

VACo General Government Steering Committee

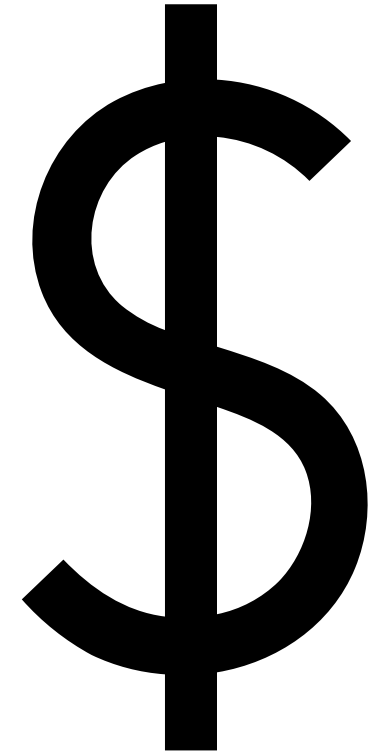
August 14, 2025

202 General Assembly Session Review of Relevant Issues



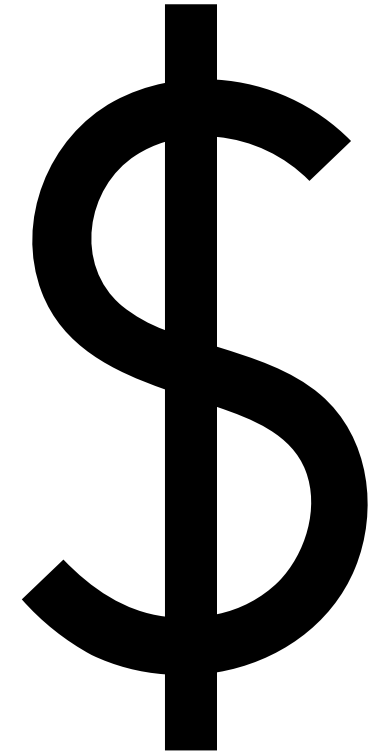
Key Provisions of the Amended 2024-2026 Biennial Budget

- Provides a 6 percent salary increase for Sheriff's dispatch positions.
- Directs the Compensation Board to assess potential options for information to be provided to the General Assembly related to comparable state roles and local salary supplements for employees in constitutional offices, with a report on recommendations due by October 1, 2026.
- Directs the Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) to evaluate total compensation, including retirement benefits, for law enforcement officers employed by the Commonwealth and covered under the VaLORS retirement system. Also directs DHRM and VRS to determine whether the elimination of the traditional VRS defined benefit pension has affected the Commonwealth's ability to retain and recruit government employees, and directs DHRM to solicit similar assessments from the Department of Education and VRS on the effects on recruitment and retention of teachers.
- Public Safety – Victim Witness Grant Program: Provides an additional \$1.5 million in FY 2026.
- Public Safety – Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Agencies: Provides an additional \$2 million in FY 2026.
- Public Safety – Unmanned Aircraft Replacement: Provides \$1 million in FY 2025 to the Department of Criminal Justice Services to administer and provide grant funding for an Unmanned Aircraft Trade and Replace Program, which would provide funding to local law enforcement agencies, local fire or ambulance service providers, or other local first responders to replace unmanned aircraft systems manufactured by foreign adversaries with systems that meet the criteria in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2024. (VACo supported)



Key Provisions of the Amended 2024-2026 Biennial Budget (cont.)

- Public Safety – Fire Programs: Includes \$5 million in FY 2025 for grants to localities to purchase protective equipment for firefighters. Directs the Department of Fire Programs to assess the fees charged by the State Fire Marshal’s office to conduct fire safety inspections and the costs to provide these services; requires that this review include a description of which fees, if any, are recommended for an increase based on the market cost and the projected additional fee revenue that would result from such recommended increase. (VACo supported)
- Provides an additional \$1.9 million in increased state matching funds for the federal State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program
- Increases from 52 to 104 weeks the maximum duration after the date of diagnosis that workers’ compensation benefits are payable for anxiety disorder, depressive disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder incurred by law enforcement officers and firefighters acting in the line of duty.



