

Capitol Contact

Virginia General Assembly

Virginia Association of Counties • 1207 E. Main Street, Suite 300 • Richmond, VA 23219
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Thursday, January 11, 2024

2024 General Assembly Convenes



The first day of the 2024 General Assembly session featured a mixture of continuity and change, as the many newly-elected legislators took office and both new and returning legislators settled into the recently-reopened General Assembly Building. In addition to the traditional procedural duties for the first day of the session, including the adoption of the session schedule and the appointment of members to standing committees, the House of Delegates marked the historic election of Delegate Don Scott as Speaker, the first African-American to serve in this capacity. Senator Louise Lucas, who is the first African-American and first woman to serve as President Pro Tempore of the Senate, will

continue in this role, alongside Lieutenant Governor Winsome Earle Sears, the first African-American and first woman elected to this office.

In keeping with tradition, Governor Glenn Youngkin addressed the legislature in his annual State of the Commonwealth speech, highlighting his legislative and budget priorities, as well as progress on Administration initiatives at his term's "halftime." He pledged to work with the legislature on a plan to convert Virginia's current system of funding K-12 staffing through the Standards of Quality to a student-based funding formula, which was a policy option discussed in the recently-released JLARC report on K-12 funding; this plan is to be delivered by November 1 of this year. He discussed several priorities in his proposed budget, including child care, public safety, workforce development, and modernization of the state's tax structure, and he also reiterated his challenge to the legislature to eliminate the car tax. He highlighted progress on reforms to the behavioral health system through the Right Help Right Now initiative, as well as efforts to improve the state's foster care system implemented by the Safe and Sound Task Force. He also touted the proposed relocation of the Washington Capitals and the Washington Wizards to a new sports and entertainment complex in the City of Alexandria.

General Assembly committees began considering legislation today; as of the evening of January 10, more than 1,800 pieces of legislation had been filed and posted on the legislature's website. Updated membership lists for House committees may be found at [this link](#), and Senate committee rosters may be found at [this link](#). VACo staff are reviewing legislation and will be providing regular updates in future editions of Capitol Contact.

[Watch Governor Youngkin's State of the Commonwealth.](#)

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

VACo Supports Expanded Local Speed Limit Authority

[HB 1071 \(Carr\)](#) and [HB 793 \(Henson, Jr.\)](#) seek to achieve a [long sought-after transportation safety policy goal](#) of localities across the Commonwealth. These bills would allow the governing body of any locality to reduce to less than 25 miles per hour, but not less than 15 miles per hour, the speed limit of highways that are part of the state highway system. The bill further states that these roads must be in a business district or residence district within the locality's boundaries and the reduced speed limit must be designated with lawfully placed signs.

In the 2021 Session, [legislation](#) was passed allowing localities to lower their speed limits in these types of districts. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) [interpreted](#) the bill to mean that the authority to reduce the speed limit under these provisions applied only to roads not under the Commissioner of

Highway's jurisdiction. In this case, roads owned and maintained by cities, towns, and the counties of Henrico and Arlington. HB 1071 and HB 793, if successful, would allow localities the ability to reduce speed limits in certain areas even if the road in question is in the state highway system.

This bill would improve the ability of Boards of Supervisors to respond to constituent concerns regarding transportation safety. VACo would like to thank Delegate Carr and Delegate Henson Jr., as well as their respective staffs, for putting these bills forward. VACo will be happy to speak in support of these bills.

VACo Contact: [James Hutzler](#)

VACo requests feedback on bill to mandate public hearings to fill interim board positions

The 2024 Virginia General Assembly will be considering legislation to require local governing bodies and elected school boards, when making an interim appointment to fill a vacancy in membership, to both publish notice and hold a public hearing on the appointment. [HB 69 \(Bulova\)](#) also specifies that at such meeting, “... *the body or board shall announce the names of all persons being proposed for the interim appointment and shall make available for inspection each person's resume and any other materials required by the body or board.*”

VACo seeks input from members regarding how this legislative mandate may impact current practices and procedures for filling interim appointments. Please send comments to Jeremy Bennett to jbennett@vaco.org.

