

# 2022 Virginia General Assembly VFC Legislative Program



Virginia First Cities Coalition



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# Eight Functional Areas



- Annexation Moratorium/Fiscal Stress Statement/COVID-19 Pandemic Response
- City Government/Administration Issues
- Community Wealth Building
- Education/Early Childhood Initiatives
- Public Safety
- Skill Games, Video Gaming Terminals, Gambling and Local Revenue
- Taxation and Tax Policy
- Transportation/Mobility

# Annexation Moratorium/Fiscal Stress/ CV-19 Response

Statement that the state fully fund obligations made when moratorium put in place

- **HB 599** -7.1% growth from FY2007 to FY2022. Request at least \$20 million more in HB599 funding
- Specific appropriation to assist city's with **local law enforcement recruitment & retention**
- **Street Maintenance** – Roads maintained by localities are in poorer condition than state-maintained roads. We know this in our fiscally stressed cities. Maintenance payments have not kept pace with our road maintenance needs. Amend Code of Va to change how road maintenance payments are distributed to our cities to better align payments to need

# City Government/Administration Issues for New State Priorities

- **City Council Salaries** – Update to Code for 21<sup>st</sup> century reality. Virginia’s counties face no such caps on compensation and can adopt salary increases for the new term of elected officials

## Community Wealth Building

- **TANF for Employment** – VFC-incubated program with three funding rounds that needs to be “reauthorized” every 5 years.
- **Affordable Housing/Gentrification** – Amendment to Virginia Constitution to allow a **long-term owner occupant program (LOOP)**
- **Eviction Prevention and Right to Counsel** – Imbalanced legal representation. Commonwealth should great increase funding to the Virginia Indigent Defense Commission to help assure the right to counsel for those in eviction proceedings

# Community Wealth Building (continued)

## **Economic Gardening** – To propel redevelopment of our cities

- Industrial Revitalization Fund (IRF)
- Main Street Program
- **Enterprise Zone Program**
- Brownfields
- Urban Public Private Partnership Redevelopment Fund
- **CDFI Fund - \$10 million + staffing**
- Oppose decrease or change to Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit
- Maximum financial assistance for the SLAF
- Flood resilience risk reduction infrastructure projects
- Broadband coverage & affordability

## **Health & Human Services**

- STEP-VA implementation and funding support
- **Marcus Alert implementation and funding support**
- Revise ECO and TDO legislation
- Support local social services
- Supports to improve birth outcomes and maternal health

# Education/Early Childhood Initiatives

- Prioritization of SOQ Enhancement Recommendations
- Because the current SOQs are inadequate for what they provide, the General Assembly should update/adopt SOQs to pick up the cost (in a meaningful way for local schools) for teacher aides in the early grade levels
- Modernization and Construction sustainable funding source
- **Support** for a **one-cent sales tax to provide revenue for construction or renovation of schools**
- Funding **Master Teacher Residency Program** for special ed teachers
- Continued funding support for **Extended Year/Round Schools**
- Support a more robust **Early Childhood Success program** for our most at-risk children

## Public Safety

- **Reiterate HB 599 funding increase. Crisis in local policing/recruitment & retention**
- State funding to fill gap/pay differential between Commonwealth Attorneys and Public Defenders
- Local Jails – **1)** Support implementation of new standards for behavioral and mental health care; **2)** Increase per diem payments for state responsible inmates in local jails; **3)** Support DoC reentry program for \$4.5 M each year
- Community Violence & Prevention; City-specific gun violence prevention programs

## Skill Games

- VFC is not in business to support “gambling winners or losers”
- State should provide a **level playing field and revenue stream directly to cities** hosting any kind of gambling platform and especially for online betting
- Localities should at all times retain local zoning authority for location, etc

# Taxation & Tax Policy

**Statement re Grocery Tax Elimination** - Since 1997 Virginia local governments have a long and not so pleasant experience with campaign promises kept that end up short changing local governments closest to the people and pushing down the tax burden. **It is for this reason that VFC urges the Governor-elect and the General Assembly to replace lost revenue to localities if there is any proposed elimination of the “Grocery Tax.”**

- Vigorously oppose any attempt to **eliminate or reduce the Machinery & Tools tax and the BPOL tax**

**Statement re Increasing Standard Deduction** – VFC has always supported increasing the standard deduction because it will most directly support putting additional dollars in the pockets of our low and middle income citizens.



# Transportation/Mobility

- Another opportunity to **vigorously promote an increased street maintenance formula and funding** for our cities
- Transit funding – State capital assistance for our transit properties is projected to lag the need. DRPT projects a \$226 M gap in state capital assistance to transit agencies over the next five years. If state transportation revenues do not recover strongly from the pandemic then additional state funding will be needed
- Amend Code of Virginia to allow local governments the option to implement a **radar-speed enforcement program** in urban centers and residential streets as a traffic calming measure. This will have the added benefit of alleviating the workforce stress of our local police departments that are severely under-resourced.

*Statement/Disclaimer: Individual items in the 2022 VFC Legislative Program may not be officially supported by every member city*