

Virginia Association of Counties

2019 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Virginia Association of Counties
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2019 Legislative Program Virginia Association of Counties

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42 **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND**
43 **PLANNING**

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45 **Priorities**

46
47 **Broadband**

48 VACo urges the Commonwealth and the Federal Government to assist
49 communities in their efforts to deploy universal affordable access to the internet
50 for all areas, particularly in underserved and rural areas. Additionally, VACo
51 opposes mandates that limit or restrict local land use authority for the siting of
52 telecommunications infrastructure or result in a negative fiscal impact to county
53 budgets.

54
55 **Proffers and Growth Management Tools**

56 VACo supports changes to the conditional zoning law to allow greater flexibility
57 in the application process for determining and addressing fiscal impacts.

58
59 VACo also supports legislation that grants localities additional tools to adequately
60 meet increasing needs for public services driven by new development without
61 burdening current residents with the cost of new growth through increased real
62 estate taxes. Such additional tools may include broad impact fee authority for all
63 counties, and adequate public facilities provisions.

64
65 **Positions**

66
67 **Land Use**

68 VACo supports maintaining local authority to plan and regulate land use and
69 opposes any legislation that weakens these key local responsibilities.

70
71 **Regulation of Home-based Businesses**

72 VACo opposes any legislation that limits or restricts local authority to regulate
73 home-based businesses, including short-term rentals regardless of whether
74 services or goods are purchased through an online hosting platform.

75
76 **Affordable and Workforce Housing**

77 VACo supports maintaining federal and state funding and appropriate incentives
78 to assist localities in fostering affordable housing, as well as workforce housing
79 for employees such as teachers and first responders.

80
81 **Economic Development**

82 VACo supports economic development policies and programs that bolster local
83 and regional development efforts by maintaining state funding and granting
84 additional funding and authority to promote local and regional initiatives. This
85 includes the provision of adequate funding for the Agriculture and Forestry
86 Industries Development Fund (AFID); the Commonwealth Opportunity Fund;

87 and the operations of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP).
88 VACo also supports state funding for Virginia’s planning district commissions
89 and local cooperative extension offices, which play key roles in addressing
90 regional challenges.

91
92 **Impacts of Federal and Military Facilities**

93 VACo supports maintaining federal and state funding and technical assistance to
94 mitigate the impacts on counties affected by federal budget cuts and to sustain
95 current and future federal facilities in Virginia. VACo supports state and local
96 partnerships that work to prevent encroachment and non-compatible land uses
97 next to military installations. VACo also supports workforce training and
98 retraining for programs that support defense activities in Virginia.

99
100 **Maintain Public Sector Role in Onsite Sewer Program**

101 VACo supports an onsite sewage program at the Virginia Department of Health
102 (VDH) that protects public health and the environment in all regions of the
103 Commonwealth. The Commonwealth should give special focus to addressing the
104 challenge of failing septic systems and allow localities authority to develop and
105 implement policies that support the state’s program. VACo supports the private
106 sector providing onsite sewage system design, installation, and repair services, as
107 long as the services can be provided at affordable rates and in a timely manner,
108 and as long as VDH continues to provide these direct services as well.

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110 **Siting of Transmission Lines**

111 VACo supports requiring utilities to seek input from localities and property
112 owners before any actions to construct, modify or enlarge transmission facilities.

EDUCATION

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Priority

Education Funding

VACo urges the General Assembly to provide full state funding for public education, including the Standards of Quality (SOQ) as recommended by the Board of Education, where these recommendations coincide with prevailing local practice, targeted incentive programs, capital, and maintenance support, and teacher salaries.

Full state funding should be achieved without reduction to other parts of state public education budgets or to other core services. Changes to school security and high school graduation standards will require additional resources to implement and those costs must be adequately funded by the state. VACo supports additional state resources and additional funding options for localities for capital and school construction costs.

VACo supports the current practice whereby all year-end funds appropriated to the school divisions by the locality revert to the locality, retaining discretion with the governing body to evaluate and approve the reallocation of year-end fund balances.

Positions

Charter Schools

VACo opposes legislation that removes authority from local school boards and divisions to establish charter schools.

Childhood Development and School Readiness

VACo supports efforts to increase at-risk children's access to high-quality, enriching learning environments, including more resources and flexibility for localities participating in programs like the Virginia Preschool Initiative and Head Start.

