

Virginia First Cities Coalition

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Virginia First Cities Coalition Requests Governor McDonnell to Distribute Federal Education Jobs Funds to Title I Schools

In a letter to Governor Bob McDonnell, Kimble Reynolds, Jr., Chairman of Virginia First Cities Coalition, requested that he accept the \$249.5 million recently authorized for Virginia through the Federal Education Jobs Fund (H. R.1586) and distribute it based on Title I-A parameters, as allowed by law. The Education Jobs Fund legislation was created to provide additional funding to states for support of local teacher salary and related costs at the elementary and secondary school level.

The Education Jobs Fund requires that the funding be distributed one of two ways:

Funding must be distributed on the basis of the "primary elementary and secondary formula" or each school division's relative shares of funds under the Title I-A program for the most recent fiscal year.

Virginia First Cities encourages the governor to select the latter method based on each school division's relative shares under the Title I-A program. Targeted Title I-A distribution would direct funding to schools, local education agencies, LEAs, with high numbers or high percentages of poor children. These added funds could be used for additional remediation and support to help children meet challenging state academic standards. Targeting funds to these schools is even more urgent following recent announcements that 40% of Virginia schools have failed to meet "adequate yearly progress", or AYP, during 2009-2010 compared to 29% in 2008-09. This provides an extra boost to Virginia schools that have lost ground and schools that have the highest number of poor and at-risk students.

Chairman Reynolds, also Vice Mayor of the City of Martinsville, underscored the critical importance of closing the achievement gap in strengthening our workforce and attracting good jobs into distressed areas. "Distributing resources in this manner is a step to improving Virginia's future workforce, so essential to Virginia's future economic vitality," said Reynolds.