VACo Contacts: [Jeremy R. Bennett](#) and [Joe Lerch, AICP](#)

Rural Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Bill Charging Ahead

[HB 107 \(Sullivan\)](#) would create the Electric Vehicle Rural Infrastructure Program and Fund, which would make available up to \$25 million each fiscal year and assist developers by offsetting up to 70 percent of the non-utility cost of electric vehicle charging stations. According to the provisions outlined in the bills, rural Virginia localities would benefit from the passage of this bill.

VACo was happy to support this bill during the [2023 General Assembly Session](#) and is excited to stand and support HB 107 when it is heard this year. VACo would like to thank Delegate Sullivan and his staff for bringing this legislation

forward. VACo will continue to monitor the progress of this legislation and provide updates when available.

VACo Contact: [James Hutzler](#)

Advocate for your locality at the VACo Local Government Day

In Partnership with VML, VAPDC and the Virginia Rural Center

Thursday, February 1, 2024

[Richmond Marriott Hotel](#)

[REGISTRATION FORM](#) | [REGISTER ONLINE](#)

Local Government Day

It's a day for all of us. Counties. Cities. Towns. Planning Districts. It's a day for us to learn how the decisions being made by the General Assembly might affect us. And it's a day to make our voices heard. Attend Local Government Day. Then visit the Capitol to meet with your legislators and observe committee meetings. Later join us for a reception.

Registration Fee

\$100 Day Briefing only (Noon – 2pm)

\$100 Reception only (530pm)

\$150 for both | \$175 late registration

Agenda

- **9am** | VACo Board of Directors Meeting
- **10am** | Registration
- **1130am** | Lunch
- **Noon** | Local Government Day
- **Afternoon** | Visit the Capitol to speak with legislators
- **530pm** | Reception

For information on how to reach your representatives, see the [Virginia House of Delegates](#) and the [Senate of Virginia](#) member websites. Find information about VACo's positions in the [2024 Legislative Program](#). We will distribute the Local Government Day Bulletin before the event.

Be a part of the legislative process at the 2024 General Assembly Session.

Register for the event at [VACo Local Government Day Online](#) or fax the [Registration Form](#) to 804.788.0083. Also, here's how you can book a room at the [Hilton Richmond Downtown](#) or the [Hampton Inn & Suites Richmond](#).

VACo Contact: [Valerie Russell](#)

Key Dates for the 2024 General Assembly

As part of its organizational work on the first day of the 2024 session, the General Assembly adopted a procedural resolution on January 10 that sets out important dates and deadlines for the 2024 legislative session.

- **January 10:** General Assembly convened at noon. Bills that were “prefiled” were due to be submitted by 10:00 a.m. Bills affecting the Virginia Retirement System, or creating or continuing a study, were required to be filed by adjournment of the floor session.
- **January 12:** Deadline for submission of member budget amendments.
- **January 19:** Deadline for all bills or joint resolutions to be filed (by 3 p.m.), with some exceptions, such as legislation introduced at the request of the Governor or legislation allowed to be introduced after deadlines by unanimous consent.
- **February 13:** “Crossover” deadline for each chamber to complete work on legislation originating in that chamber (except for the budget bill).
- **February 18:** “Budget Sunday,” the deadline for the “money committees” to report their respective budgets by midnight.
- **February 22:** Deadline for each chamber to complete consideration of its budget bill.
- **February 28:** Deadline for each chamber to complete consideration of the other chamber’s budget bill and revenue bills.

- **March 4:** Deadline for committee consideration of legislation, by midnight.
- **March 9:** Scheduled adjournment *sine die*.
- **April 17:** Reconvened session for consideration of Governor's amendments and vetoes.

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)