

# VACo Legislative Team



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## VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY



# 2016 Legislative Priorities



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# VACo 2016 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

## OVERARCHING LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY POSITION

### **Increase Education Funding**

To assure children in Virginia a quality education necessary for their success, VACo calls upon the Governor and General Assembly to fully fund the Standards of Quality as recommended by the Board of Education and the Standards of Accreditation. The provision of a quality education for all Virginia's children is the most important function of state and local government. When adjusted for inflation, state per pupil spending on public education is less than funding levels in FY 2005. With increased educational mandates, increased students and state policy changes that decreased education funding local school divisions have had to eliminate important academic programs, cut instructional and support staff, and increase class sizes, despite strong local efforts to improve efficiencies in public education.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING**

### **Land Use/Growth Management Tools**

VACo supports maintaining local authority to plan and regulate land use and opposes any legislation that weakens these key local responsibilities. VACo supports legislation that grants localities tools to adequately meet increasing needs for public services driven by new development without burdening current residents with the cost of new growth through increased real estate taxes.

### **Enhanced Coordination between Workforce System and K-12**

VACo supports a statewide effort to bring together localities and the key education, business and workforce development stakeholders to explore opportunities to make systemic changes that will increase the focus on career and technical education in K-12 that meets the needs of local and regional economic development efforts. County officials desire to work with the state, the community college system and the business community to evaluate and implement policy changes that lead to increased employment opportunities for the Commonwealth's students and an increased pool of talent with the necessary training for our Commonwealth's current and prospective businesses.

## **ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE**

### **Water Quality Improvement Funding**

VACo supports effective partnerships across all levels of government to improve water quality. VACo opposes provisions of any strategy that penalizes 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.

## **FINANCE**

### **Local Finances**

VACo supports the authority of county governments to levy and collect revenue from local business taxes. VACo requests county government representation on all study or legislative commissions that impact local government revenues or

services. VACo opposes mandated new or expanded funding requirements on counties.

## **GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

### **Broadband**

VACo urges the Commonwealth and the Federal Government to assist communities in their efforts to deploy universal affordable access to broadband for all areas, particularly in underserved and rural areas while preserving local land use, permitting, fees and other local authority. Widespread deployment of broadband should be a top priority for the Commonwealth to ensure competitive economic advantages, improve public safety, provide quality educational opportunities and facilitate telemedicine and other modern health care initiatives.

## **HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **Health and Human Resources Funding**

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

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Devolution of Secondary Roads**

VACo opposes legislative or administrative initiatives that transfer to counties the responsibility for the construction, maintenance or operation of new and existing roads.

### **Local-State Transportation Funding and Cooperation**

VACo believes it is important to closely monitor the implementation of HB 2 and HB 1887 and determine whether process improvements need to be made. While HB 1887 provided some additional funding for transit services, VACo supports the full funding of transit systems by the state to meet critical transit needs. VACo is also concerned about the condition of secondary roads throughout the Commonwealth, but is appreciative of funding in the Six Year Improvement Plan to meet some of these needs, and supports additional funding for these efforts.