2025 Enacted Legislation Related to VACo General Government Platform/ Proposed Revisions

- **HB 1705 Virginia Retirement System; disability benefits for certain emergency dispatchers.**
 - Requires that, beginning July 1, 2026, emergency dispatchers who are not members of the hybrid retirement program become participants in the disability program for hybrid retirement plan members if the locality employing such dispatcher participates in such program. The employers of such dispatchers shall provide the costs required for funding participation in such program. (VACo worked with Vacorp , dispatchers, and patron to reduce fiscal burden).
- **HB 1730 / SB 894 Personal injury or death by wrongful act; liability of employer to vulnerable victims.**
 - Provides that in an action for personal injury or death by wrongful act brought by a vulnerable victim, as defined in the bill, against an employee, a finding that the employee's employer is vicariously liable for such employee's conduct shall be based on several factors, including the likelihood of the employee coming into contact with such vulnerable victim and the employer's failure to exercise reasonable care over the employee. (VACo and many other organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce opposed due to increased liability concerns).
- **HB 1815 / SB 1142 Line of Duty Act; benefits for campus and private police officers.**
 - Provides employees of contributing nonprofit private institutions of higher education and contributing private police departments, as those terms are defined in the bill, with the benefits granted to employees of participating employers under the Line of Duty Act. The bill clarifies that the Line of Duty Act shall not apply to any (i) private institution of higher education that is not a contributing nonprofit private institution of higher education or (ii) private police department that is not a contributing private police department. The bill requires each contributing nonprofit private institution of higher education and contributing private police department to pay its pro rata share of the initial costs to implement the bill, as determined by the Virginia Retirement System. (VACo platform position supported)



2025 Enacted Legislation Related to VACo General Government Platform/ Proposed Revisions (cont.)

- **HB 1820 Public safety communications; evaluation of need for infrastructure updates & hardware replacements.**
 - Directs the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, in conjunction with the Secretary of Finance, to evaluate the need for public safety communications infrastructure updates and hardware replacements, and the cost of meeting such need. The Secretaries shall report any findings and recommendations, including possible funding options, to the Chairs of the House Committee on Appropriations and the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations no later than December 1, 2025. (VACo is part of the workgroup through the State Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) which will meet in August).
- **HB 1933 / SB 920 Workers' compensation; presumption as to death or disability from throat cancer.**
 - Provides that for the purposes of the workers' compensation presumption as to death or disability from certain types of cancer, throat cancer includes cancer that forms in the tissues of the pharynx, larynx, adenoid, tonsil, esophagus, trachea, nasopharynx, oropharynx, or hypopharynx. This bill applies only to diseases diagnosed on or after July 1, 2025. (VACo coordinated with Vacorp to reduce liability).
- **HB 2150 Virginia Public Procurement Act; contract terms inconsistent with Virginia law.**
 - Provides that no public contract for information technology goods and services, as defined by the bill, may contain terms in conflict with Virginia law. The bill also provides that public contracts shall provide for the application of Virginia law and for jurisdiction in the state of Virginia regardless of the terms of the contract. The provisions of this bill only apply to a county, city, town, political subdivision, or public institution of higher education, or to a public body listed as an independent agency in the appropriation act, if its governing body has adopted such provisions as part of its procurement policies and procedures.



2025 Enacted Legislation Related to VACo General Government Platform/ Proposed Revisions

(cont.)

- **HB 2152 Virginia Freedom of Information Act; public body's FOIA officer training.**
 - Provides that any legal counsel for a public body who is also designated as the public body's Freedom of Information Act officer (FOIA officer) shall complete a training session or online course offered or approved by the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council.
- **HB 2177 Unmanned aircraft systems; use by public bodies, certain employees.**
 - Allows a law-enforcement officer or an employee of a law-enforcement agency to deploy an unmanned aircraft system without a warrant (i) following an accident where a report is required pursuant to relevant law to survey the scene of such accident for the purpose of crash reconstruction and record the scene by photographic or video images or (ii) to (a) aerially survey a primary residence of the subject of the arrest warrant to formulate a plan to execute an existing arrest warrant or capias for a felony offense or (b) locate a person sought for arrest when such person has fled from a law-enforcement officer and a law-enforcement officer remains in hot pursuit of such person. Current law allows a law-enforcement officer to operate an unmanned aircraft system under such conditions. The bill also permits a law-enforcement officer to deploy an unmanned aircraft system without a warrant where such officer is investigating unmanned aircraft systems surrounding or over property of the federal or state government, public critical infrastructure, or nongovernment-operated prison or jail facilities.
- **HB 2541 Information Technology Access Act; digital accessibility, definitions, procurement requirements.**
 - Makes numerous organizational changes to the Information Technology Access Act to basically conform with provisions of the federal Americans with Disability Act (ADA). (VACo was involved in the work of the Public Body Procurement Workgroup).



