



Dinwiddie County's 2020 Legislative Program

Based on VACo's Preliminary 2020 Legislative Program

November 19, 2020

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this document is to demonstrate how Dinwiddie County's legislative priorities align with those of the Virginia Association of Counties' 2020 Legislative Program.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

Priorities

Broadband

VACo urges the Commonwealth to provide adequate financial assistance to counties to build the necessary telecommunications infrastructure to deploy universal affordable access to the Internet for all areas, particularly in underserved and rural areas. Additionally, VACo supports legislation that provides additional tools for counties to finance, build, and operate open access networks in partnership with commercial Internet service providers.

Proffers and Growth Management Tools

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

VACo also supports legislation that grants localities additional 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. Such additional tools may include broad impact fee authority for all counties, and adequate public facilities provisions.

Positions

Land Use

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

Regulation of Home-based Businesses

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

Affordable and Workforce Housing

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

Economic Development

VACo supports economic development through policies and programs that bolster local and regional development efforts by maintaining state funding and granting additional funding and authority to promote local and regional incentives. This includes the provision of adequate funding for the Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund (AFID); the

Commonwealth Opportunity Fund; and the operations of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP).

VACo also supports state funding for Virginia's planning district commissions and local cooperative extension offices, which play key roles in addressing regional challenges.

Adequate funding for the AFID grant program is important to the County because it helps the agricultural and forestry industries in Dinwiddie create a value added agricultural product or processing facility, to help diversify their farm income. Agriculture is still the state and Dinwiddie Counties largest industry sector.

The commonwealth opportunity fund and efforts from the VEPD are important to help Dinwiddie compete with other states for economic development projects. Funding for VEDP's workforce development initiative is needed to help the County maintain and create a talent pipeline for existing industries and to attract new industry.

Impacts of Federal and Military Facilities

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

Maintain Public Sector Role in Onsite Sewer Program

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

Siting of Transmission Lines

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

Education

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.

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.

Funding Support Personnel

VACo supports full restoration of budget cuts, including the elimination of the funding cap on support positions, and full reinstatement of the Cost of Competing Adjustment "COCA" for support staff. In addition to meeting its obligations to fully fund instructional staff, the Commonwealth should meet its obligation to fully fund K-12 support staff.

Library System

VACo supports maintaining the level of funding of financial aid to the library system at levels budgeted for FY 2019 and FY 2020.

School Safety and Security

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

Dinwiddie County has implemented a School Resource Officer (SRO) program at both of its secondary schools and two of its elementary schools. This was accomplished through DCJS grant funding and sustained by Dinwiddie County following the grant period. During the 2019-2020 school year, School Security Officers (SSOs) were added at Dinwiddie County Middle and High Schools (one each) to supplement and enhance the safety and security of our students and staff.

Special Education Regional Tuition Reimbursement Program

VACo supports enhancing local capacity to serve children with high-level support needs in the least restrictive environment, including regional special education programs. VACo supports local flexibility in the structure of such programs. If a new model for the distribution of funding for special education students with intense support needs is implemented, such a model should be phased in gradually, with state dollars provided to enable school divisions that would otherwise experience reductions in funding to continue to meet federal maintenance of effort requirements.

Teacher Shortage and Retention

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

Workforce-Ready Students

VACo supports changes in curriculum and funding that will increase the number of student leaving the K-14 system with workforce-ready credentials. VACo supports incorporating career and technical education curriculum at the elementary school level. VACo supports high school students earning academic credit for participating in an internship, apprenticeship, credential, and other work programs. VACo supports innovative models for schools to give academic credit for students that earn industry workforce skills through certifications, or licensure from an approved education or training provider. VACo supports establishing partnerships to strengthen the school-to-workforce pipeline in a variety of ways including guaranteed employment opportunities with local businesses and learning opportunities shared between local community colleges and high schools.

ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE

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 these 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.

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 protection of land for conservation purposes. VACo supports the creation of a Purchase of Development Rights program that provides state funding for the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation and participation incentives for landowners. Such programs preserve prime soils for food production and protect important forest land and environmentally sensitive areas in the Commonwealth.

Dam Safety

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

Energy

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

Dinwiddie County supports this position, but has concerns regarding the impact of renewable energy resources on timber and farmland.

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.

Invasive Species and Noxious Weeds

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

Large Utility Projects

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

Non-Point Source Pollution

VACo supports a well-financed state program to address non-point source runoff from agricultural operations. The program should encourage implementation of priority best management practices (BMPs) such as nutrient management planning, use of cover crops, continuous no-till farming and development of forested riparian buffers and livestock stream exclusion.

