro; Yoast for search-engine settings; WinRed for donations; and Google Site Kit, Google Analytics and Google Tag Manager for visitor tracking [8]. That last point matters: the party collects its own visitor numbers. It just does not publish them.

Part 6. How many people visit?

The party's real visitor numbers are private. What follows are outside estimates from two public sources, each labeled. For a site this small, treat them as rough sizes, not counts.

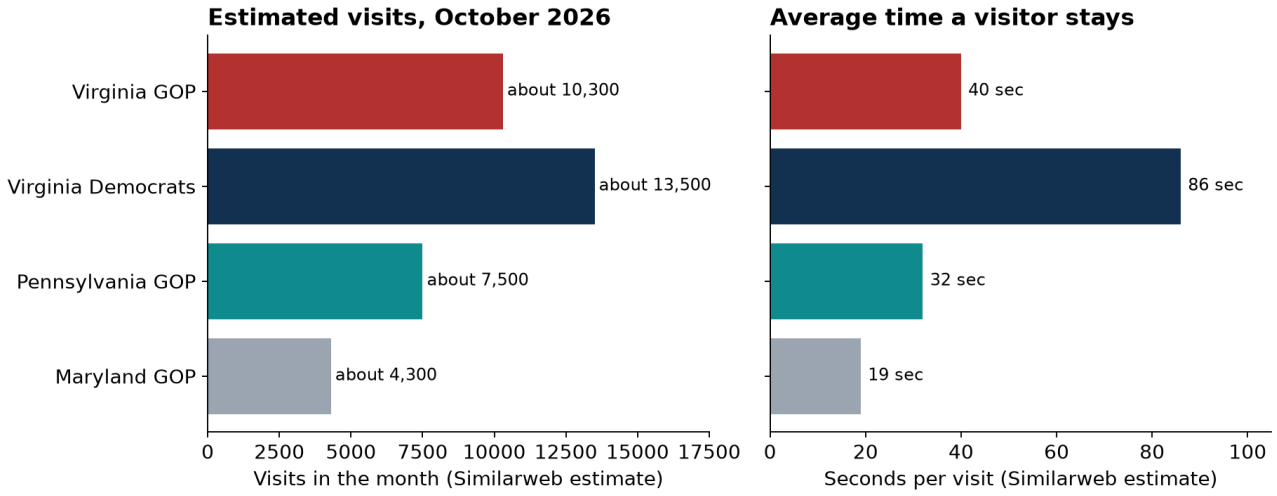


Figure 10. Similarweb's free estimates for October 2026, read November 11, 2026. Left: estimated visits in the month. Right: average time per visit. What it is: a private company's model. What it is not: the party's own numbers.

October 2026, Similarweb estimate	Virginia GOP	Virginia Democrats	Pennsylvania GOP	Maryland GOP
Estimated visits in the month	about 10,300	about 13,500	about 7,500	about 4,300
Change from September	up 32%	up 11%	up 7%	up 119%
Average time per visit	40 seconds	1 minute 26 seconds	32 seconds	19 seconds
Pages seen per visit	2.04	2.39	1.45	1.91
Visitors who left after one page	56.7%	54.8%	78.4%	45.6%
Desktop visits that came from a search engine	41.9%	68.9%	41.8%	42.2%
Rank among U.S. websites	509,677	405,130	861,821	1,091,179

Source: Similarweb free website pages, each read November 11, 2026 [11]. The visit figure is the number Similarweb prints beside each site in its "compare" box.

About 10,300 visits in a month, in the month before a U.S. Senate and congressional election, is small for a state party in a state of about 8.8 million people [21]. Visitors stay 40 seconds on average, under half the 86 seconds they spend on the Virginia Democrats' site [11]. Similarweb also lists the search terms that bring people in. For virginia.gop, the top listed term was "jay jones," the Democratic attorney general elected in 2025, ahead of "richmond va gop" and "virginia gop" [11].