Composite Index Calculation

VACo supports legislation to adjust the calculation of the Local Composite Index for public school funding by directing the Department of Education to adjust its funding calculations for the local ability to pay by using the use-value assessment of real property, in localities that have adopted use-value taxation.

Critical thinking Skills

VACo supports changes to educational programs and standards that rely less on standardized testing and more on critical thinking skills such as performance-based assessments.

179 **Funding Support Personnel**
180 VACo supports full restoration of budget cuts, including the elimination of the
181 funding cap on support positions, and full reinstatement of the Cost of
182 Competing Adjustment “COCA” for support staff. In addition to meeting its
183 obligations to fully fund instructional staff, the Commonwealth should meet its
184 obligation to fully fund K-12 support staff.

185
186 **Library System**
187 VACo supports maintaining the level of funding of financial aid to the library
188 system at levels budgeted for FY 2019 and FY 2020.

189
190 **School Safety and Security**
191 VACo supports efforts to improve school safety and preparedness including
192 establishing a Statewide School Safety Drill, for students, teachers,
193 administrators, law enforcement, and other staff to engage in active shooter
194 drills. VACo supports the development of model policies to provide guidance on
195 active shooter drills and updates to school safety plans and drills. VACo supports
196 dedicated state funding to improve school security for both capital and
197 operational costs including funding that would serve as an incentive for local
198 school divisions to hire additional Resource Officers, School Protection Officers,
199 or other security personnel and measures.

200
201 **Special Education Regional Tuition Reimbursement Program**
202 VACo supports enhancing local capacity to serve children with high-level support
203 needs in the least restrictive environment, including regional special education
204 programs. VACo supports local flexibility in the structure of such programs. If a
205 new model for the distribution of funding for special education students with
206 intense support needs is implemented, such a model should be phased in
207 gradually, with state dollars provided to enable school divisions that would
208 otherwise experience reductions in funding to continue to meet federal
209 maintenance of effort requirements.

210
211 **Teacher Shortage and Retention**
212 VACo urges the General Assembly to approve and fund strategies addressing the
213 teacher shortage in the Commonwealth. VACo supports a targeted approach to
214 teacher shortage by prioritizing areas in critical need, as recommended by the
215 Virginia Department of Education. VACo supports using district-level data to
216 determine how to best fill shortage gaps, especially in hard-to-staff divisions.
217 VACo supports reducing burdens on the teacher workforce in the
218 Commonwealth. VACo supports programs aimed at reducing student debt for
219 teaching in public schools. VACo also supports programs that encourage teachers
220 to stay in the profession including measures that provide mentorship, guidance
221 and other forms of support for teachers in their first five years in the profession.

222
223 **Workforce-Ready Students**
224 VACo supports changes in curriculum and funding that will increase the number
225 of students leaving the K-14 system with workforce-ready credentials. VACo

226 supports incorporating career and technical education curriculum at the
227 elementary school level. VACo supports high school students earning academic
228 credit for participating in an internship, apprenticeship, credential, and other
229 work programs. VACo supports innovative models for schools to give academic
230 credit for students that earn industry workforce skills through certifications, or
231 licensure from an approved education or training provider. VACo supports
232 establishing partnerships to strengthen the school-to-workforce pipeline in a
233 variety of ways including guaranteed employment opportunities with local
234 businesses and learning opportunities shared between local community colleges
235 and high schools.

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ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE

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Priority

Water Quality Improvement Funding

VACo supports effective partnerships across all levels of government as well as adequate financial and technical assistance from the federal and state governments to improve water quality. VACo supports improved water quality but opposes strategies that penalize local governments by withdrawing current forms of financial assistance or imposing monitoring, management, or similar requirements on localities without providing sufficient resources to accomplish those processes. VACo opposes the imposition of a state fee, tax or surcharge, on water, sewer, solid waste, or any service provided by a local government or authority.

Hydraulic Fracturing

VACo supports a stringent state regulatory program for hydraulic fracturing (or “fracking”) that addresses the potential to tap into natural gas reserves in ways that protect public and private groundwater supplies and preserve local government authority to regulate and/or ban this type of mining activity through their land use ordinances. VACo supports transparency efforts that require the disclosure of all chemicals and chemical mixes used in the fracking process prior to their use.

