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VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

February 4, 2025

The Honorable L. Louise Lucas
Chair
Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee
General Assembly Building, Room 1404
201 North 9th Street
Richmond, VA 23219

The Honorable Luke E. Torian
Chair
House Appropriations Committee
General Assembly Building, Room 1223
201 North 9th Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Chair Torian and Chair Lucas,

On behalf of the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo), I am writing to express our sincere gratitude for the work of the Senate Finance and Appropriations and House Appropriations Committees in advancing critical investments in K-12 education. We particularly appreciate your leadership in securing \$222.9 million in funding to remove the support cap, a long-standing priority for VACo, and our top funding request for 2025, that will significantly strengthen our local school divisions' ability to provide essential services to students.

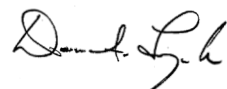
Your commitment to ensuring that Virginia's public schools receive the resources they need is commendable. The elimination of the 15-year-old support cap represents a transformative step forward, allowing school divisions to hire additional support staff and better meet the needs of students. Additionally, the investments made in special education funding and compensation for instructional and support positions will further enhance educational outcomes across the Commonwealth.

The \$52.8 million in additional funding for special education demonstrates your recognition of the growing needs of students requiring specialized support and the work of the Joint Subcommittee on Elementary and Secondary Education Funding. Moreover, the one-time \$1,000 bonus for state-supported instructional and support positions will help with retention and morale among our educators, who are vital to the success of our students. The flexibility regarding local match for this funding is greatly appreciated.

As we continue to work toward a strong and equitable education system for all students, we value your leadership and dedication to making meaningful investments in public education. We look forward to continued collaboration with you and your colleagues to support policies that enhance learning opportunities for every child in Virginia.

Thank you again for your unwavering commitment to Virginia's students, educators, and families.

Sincerely,



Dean A. Lynch, CAE
Executive Director
Virginia Association of Counties

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Members, Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee
Members, Joint Subcommittee on Elementary and Secondary Education Funding
Members, Virginia General Assembly
Members, Virginia County Administrators
April Kees, Director, Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee
Anne E. Oman, Staff Director, House Appropriations Committee
Wendy Kang, Legislative Analyst, Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee
Zachary L. Robbins, Legislative Fiscal Analyst, House Appropriations Committee