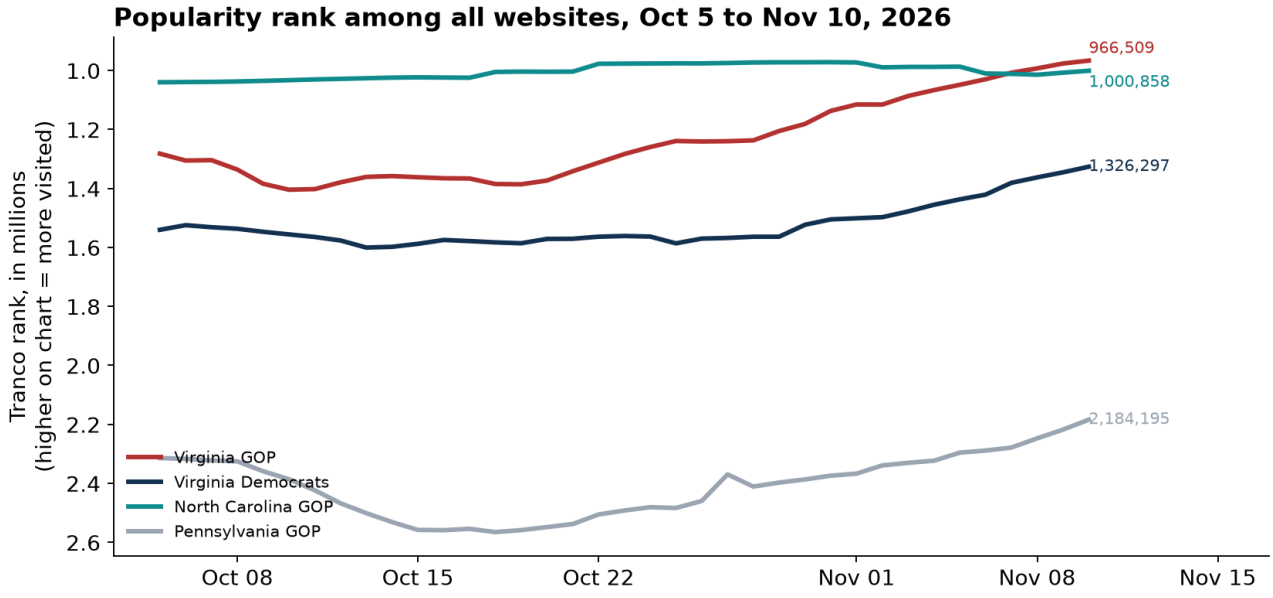


Figure 11. Daily Tranco rank, October 5 to November 10, 2026. Lower numbers mean more visitors, so the chart is drawn upside down: higher on the chart is more visited. What it is: a research ranking built from several traffic sources. What it is not: a visitor count.

Tranco tells a more favorable story for the party. On November 10, virginia.gop ranked 966,509 among all websites, ahead of Virginia Democrats (1,326,297), North Carolina's GOP (1,000,858), Pennsylvania's (2,184,195), Ohio's (2,838,526) and Maryland's (3,663,557). The national party's gop.com ranked 44,185. Virginia GOP's rank improved from 1,282,039 on October 5 as the election approached [12]. The two sources disagree on which Virginia party site gets more traffic. Both agree on the size: a few hundred visitors a day, not thousands.

The Wayback Machine has saved the homepage hundreds of times a year: 366 distinct copies in 2025 and 450 in 2026 so far [19]. That shows outside interest in archiving the site, not how often the party updates it; the party's own records in Part 2 answer that.

What changed since November 7

We re-checked every problem flagged in the November 7 review against the live site on November 11, between about 4:32 and 4:45 PM ET.

November 7 problem	Status November 11
1. Vote button goes to an RNC sign-up, no direct state election links	Not fixed. Same form; 0 links to elections.virginia.gov [1][2]
2. No current "who is on my ballot" directory; 2022 page live	Not fixed. 2022 page unchanged since July 21, 2022 [3][4]
3. Stale pages (resume bank 2025, Virginia Victory 2025 ticket, past training dates)	Not fixed. All three unchanged [9]
4. No plain-English policy guide	Not fixed. Principles page last edited September 10, 2024 [4]
5. Redistricting page out of date after the court ruling	Not fixed. Still "If their rigged maps pass" [9]
6. Volunteer page asks for a phone number before offering any role	Not fixed [13]
7. Broken headquarters phone link; no site search	Not fixed. Still dials 804-780-011; still no search box [2]
Newly found today	Salem and Bristol links broken; 2 localities VACANT; 125 unlabeled links on the county list; 14-second phone load; no news posts July to October 2026; 1 event listed through 2027 [4][5][6][10][14]

No page has been edited since November 4, three days before the first review [4].

What genuinely works

A blanket "this site is useless" would be wrong, and it would be easy to knock down. The county directory covers 123 localities with names and links. The events calendar has search, map view and subscriptions. The candidate-training page lays out a real curriculum. There is a November 6 election statement, an election-problem reporting page at /protect/, and long archives of party rulings and committee minutes [7]. The site loads over a valid encrypted connection and lets search engines in [17][18]. The criticism here is the gap between that party machinery and the simple questions a voter brings: where do I vote, who is on my ballot, and what can I do this weekend.

Intelligence Assessment

This section describes what the site does, not why. We have no inside knowledge of the party's staffing or budget for the site.