Positions

Aquifer Protection

VACo supports initiatives by the state to assure adoption of actions to reduce high chloride concentrations and loss of artesian head pressure in Virginia’s aquifers. VACo also supports a review of regulations and supports education initiatives that promote reclamation of water on a local level for industrial and irrigation uses to offset future demands on all ground and surface water used for human consumption.

Biosolids

VACo supports an effective statewide regulatory program governing land application of biosolids. Such a program should not infringe upon the authority of local governments to monitor compliance. VACo supports the ability of local governments to propose amendments to biosolids permits as they are considered by DEQ.

Conservation

VACo encourages targeted initiatives to facilitate the protection of land for conservation purposes. VACo supports the creation a Purchase of Development Rights program that provides state funding for the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation and participation incentives for landowners. Such programs preserve

319 prime soils for food production and protect important forest land and
320 environmentally sensitive areas in the Commonwealth.

321
322 VACo supports voluntary state and federal conservation programs, including the
323 United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Environmental Quality
324 Incentives Program and the Conservation Stewardship Program, to assist
325 producers with the implementation of best management practices.

326
327 **Dam Safety**

328 VACo supports programs that keep downstream owners and developers aware of
329 potential inundation zones. VACo also supports sufficient state and federal
330 funding for the repair and maintenance of dams.

331
332 **Energy**

333 VACo supports renewable energy policies and energy efficiency measures that
334 reduce greenhouse gas emissions and lessen dependence upon foreign sources of
335 energy, and improve the feasibility of using renewable energy, including efforts to
336 remove barriers to municipal net metering. VACo supports legislation that
337 encourages renewable energy production through the implementation of
338 Renewable Portfolio Standards. VACo supports creative financing mechanisms
339 that enable localities to implement their own renewable energy and energy
340 efficiency measures. VACo supports maintaining local zoning authority
341 regarding renewable energy facilities and other utility projects to protect
342 agricultural and other local considerations. Finally, VACo supports responsible
343 policies that enable coal and natural gas extraction, processing, and transport
344 while protecting agricultural interests and natural resources.

345
346 **Invasive Species and Noxious Weeds**

347 VACo supports funding for, and the complete implementation of, the Virginia
348 Invasive Species Management Plan. VACo supports an amendment to the term,
349 “noxious weeds,” enabling additional invasive plants to be considered for
350 regulation. All programs and proposals should be evaluated for their commercial
351 impact, allowing no more than a negligible impact on Virginia’s agricultural
352 industry. Finally, VACo supports requiring better state prevention and
353 mitigation practices.

354
355 **Large Utility Projects**

356 VACo supports the provision of adequate direction and resources for the state to
357 improve monitoring and enforcement of Erosion and Sediment Control and
358 Stormwater requirements by entities constructing large-scale utility projects. The
359 state should conduct a review of the annual standards, specifications, and
360 construction general permit requirements to determine adequate protection of
361 water quality and natural resources.

362
363 **Non-Point Source Pollution**

364 VACo supports a well-financed state program to address non-point source runoff
365 from agricultural operations. The program should encourage implementation of

366 priority best management practices (BMPs) such as nutrient management
367 planning, use of cover crops, continuous no-till farming and development of
368 forested riparian buffers and livestock stream exclusion.

369

370 **Predator Control**

371 VACo urges state and federal agencies to support the agricultural industry by
372 allowing farmers and producers sufficient flexibility when protecting livestock
373 against predatory animals. VACo encourages the USDA Wildlife Services Division
374 and the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to allow
375 producers access to the predator control tools required for the continuation of
376 effective livestock production. VACo also supports USDA's Livestock Indemnity
377 Program and the financial relief it provides to producers who have lost livestock
378 to the attacks of federally protected predators.

379

380 **Southern Rivers Watershed**

381 VACo supports continued funding for the Southern Rivers Watershed
382 Enhancement Program to improve water quality in non-Chesapeake Bay
383 watersheds.