2025 Enacted Legislation Related to VACo General Government Platform/ Proposed Revisions

(cont.)

- **SB 1248 Fire Prevention Code; prohibition on permit fees for fire departments, etc., for certain localities.**
 - Prohibits the State Fire Marshal from charging a fee for the approval and administration of certain permits issued to fire departments and emergency medical services agencies in localities with a total population of less than 10,000 as determined by the most recent federal decennial census by the United States Census Bureau.
- **SB 1318 (McPike) Board of Pharmacy; emergency medical services providers; work group.**
 - Directs the Board of Pharmacy, in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Health and the Office of Emergency Medical Services, to report on progress in implementing Board regulations that replaced the hospital drug box exchange program, pursuant to U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency requirements.



2025 Legislation Related to VACo General Government Platform/ Proposed Revisions

Failed Legislation

- **HB 2069 Insurance; Fire Programs Fund; purposes; Aid to Localities Grant Program.**
 - Was left in House Appropriations and would have increased the assessment on certain insurance companies from one percent to 1.5 percent. The bill provides that the portion of the Fire Programs Fund allocated to localities may be used for the additional purposes of (i) constructing, improving, or expanding fire station facilities; (ii) providing mental health resources for fire personnel; or (iii) hiring additional fire personnel and funding recruitment and retention programs. (VACo supports, recommendation of two years' worth of studies, likely to be reintroduced).
- **SB 984 Virginia Fire Personnel and Equipment Grant Program established.**
 - Was passed by indefinitely in Senate Finance and Appropriations. This bill would have established the Virginia Fire Personnel and Equipment Grant Program for the purpose of providing grants to localities to hire additional firefighters and to improve their firefighting and emergency medical services. VACo supports, recommendation of two years' worth of studies, likely to be reintroduced).



2025 Legislation Related to VACo General Government Platform/ Proposed Revisions

Failed Legislation (cont.)

- **HB 2495 Collective bargaining by firefighters and emergency medical services providers.**
 - Was passed by indefinitely in Senate Commerce and Labor and would have authorized firefighters and emergency medical services providers employed by a political subdivision of the Commonwealth to engage in collective bargaining through labor organizations or other designated representatives. The bill established the Fire Service Cooperation Board to administer its provisions. The bill provided for the appointment of a three-member board of arbitration regarding any dispute arising between an employer and firefighters or emergency medical services providers. Under the bill, determinations made by such board of arbitration would be final on a disputed issue and are binding on the parties involved.
- **HB 2764 / SB 917 Collective bargaining by public employees; exclusive bargaining representatives.**
 - Would have repealed the existing prohibition on collective bargaining by public employees. The bills created the Public Employee Relations Board, which would determine appropriate bargaining units and provide for certification and decertification elections for exclusive bargaining representatives of state employees and local government employees. The bills required public employers and employee organizations that are exclusive bargaining representatives to meet at reasonable times to negotiate in good faith with respect to wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment. The bills repealed a provision that declares that, in any procedure providing for the designation, selection, or authorization of a labor organization to represent employees, the right of an individual employee to vote by secret ballot is a fundamental right that shall be guaranteed from infringement. (Vetoed)



2025 Legislation Related to VACo General Government Platform/ Proposed Revisions

Failed Legislation (cont.)

- **SB 876 Virginia Freedom of Information Act; notice of public meetings; proposed agenda required**
 - Was left in House General Laws and referred to the FOIA Council. This bill would have required public bodies subject to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act to include a proposed agenda and any subsequent revisions to be posted on the public body's official public government website, if any, and made available to the public prior to the meeting. The bill provided that any items added to the agenda after the meeting commences may be considered and discussed at the meeting, but final action shall not be taken on such an item unless the matter is time sensitive. (VACo is part of the workgroup. Should this apply to only public bodies or also advisory boards?)
- **SB 1029 Virginia Freedom of Information Act; procedure for responding to requests; charges; posting of notice of rights and responsibilities.**
 - Was left in House General Laws, and would have limited the fees charged for producing public records to the median hourly rate of pay of employees of the public body or the actual hourly rate of pay of the person performing the work, whichever is less, and provided that a public body may petition a court for relief from this fee limit if there is no one who can process the request at the median hourly rate of pay or less. The bill also amended existing law providing that a public body may petition a court for additional time to respond to a request for public records to allow such petitions to be heard in either general district or circuit court, to give such petitions priority on the court's docket, and to toll the response time while such a petition is pending before a court. (VACo worked with stakeholders and patron on compromise language. Will likely be reintroduced.)



Questions?

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