

## VACo Principles

- For more than 20 years, VACo has promoted long term reforms to relieve the growing burden on the local real estate tax, recent proposals include:
  - State Revenue Sharing -- state program to share income taxes with state and local governments; and
  - Equal Taxing Authority – provision permitting counties to enjoy the same taxing authority as cities and towns, thereby, enabling local diversification of revenue streams.
- VACo respects the fact that local government is directly accountable to the constituents it serves and works to honor that relationship. The organization has consistently opposed encroachments on local authority and has argued against the “Dillon Rule” mentality. The “Dillon Rule” approach has worked to skew local accountability and hamper the efforts of local government to provide for constituent needs in the most cost effective and efficient manner.
- VACo asks the states to fully fund mandates passed down to local governments to help relieve the burden on the local taxpayer. Some of the more costly mandates include local dollars spent for:
  - K-12 Standards of Quality
  - Academic enhancements to achieve the Standards of Learning
  - Comprehensive Services Act
  - Courts and law enforcement
  - Prisoner incarceration
- A true partnership between state and local governments entails a fair and adequate sharing of state revenues. The state has an obligation to fully fund the costs of mandates placed on local governments. Honoring this obligation becomes even more critical when the state requires that local governments provide services in a prescriptive manner with little flexibility.
- VACo remains willing and able to assist the state government in addressing compelling issues facing the Commonwealth. We ask that solutions be developed collaboratively, with mutual respect and with recognition of the unique strengths each level of government has to offer.