

Capitol Contact

Virginia General Assembly

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Monday, January 23, 2017

Senate Charter School Constitutional Amendment to be Heard Wednesday, January 25

[SJ 240 \(Obenshain\)](#), which would allow the state Board of Education to establish charter schools, subject to criteria and conditions that the General Assembly would prescribe, is scheduled to be heard in the [Senate Privileges and Elections Committee's Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments](#) on Wednesday, January 25.

VACo has historically opposed such measures because they would allow a state body to make decisions that are more appropriately handled locally, potentially including decisions about the use of local school funding dollars, depending upon how a charter school would be structured under the “criteria and conditions” the General Assembly would dictate.

VACo Members - Please call members of the subcommittee in opposition to this measure.

[Senate Privileges and Elections Committee's Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments:](#) [Cosgrove \(Chairman\)](#), [Chafin](#), [Chase](#), [Dance](#), [Spruill](#), [Vogel](#)

[Senate Privileges and Elections Committee:](#) [Vogel \(Chairman\)](#), [Howell](#), [Deeds](#), [Edwards](#), [Reeves](#), [Ebbin](#), [Chafin](#), [DeSteph](#), [Chase](#), [Ruff](#), [Cosgrove](#), [Dance](#), [Spruill](#), [Peake](#)

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VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

Several problematic education bills introduced

In addition to the constitutional amendments that would allow the Board of Education to approve charter schools, two bills on the same topic have been introduced. [HB 2342 \(Landes\)](#) and [SB 1283 \(Obenshain\)](#) would allow the Board of Education to establish charter school divisions in regions where one or more of the school divisions have an enrollment of more than 3,000 students and one or more schools have been denied accreditation for two of the past three years. A school board would be appointed for the regional charter school division, with eight members to be appointed by the state Board and three members to be appointed by the governing bodies of the underlying locality's school divisions. This regional school board would make decisions about the establishment of charter schools within the region. While the provisions allowing for some local participation in the regional school board are an improvement over the constitutional amendments, the composition of the regional school board is heavily weighted toward appointees of the state Board.

VACo has historically opposed decisions about local schools being removed from the hands of local school boards.

HB 2342 has been referred to the [House Education Committee's Subcommittee on Education Innovation](#). SB 1283 has been referred to the [Senate Education and Health Committee](#).

[HB 1605 \(LaRock\)](#) and [SB 1243 \(Dunnavant\)](#) provide for Parental Choice Education Savings Accounts and are variations on legislation that has been considered in previous years. The Senate bill is more narrowly tailored and applies only to children with Individualized Education Programs who live in families with incomes less than or equal to 300 percent of the poverty. The House bill would provide additional funding to children in these families, but would allow all students who attended public schools for two semesters to apply to participate. Both bills allow for the transfer of state Standards of Quality funding to the families of qualified students for use in a variety of education-related expenses, such as tuition at private schools (which could be sectarian or non-sectarian) and fees for standardized tests.

VACo has historically opposed such measures because they siphon public funds away from public schools. The effect would be particularly pronounced among localities with low Local Composite Indices.

HB 1605 has been referred to the [House Education Committee's Subcommittee on Education Innovation](#). SB 1243 has been referred to the [Senate Education and Health Committee](#). It was docketed for last Thursday's meeting but was delayed for a week at the request of the patron.

VACo Members are encouraged to make calls in opposition.

House Education Committee Subcommittee on Education Innovation: [Greason \(Chairman\)](#), [Bell, Richard P.](#), [Robinson](#), [Yancey](#), [Dudenhefer](#), [Leftwich](#), [Tyler](#), [Bulova](#)

House Education Committee: [Landes \(Chairman\)](#), [Pogge \(Vice Chair\)](#), [Lingamfelter](#), [Cole](#), [Massie](#), [Greason](#), [Bell, Richard P.](#), [LeMunyon](#), [Robinson](#), [Yost](#), [Yancey](#), [Dudenhefer](#), [Davis](#), [Leftwich](#), [LaRock](#), [Tyler](#), [Bulova](#), [Keam](#), [Hester](#), [Lindsey](#), [Bagby](#)

Senate Education and Health Committee: [Newman \(Chairman\)](#), [Saslaw](#), [Lucas](#), [Howell](#), [Locke](#), [Barker](#), [Black](#), [Carrico](#), [Petersen](#), [Cosgrove](#), [Lewis](#), [Dunnavant](#), [Chase](#), [Suetterlein](#), [Peake](#)

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Key Dates for 2017 General Assembly Session

- **January 11:** General Assembly convenes at noon. Prefiled legislation must be submitted by 10 a.m.; this is also the last day to file bills dealing with the Virginia Retirement System or legislation creating or continuing a study.
- **January 13:** Budget amendments by General Assembly members must be submitted by 5 p.m.
- **January 20:** All bills must be filed by 3 p.m.
- **February 5:** The Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees must report their respective budgets.
- **February 7:** Crossover (deadline for legislation to pass its chamber of origin)
- **February 9:** Deadline for each chamber to complete work on its budget
- **February 20:** Deadline for committee action on legislation
- **February 25:** Scheduled adjournment *sine die*
- **April 5:** Reconvened session to consider the Governor's amendments and vetoes

Governor McAuliffe to speak at VACo County Government Day

This is our day to advocate for counties at the General Assembly. Join us at VACo County Government Day on Thursday, February 2! Registration opens at 11 a.m. and the event kicks off with a boxed lunch at noon. Our keynote speaker will be The Honorable Governor Terry McAuliffe who will address attendees on issues that affect counties.

VACo staff will provide legislative briefs before charging all present to meet with their General Assembly representatives that afternoon. For information on how to reach your representatives, see the [Virginia House of Delegates Member Listings](#) and the [Senate of Virginia](#) websites. Find information about VACo's positions in the [2017 Legislative Program](#), created by VACo Steering Committees, and adopted at our Annual Business Meeting. We will distribute our VACo County Government Day Bulletin at the event.

We encourage all counties to participate in the legislative process - hear briefs on the issues and make appointments to speak with your representatives that afternoon. The VACo County Government Day event should last no later than 1:30 p.m.

Register for [VACo County Government Day online](#) or by faxing in a [registration form](#) to 804.788.0083. Register early and show the state who's coming to town!

For rooming information, check out [our dedicated online room reservation page](#) or call 1.800.THE.OMNI and use code "VACo County Government Day" to unlock our special event rate. Omni Richmond is participating in the HUNGER program, which will provide one week of meals to a family of four for every online reservation. Consider reserving online to help a family during this season. Room Reservation cut off is 5 p.m. January 18. Room rate is not guaranteed after that date.

We are also introducing sponsorship opportunities for the February events. Check back soon, or contact [Amy Sales](#) for more information.

VACo Contact: [Amy Sales, CMP](#)