384

385 **Stormwater Programs**

386 VACo supports state funding that enables local governments to fully satisfy the
387 resource and funding needs associated with local stormwater management
388 programs, such as the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF). VACo supports
389 legislation that proposes creative and cost-effective stormwater management
390 practices. VACo supports initiatives that clarify and modernize stormwater
391 regulations and permitting processes, including measures that make permitting
392 more efficient, reevaluates the fee structure system, and allows for considerations
393 of factors such as long-term maintenance costs. VACo supports legislation that
394 proposes innovative solutions to facilitate compliance with stormwater standards
395 in ways that promote economic development while achieving water quality goals.

396

397 **Onsite Wastewater Systems**

398 VACo supports legislation ensuring that potential buyers of real property are told
399 about the type, size and maintenance requirements and associated costs of the
400 wastewater systems on the property prior to the signing of the initial sales
401 contract and the recordation of engineered systems plat and deed at the time of
402 sale.

403

404 **Uranium Mining**

405 VACo supports the continuation of a moratorium on uranium mining and milling
406 within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

407

408 **Technical Assistance**

409 VACo supports robust state funding for entities that provide critical resources
410 and technical assistance to localities in their efforts to comply with
411 environmental policies and regulations. This includes, but is not limited to,

412 organizations such as the Virginia Cooperative Extension and Planning District
413 Commissions (PDCs).

414

415 **Water Supply Planning**

416 VACo supports appropriations adequate to ensure full funding by the state for the
417 ongoing development and implementation of state-mandated water supply plans.
418 VACo does not support overly burdensome permitting processes or applications
419 for water usage.

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FINANCE

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Priorities

Local Finance

VACo supports the authority of county governments to levy and collect revenue from local business taxes.

Equal Taxing Authority

VACo supports granting counties equal taxing authority to that enjoyed by cities and towns to enact local excise taxes without referendum, such as the authority to adopt a local meals tax without referendum and to levy and collect a tobacco tax.

Positions

Funding for State Mandated Positions and Jails

VACo urges the Commonwealth to meet its full funding obligations and provide flexibility in the use of state funds for compensation of constitutional officers and state-supported local employees.

VACo requests that jail per diem funding in the 2018-2020 biennial state budget be increased to levels that better represent the costs of housing inmates, and be adjusted for inflation in the future so that payments keep pace with rising costs. The current rates of \$4 per day for local-responsible inmates and \$12 per day for state-responsible inmates are inadequate and represent an underfunded mandate on counties. The Compensation Board estimated a total average daily cost of operating local and regional jails at \$85.17 per inmate in FY 2016, of which \$46.16 was contributed by localities. Additionally, VACo requests that the state fully fund four quarters of per diem payments in the introduced budget.

VACo supports payment of the medical costs of inmates using a cost-effective program jointly funded at the federal and state levels. VACo supports streamlining the process of eligibility determination and enrollment for inmates who may qualify for Medicaid. VACo supports the provision of clinically appropriate health care, including mental health care, for individuals incarcerated in local and regional jails. If the state establishes standards for the provision of health care, including mental health care, in local and regional jails, these standards should be adopted through the regulatory process with ample opportunity for stakeholder involvement, and the state must provide sufficient funding to allow these standards to be met. If the state mandates that mental health assessments be conducted for inmates of local and regional jails who appear to be suffering from mental illness, based on an initial screening, within 72 hours of that screening, the state must provide funding to support the necessary staffing to conduct such assessments.

504 VACo supports reinstating state payments (PILT) to counties that mitigate the
505 impacts of state correctional and behavioral healthcare facilities on county
506 revenue.

507

508 **Implementation of Medicaid Expansion**

509 VACo supports full state funding for the local costs associated with Medicaid
510 expansion, including local eligibility workers and case managers. VACo supports
511 the restoration of General Fund reductions to Community Services Boards in FY
512 2019 and re-examination of these expected savings in FY 2020. These savings
513 were incorporated in the 2018 Appropriations Act and are expected to be
514 generated by replacing General Fund support for services for previously-
515 uninsured CSB clients with Medicaid billing for clients newly eligible for
516 Medicaid. However, there is concern that Medicaid billings may not fully cover
517 the General Fund reductions, particularly in the current fiscal year, as CSBs and
518 managed care organizations develop and perfect billing processes.

519

520 **Modernization of Communications and Sales Tax Structure**

521 VACo supports updating the Communications Sales and Use Tax (CSUT) to
522 ensure that it reflects the modern telecommunications landscape, which has
523 evolved since the CSUT took effect in January 2007.