Predator Control

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

Southern Rivers Watershed

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

Stormwater Programs

VACo supports state funding that enables local governments to fully satisfy the resource and funding needs associated with local stormwater management programs. VACo supports legislation that proposes creative and cost-effective stormwater management practices. VACo supports initiatives that clarify and modernize stormwater regulations and permitting processes, including measures that makes permitting more efficient, reevaluates the fee structure system, and allows for considerations of factors such as long-term maintenance costs. VACo supports legislation that proposes innovative solutions to facilitate compliance with stormwater standards in ways that promote economic development while achieving water quality goals.

Tree Conservation and Replacement

VACo supports expanding tree replacement and tree conservation statutes to include all localities in Virginia.

Onsite Wastewater Systems

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

Uranium Mining

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

Technical Assistance

VACo supports robust state funding for entities that provide critical resources and technical assistance to localities in their efforts to comply with environmental policies and regulations. This includes, but is not limited to, organizations such as the Virginia Cooperative Extension and Planning District Commissions (PDCs).

Water Supply Planning

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

FINANCE

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

Appeals of Tax Assessments

VACo opposes proposals to make major changes to the current appeals processes for real or tangible personal property assessments, such as changes to the assessor's presumption of correctness or the role of the state Tax Commissioner with respect to valuation of property.

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 2020-2022 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 to be \$85.83 per inmate in FY 2017, of which \$36.30 was contributed by localities.

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 for individuals incarcerated in local and regional jails; if the state establishes standards for the provision of health care, including behavioral 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.

Funding for Payments of Service Charges in Lieu of Taxes for State Facilities

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

Implementation of Medicaid Expansion

VACO supports full state funding for the local costs associated with Medicaid expansion, including local eligibility workers and case managers. VACo supports restoration of General Fund reductions to Community Service Boards in FY 2020. These savings were incorporated in the 2018 Appropriations Act and were expected to be generated by replacing General Fund support for services for previously-uninsured CSB clients with Medicaid billing for clients newly eligible for Medicaid. However, there is concern that Medicaid reimbursements may not fully cover the General Fund reductions.

To date, Dinwiddie County has enrolled an additional 1297 adults to Medicaid because of the Expansion.

Modernization of Communications Sales and Use Tax Structure

VACo supports updating the Communications Sales and Use Tax (CSUT) to ensure that it reflects the modern telecommunications landscape, which has evolved since the CSUT took effect in January 2017.

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

Real and Personal Property Tax Exemptions Enacted Prior to 2003

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

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Priorities

Local Authority

VACo supports 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. 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 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. Additionally, VACo supports a streamlined process to address situations in which census boundaries do not align with locally drawn or commonly adhered to boundaries.

Primary elections present a significant cost to Dinwiddie County as turnout is historically very low. Some precincts had 5-10 voters in the last primary. If primaries were funded by political parties, it would lessen the financial burden on localities. It is the opinion of the County's General Registrar that eliminating current "splits" would also decrease the costs associated with elections considerably. The most recent election required that the County order and pay for seven different ballot styles as opposed to one for our five districts. Finally, the General Registrar feels as though anything that can be done to adjust census lines will be beneficial.

Ethics Reform

VACo supports common sense efforts to strengthen Virginia’s public ethics and conflicts of interest laws that are applicable and practical at the local level.

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.

This legislation would align Dinwiddie County’s policy with that of the Department of Social Services, thereby ensuring consistency among all County employees. This legislation also allows a trained Hearing Officer to be the decision-maker in extremely important personnel matters. Granting immunity to employees creates a “safe environment” for participation of employees and others in extremely sensitive matters.

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 streamline 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.

Advertisements in local newspapers are expensive, and I do know how effective they really are. I feel more people get information from the website or joining our public information distribution list rather than an ad hidden among other classifieds.

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.

The Dinwiddie County Sheriff's Office instituted a Body Worn Camera (BWC) program several years ago, which has been tremendously successful. Video footage of incidents has significantly reduced the number of founded complaints against deputies and reportedly brings a new level of security to citizens during routine traffic stops and other law enforcement interactions. Dinwiddie County's program was made possible through grant funding from the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).

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.

If Dinwiddie County did not have sovereign immunity, or if this sovereign immunity was weakened, the County would be exposed to additional liability, which would increase insurance rates and possible lead to tax increases.