The pattern is consistent. The parts of the site that bring money or contact details in are current, prominent and work: donation buttons on the first screen, a fresh gala banner, a store link, sign-up forms on the volunteer and Vote paths. The parts that give information out to voters are stale, hidden or missing: a 2022 candidate page, a 2025 recruiting page, a redistricting page that never caught up with the court, and no voting help at all. News stopped for four months during a federal campaign, and the calendar is almost entirely the party's internal nominating business.

Whatever the reason, a Virginian who goes to the state Republican Party's website to figure out how and where to vote, or who their Republican candidates are, cannot get an answer there without handing over a phone number to a national texting list. On a phone, they will wait about 14 seconds for the page to finish showing up, and the first thing they see is a request for $50.

What would fix it

These are plain fixes, most of them cheap. They are listed roughly from biggest voter impact to smallest.

1. Put a "How to vote in Virginia" box on the homepage with direct links to the Department of Elections for registration, polling place, absentee ballots and ballot tracking, with no sign-up required [15].
2. Replace the 2022 candidates page with a current 2026–2027 ballot guide, clearly dated, linked from the menu, and archive the old page with a "2022" label.
3. Take down or date-stamp the resume bank, Virginia Victory, check-back-soon, empty "Vote" page and old training schedule. Update the redistricting page to say what happened.
4. Fix the phone link: one missing digit.
5. Fix the Salem and Bristol links, fill in or explain the two vacancies, and add text labels to the 122 envelope icons.
6. Shrink the homepage pictures. That alone could cut more than 1.5 megabytes from a phone load [6].
7. List real volunteer tasks with dates and places before asking for a phone number.
8. Add a site search box and post news through campaign season, not just before and after it.

Follow-up research

1. Real-visitor phone speed from Google's Chrome data once a free key is available, to confirm or correct the 14-second lab result.

2. A hands-on screen-reader and keyboard-only walk-through of the homepage, Vote path and county directory.
3. Whether the RNC's vote.gop sends a Virginia voter to official state information after the form is sent (would require entering real or test data, which we did not do).
4. Whether the 10 county party sites our checker could not reach are actually down or just blocked our connection.
5. Re-check all of the above after the December 4–6 Advance and again before the 2027 General Assembly elections.

How we checked

We looked at the site the way a member of the public would, from the open internet, on November 11, 2026 between about 4:32 and 4:46 PM Eastern Time. We did not log in, sign up, donate or send any form, and we entered no personal information anywhere.

- **Voter tasks and screenshots:** we opened the homepage in an ordinary Chrome browser at desktop size and at iPhone size, counted clicks, followed the Vote link to its destination and took screenshots. Earlier screenshots from November 7 and 10 were checked against today's pages.
- **Dates and freshness:** WordPress sites publish a public list of their pages and posts with publish and last-edit dates. We pulled all 44 pages and 287 posts. "Last edited" means the date WordPress records for a content change; small changes to menus or banners may not show up there. The events calendar has its own public data feed, which we read for January 2025 through December 2027.
- **Speed:** Google Lighthouse (version installed November 11), run from our own computer in phone mode and desktop mode. The two Virginia homepages were run three times in phone mode; we report the middle result. Lab tests can differ from what real visitors see.
- **Disability access:** the axe checker (axe-core), set to the WCAG 2.1 level A and AA rules, run on 10 party pages and 3 comparison homepages. Automated tools catch only part of the real problems.
- **Links:** we tested every link on the homepage, all 44 pages and all 72 county-party website links. Donation, Facebook and the party-plan PDF links blocked our automated checker but opened normally in a browser, so we do not count them as broken. Our connection could not open old "http://" addresses at all, so for those 38 county links we tried the encrypted "https://" version instead: 28 opened, Bristol returned "not found," and the rest could not be reached from our connection. We count only Salem and Bristol as broken.
- **Security:** we read the site's certificate and the instructions it sends browsers, and compared them with the three comparison sites.
- **Traffic:** Similarweb's free website pages and Tranco's free public ranking, each read November 11, 2026.

What we could not get, and why.

- Real-visitor speed data from Google (the Chrome User Experience Report): Google's free PageSpeed Insights service refused our request because its shared daily limit was used up, and the Chrome data service requires a private key we do not have. Not reported.
- Cloudflare Radar's ranking page refused our request (access denied). Not reported.
- Semrush's free overview page returned "not found" for the site; Ahrefs requires an account. Not reported.
- BuiltWith's public page did not load for our reader, so we read the site's technology directly from its page code.
- The Wayback Machine could not be reached from our own computer; we read its public capture list through a web reader instead.
- Ten county party websites could not be reached from our connection. We do not call them broken.
- The party's own Google Analytics numbers are private.
- North Carolina's GOP site refused our connection, so it appears only in the Tranco ranking, not the speed or access tests.

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