524

525 VACo opposes any further diversion of Communications Sales and Use Tax Trust
526 Fund dollars beyond the uses already specified in statute. These revenues should
527 be held in trust for localities and not diverted for general state purposes.
528 Currently, funds from the Communications Sales and Use Tax Trust Fund are
529 taken “off the top” for the Department of Taxation’s costs to administer the tax,
530 the telephone relay center operated by the Department for the Deaf and Hard of
531 Hearing, and any franchise fees owed to localities. Language adopted in the
532 2018-2020 biennium budget provides for an additional diversion of funds to the
533 state General Fund from assumed savings in the telephone relay contract; these
534 funds would otherwise flow to localities.

535

536 VACo supports revising sales and use taxes to address modern patterns of
537 consumption, such as online purchases. Any statutory changes enacted in light of
538 the Supreme Court decision eliminating the requirement for physical presence
539 for collection of sales and use taxes must include the ability for local option sales
540 taxes to be collected from remote sellers in addition to state sales taxes.

541

542 **Real and Personal Property Tax Exemptions Enacted Prior to 2003**

543

544 VACo supports providing localities the ability to decide whether to maintain
545 property tax exemptions granted by the General Assembly prior to passage of the
546 Constitutional amendment vesting the authority to grant such exemptions with
547 localities. The Constitutional amendment which was passed by the voters in
548 2002 and took effect in January 2003 placed decision-making authority about
549 local tax exemptions with local governing bodies, within certain limits, and this
550 authority should apply to exemptions granted before 2003 as well.

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GENERAL GOVERNMENT

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Priorities

Local Authority

VACo supports the relaxation of the Dillon Rule and legislation maintaining and enhancing local authority and autonomy in matters including land use, revenue measures, procurement and other issues of local concern. VACo supports extending powers currently granted to some local governments to all local governments. VACo opposes legislation that erodes local authority.

Unfunded Mandates

VACo opposes unfunded mandates and shifting fiscal responsibility for existing programs by the Commonwealth from the state to localities. When funding for a mandated program is altered, the mandate should be suspended until full funding is restored. When legislation with a cost to localities is passed by the General Assembly, the cost should be borne by the Commonwealth, and the legislation should contain a sunset clause providing that the mandate is not binding on localities until funding by the Commonwealth is provided.

Positions

Collective Bargaining for Public Employees

VACo opposes any effort to mandate collective bargaining for public employees.

Election Costs and Districts

VACo supports legislation that would decrease the costs of elections to localities. These costs include primaries, voting equipment, personnel and voting places. Cost reduction solutions include requiring parties to pay for primary elections, having one date for primary elections, using printed ballots, establishing countywide voting places and other similar measures. The state should provide adequate funding to localities for optical scan and other voting equipment and registrar costs. VACo also supports legislation to minimize or eliminate Split Voting Precincts. VACo supports a streamlined process to address situations in which census boundaries do not align with locally drawn or commonly adhered to boundaries. VACo supports legislation to expand the authority for localities making voluntary boundary line adjustments to use Geographic Information System (GIS) maps to depict the changes.

Ethics Reform

VACo supports common-sense efforts to strengthen Virginia's public ethics and conflicts of interest laws that are applicable and practical.

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Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

VACo opposes changes to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act that would impose additional burdens on localities.

Grievance Hearings

VACo supports legislation authorizing localities to use an administrative hearing officer and existing grievance panels and procedures, and opposes the mandate of a three-member panel. VACo also supports providing immunity to local government employees, officers, volunteers, administrative hearing officers and panel members for claims arising out of participation in personnel grievance procedures.

Interoperability

VACo supports the state’s goal that agencies and their representatives at the local, regional, state and federal levels be able to communicate using compatible systems to respond more effectively during day-to-day operations and major emergencies. Local governments require dedicated federal and state funding sources to achieve this goal.

Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1)

VACo supports the Commonwealth’s transition to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) in a way that does not unfairly burden localities, financially or otherwise.

Pretrial Services

VACo supports increased funding for, and expansion of, pretrial services.

Public Notice, Public Hearing, and Public Procurement

VACo supports legislation to reduce required newspaper advertising for public notices, public hearings and public procurement including legislation to give localities the option to use electronic or other forms of notification as an alternative to newspaper advertising.