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's department provides law enforcement and those cities, counties and towns with a police department.

Health and Human Resources

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.

Dinwiddie currently has 32 people funded by state/county in Azzie Manor and Harris Manor plus 3 in Browder Manor for a total of 35. There are 89 adults who either have companion services (we could not fund this without Pamplin money as the state does not provide enough) or other state/local assistance.

It is anticipated that many more "baby boomers" will become qualified in the next few years for services.

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.

Any changes to CSB funding should involve meaningful consultation with localities as key funding partners in the behavioral health system. In addition to local contributions to CSBs, localities make significant commitments to behavioral health through support for services funded through the Children's Services Act and local spending on behavioral health care in local and regional jails, among other funding commitments.

Proposed changes to the funding structure, such as the creation of new funding formulae, should apply only to new funding. As an alternative, hold-harmless funds must be provided to those CSBs that would stand to lose state funding under any new funding structure.

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, approximately 13,000 of whom were on a wait-list as of August 2019.

Children's Services Act

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

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

VACo supports state assistance to localities with contracting for CSA services to improve localities' ability to negotiate with providers of these services, such as private day placements.

Early Intervention

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

Emergency Medical Transportation

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

Foster Care

VACo supports efforts to ensure that the state is prepared to meet the requirements of the recently-enacted federal legislation governing federal funding for children placed in foster care, to include preparing providers to meet new standards required in the law. This

legislation will allow federal participation in prevention services that previously have been funded by state and local dollars, but services must meet certain standards in order to qualify for federal funding. VACo supports state assistance in recruiting appropriate foster families to care for children who must be removed from their homes.

VACo supports state assistance in recruiting and retaining child welfare workers to address high rates of turnover in local department of social services.

The new legislation is looking at evidence-based practices to return children to their homes rather than foster care/adoption. However, there will always be those children who need foster care families. The goal is to provide more preventive services to families. We provide some preventive services now in Dinwiddie for 10 families (not all localities do this). When Family First comes into effect, the number will at least double. At that time, we will review Family Services workload to determine if more staff will be needed or redistribution of tasks.

Group Homes

VACo supports resources necessary for the state to enforce appropriate regulation of group homes, such as staff qualifications and the condition of the homes, to ensure the protection of residents' health and safety.

Healthcare

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

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 Health 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

Priority

Transportation Funding

VACo supports expedited action to address 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 action 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 continuing 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 the 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.

Devolution of Secondary Roads

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

Highway Tolls

VACo opposes the installation of toll facilities on Virginia's interstate highways until the Commonwealth Transportation Board has thoroughly reviewed and assessed the

components of a long-term capital improvement program, has identified and compared all available funding alternatives and has adopted a proposal that matches capital improvements with realistically available funding sources.

Maintenance Priorities

VACo supports a requirement imposed upon VDOT to implement a notification plan with the local governing body to establish maintenance priorities.

Parking

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

Peer-to-Peer Automobile Rentals

All vehicles, regardless of ownership, that are rented through online platforms should be subject to the current rental car taxes allocated to state and local funds.

Rail Enhancement Fund

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

Railway Crossings

VACo supports efforts to safely improve mobility issues on roads that cross railway lines.

Truck Size and Weight

VACo opposes any legislation that seeks to increase truck size or weight beyond the current federal standards thereby stressing the capacity of the Commonwealth's road systems and putting highways, roads and bridges at risk of increased damage or deterioration.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Uniform Partition of Heirs Act

As you know, the County Attorney's Office provides non-biased legal advice, and, thus, whatever the personal opinions of the employees of the County Attorney's Office, generally does take positions on legislation, but leaves those judgments to the Board of Supervisors and other elected officials. A citizen, Mr. Anthony Jones, has asked the Board of Supervisors to support the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act, and as a courtesy to Mr. Jones, I am reminding everyone of that. This act would provide additional protections for heir property owners. Situations regarding heir property owners often arise when a landowner dies without a will. After two or three generations, it is not uncommon for dozens of property owners to simultaneously own a property. A longer, but more thorough summary of this legislation provided by the American Bar Association is available on their website.

Gaming Parlors

With three such establishments, and gaming machines in many local convenience stores in our locality, Dinwiddie County fully supports the General Assembly's efforts to establish additional rules in an effort to better regulate gaming parlors and their impact on local communities.

Second Amendment Rights

See attached resolution.