



Policy Priorities for 2024 General Assembly

Health Equity

VICPP Leading

Unconscious Bias Training for Healthcare Professionals. VICPP will continue to seek a requirement that healthcare professionals who deal with pregnant women be trained in unconscious bias. The PUSH Coalition that VICPP helped organize is eager to continue working on this issue and has secured bi-partisan support. Senate Co-Patrons: Senator Locke (D), Senator-elect Head (R). House Co-Patrons: Delegate Hayes (D), Delegate Coyner (R).

Community Health Workers. A Community Health Worker (CHW) is a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of the community. Virginia is not among the 25 states that have created a sustainable pathway to fund CHWs. With the end of COVID-19 emergency funding, most CHWs connected to Local Health Districts will lose their funding in 2024. VICPP will advocate money in the budget to support CHWs. Budget amendment sponsors: Delegate Sickles (D) and Senator-elect Aird (D).

VICPP Supporting

Healthcare Coverage for Undocumented Children. VICPP will advocate a bill to cover healthcare for the 13,000 children who would be eligible for Medicaid except for their documentation status. Work led by The Commonwealth Institute. Patrons: Delegate Tran (D) and Senator Hashmi (D).

Criminal Justice Reform

VICPP Leading

Limiting the use of dogs in prisons. Most prison systems use dogs to locate contraband. Virginia uses dogs to “manage” people who are incarcerated. Between 2017 and 2022, people incarcerated were bitten by dogs 271 times. Some of these bites caused permanent damage. The next highest state had only 15 bites in the same period. Patrons: Delegate Webert (R) and Delegate Seibold (D).

No cost communication. VICPP supported a bill patroned by Senator Boysko in 2023 that would have made phone calls to incarcerated people free. It was killed in the House, but there was interest in the issue. VICPP is actively helping lead a coalition effort on this work with other key organizations like the Legal Aid Justice Center, the ACLU, Sistas for Justice Reform, SALT, and the Humanization Project. Patron: Senator Boysko (D).

VICPP Supporting

Oversight. There was money in the 2023 budget to set up an oversight office. Now the office needs to be codified. The ACLU is leading the work. Patron: Senator Marsden (D).

Second Look. This bill provides people who are incarcerated with long prison sentences an opportunity to get a second look at their sentence if they’ve served at least ten years and been active in education and reform opportunities. The ACLU is leading the work. Patrons: Senator Deeds (D) and Delegate-elect Cousins (D).

Automatic restoration of voting rights. VICPP will support bills to automatically restore voting rights. Patrons: Senator Locke (D) and Delegate Bennett-Parker (D).

Affordable Housing

VICPP Leading

Housing in Faith in the Commonwealth. VICPP is leading an effort to get Virginia to allow congregations to build affordable housing without special zoning changes. VICPP's bill is modeled after one that recently passed in California called "Yes, in God's Backyard." Patrons: Senator Hashmi (D) and Delegate Carr (D).

VICPP Supporting

Money. VICPP will support more money for building affordable housing, rental assistance, and home ownership opportunities. This work is led by the Virginia Housing Alliance and the Virginia Poverty Law Center.

Tenant protections. VICPP will support the Virginia Poverty Law Center's and Housing Opportunity Made Equal's proposals for protecting tenants against evictions.

Working Family Support

VICPP Leading

Paid Sick Days. VICPP will seek a Paid Sick Day standard for all workers. Patrons: Senator Surovell (D) and Delegate Ward (D).

Child Labor Protections. VICPP is seeking to increase the penalties for child labor violations. The penalties have not been updated in 30 years. Patron: Delegate Siebold (D).

VICPP Supporting

Minimum wage. The minimum wage bill passed in 2020 must be reenacted before July 2024 for the next two increases can go into effect and raise the minimum wage up to \$15 per hour. VICPP supports reenactment of the bill. This will likely be a high-profile issue. VICPP is part of a minimum wage coalition. Patrons: Senator Lucas (D) and Delegate Ward (D).

Childcare subsidies. VICPP is part of a childcare coalition (Virginia Promise Partnership) advocating more subsidies for childcare. Much more is needed for working families. The Governor has proposed money in his budget. The Partnership believes more is needed.

Wage Theft. VICPP is part of a group of labor attorneys, labor groups and worker advocates that want to strengthen remedies on minimum wage and overtime laws to make it easier to recover unpaid wages.

Remove farmworker exemption. Currently farmworkers are exempted from the state minimum wage, a clear legacy from slavery. The Legal Aid Justice Center is the lead on this work. Patrons: Delegate-elect Hernandez (D) and Delegate Sickles (D).

Other

Assault weapon ban. VICPP supports commonsense gun reform, including a ban on assault weapons. Patrons: Senator Deeds (D) and Delegate Helmer (D).

Tax reform. VICPP has been a part of tax coalition led by the The Commonwealth Institute. The coalition supports making Virginia's taxes more progressive and may run a bill for a tax on millionaires that could help fund things like affordable housing, childcare, and education. This approach may need a few years to garner support.