Public Safety – Body Worn Cameras

VACo supports maintaining the ability of local governments to adopt policies and practices regarding body-worn cameras that reflect local needs and fiscal realities.

Sovereign Immunity

VACo opposes any substantive change in local governments’ present defense of sovereign immunity. VACo opposes bringing counties under the Virginia Tort Claims Act.

State Assistance for Police Departments

VACo supports increasing state assistance for police departments through “599” Aid to Localities. This funding is designed to equalize state funding between counties in which the sheriff department provides law enforcement and those cities, counties, and towns with a police department.

HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES

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Priority

Health and Human Resources Funding

VACo supports transparent state policies and funding to ensure the Commonwealth’s at-risk families have access to high quality and appropriate services. The Commonwealth should provide full funding to localities and their state administrative entities for state-mandated human services and provide the necessary program flexibility to enable localities to provide comprehensive and case-tailored services.

Positions

Aging/Long-Term Care

VACo supports efforts that allow seniors to remain at home in a safe and secure environment. VACo urges the General Assembly to provide sufficient funding for companion services, in-home services, and home-delivered meals.

Behavioral Healthcare

VACo supports continued funding by the Commonwealth sufficient to allow Community Services Boards (CSBs) to meet adequately the charge of providing services through a community-based system of care. State support must adequately enable CSBs to provide the additional services mandated by the General Assembly to be phased in over the next several years, as well as any additional requirements that may be added, such as a requirement to provide behavioral health treatment in local and regional jails. VACo supports the ability of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services to waive local matching requirements for CSB funding for localities experiencing financial hardships. Realignment of the behavioral health funding structure to incentivize community-based treatment rather than use of state hospitals will require additional state dollars and must not rely on local funding to backfill unanticipated costs for hospitalization.

VACo supports the creation of additional Medicaid waiver slots to serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the community, more than 12,000 of whom were on a wait-list as of January 2018.

Children’s Services Act

VACo supports monitoring the implementation of policies by the State Executive Council that provide guidelines for public participation in its process of developing and adopting policy.

VACo supports equitable cost-sharing between the state and localities for the costs involved in the placements of children in residential treatment facilities for non-educational reasons. VACo opposes proposals to limit state participation in

690 funding services for children and youth who are mandated to be provided with
691 special education and foster care services.

692
693 VACo supports enhancing the ability of local school divisions to serve children
694 with disabilities in their neighborhood schools, to include flexibility in use of
695 state pool funds to serve children with high-level needs in local or regional
696 programs tailored to meet those needs, and additional support for special
697 education wraparound services to help support children in their communities.

698
699 VACo supports the development of outcome measures to track students' progress
700 in private day placements. VACo supports state assistance to localities with
701 contracting for CSA services as well as a study of the potential benefits of
702 establishing a rate-setting structure for educational services funded through CSA.

703
704 **Early Intervention**

705 VACo supports sustainable funding for Part C Early Intervention, which is an
706 entitlement program that provides services for Virginia's infants and toddlers.
707 VACo requests that the General Assembly continue to increase state general
708 funding to address growth in caseloads. Underfunding this entitlement program
709 puts pressure on local revenues to fill funding gaps for this mandated service.

710
711 **Emergency Medical Transportation**

712 VACo supports policies to protect consumers who require air ambulance services.
713 VACo opposes proposals that would add additional legal and administrative
714 burdens on local first responders regarding decisions about methods of
715 transportation in emergency situations.

716
717 **Foster Care**

718 VACo supports efforts to ensure that the state is prepared to meet the
719 requirements of the recently-enacted federal legislation governing federal
720 funding for children placed in foster care, to include preparing providers to meet
721 new standards required in the law. This legislation will allow federal
722 participation in prevention services that previously have been funded by state
723 and local dollars, but services must meet certain standards in order to qualify for
724 federal funding.

725
726 **Group Homes**

727 VACo supports resources necessary for the state to enforce appropriate
728 regulation of group homes to ensure the protection of residents' health and
729 safety.

730
731 **Healthcare**

732 VACo supports continued state funding for dental care, school nurses and
733 preventive services and maternal and child health programs offered through local
734 health departments and local school systems. VACo encourages the state to
735 prepare for emergency health services access to care and to develop and fund
736 incentives that would alleviate the nursing shortages felt in many communities.

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Human Trafficking

VACo supports treating survivors of human trafficking as victims, not criminals, and supports their access to services available to other trauma victims, such as job placement services, housing assistance, access to education, legal services, and mental health services.

Local EMS Involvement

VACo supports increased local involvement in state EMS planning to ensure statewide needs are met and to avoid imposing unnecessary barriers to volunteerism.

Prevention Services

VACo supports increased state general funding for community-based service programs. VACo recognizes programs such as Healthy Families, Comprehensive Health Investment Project (CHIP) of Virginia, Smart Beginnings, and Resource Mothers as important models and requests that the General Assembly provide additional funding for these home- and community-based activities. Investments in programs that ensure a strong start for children can help reduce the need for costlier interventions later in life.

Substance Abuse

Efforts to address substance dependency must be comprehensive and coordinated with localities. The state should develop and support evidence-based prevention initiatives and should continue to improve access to treatment.

Telehealth

VACo supports the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to support long-distance clinical health care, patient and professional health-related education, public health and health administration. Flexibility in the delivery of these services is essential in meeting the needs of residents.

TRANSPORTATION

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Priorities

Transportation Funding

VACo supports a study to examine the causes for declining growth in transportation revenues and to develop recommendations to grow revenue over time to meet increasing demands for new construction and maintenance for existing transportation infrastructure. Such a study must address the secondary road needs of counties throughout the Commonwealth, as such funding has been vastly reduced over the past 10 years.

VACo supports changes to simplify the Smart Scale process for allocating transportation funds to reduce time and costs to prepare and review applications.

VACo supports adequate funding levels to maintain existing transit capital state match rates which are projected to decline starting in 2021 due to the depletion of transportation bonds.

In 2018 the legislature enacted a dedicated funding solution for Metro that came largely through reallocation of existing revenues, at the expense of other significant transportation projects throughout Northern Virginia. To address this issue, VACo supports efforts to replace the regional funding that was redirected from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority.

Positions

Local-State Cooperation

VACo is committed to the protection of local government authority to regulate land use. This authority must be recognized by Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) when evaluations are conducted to determine the consistency between local transportation plans and the Commonwealth's transportation priorities. VACo also opposes the reduction of local control that is associated with the CTB's process of designating Corridors of Statewide Significance and the implementation of Arterial Preservation. Additionally, VACo supports additional flexibility within the VDOT project approval process and standards to be responsive to localities' individual needs.

824 **Devolution of Secondary Roads**
825 VACo opposes legislative or administrative initiatives that would transfer to
826 counties the responsibility for the construction, maintenance or operation of new
827 and existing roads.

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829 **Highway Tolls**
830 VACo opposes the installation of toll facilities on Virginia’s interstate highways
831 until the Commonwealth Transportation Board has thoroughly reviewed and
832 assessed the components of a long-term capital improvement program, has
833 identified and compared all available funding alternatives and has adopted a
834 proposal that matches capital improvements with realistically available funding
835 sources.

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837 **Maintenance Priorities**
838 VACo supports a requirement imposed upon VDOT to implement a notification
839 plan with the local governing body to establish maintenance priorities.

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841 **Parking**
842 VACo supports general authority for counties to adopt ordinances regulating,
843 including prohibiting, the parking of boats, RVs, utility trailers, campers, etc. on
844 subdivision streets. In addition, VACo supports additional authority that would
845 allow localities with parking ordinances the ability to enforce such ordinances
846 using law enforcement, uniformed local employees, or uniformed personnel
847 under contract with the locality.

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849 **Rail Enhancement Fund**
850 VACo supports authority for counties to approve Rail Enhancement Fund
851 projects funded by the state and constructed within their jurisdictions.

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853 **Railway Crossings**
854 VACo supports efforts to safely improve mobility issues on roads that cross
855 railway lines.

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857 **Road Construction and Maintenance**
858 VACo supports legislation that would prohibit VDOT from requiring localities to
859 administer any transportation project without the consent of the local governing
860 body.

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862 **Truck Size and Weight**
863 VACo opposes any legislation that seeks to increase truck size or weight beyond
864 the current federal standards, thereby stressing the capacity of the
865 Commonwealth’s road systems and putting highways, roads, and bridges at risk
866 of increased damage or deterioration.

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