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VICPP 2025 Policy Priorities

Health Equity

Lead on Maternal Health:

- **Unconscious Bias/Cultural Competency Training (SB 740/HB 1649).** VICPP has led on this issue for the last few years and has come very close to winning it. VICPP is hopeful that the Governor will sign the bill this year. (Patrons: Sen. Locke/Sen. Head and Del. Hayes with Del. Coyner supporting) ***Vetoed by the Governor.***
- **Expand Medicaid Services to Incarcerated Pregnant Women.** This budget amendment directs DMAS to apply for a Medicaid 1115 reentry waiver to provide pregnant and postpartum care for women who are incarcerated. VICPP is partnering with the Virginia Poverty Law Center (VPLC) on this issue. (Budget Amendment Sponsors: Sen. Locke and Del. Coyner) ***Did not make it into the budget.***
- **Presumptive Eligibility for Pregnant Women (SB 831/HB 2102).** Allow pregnant women to be immediately enrolled in Medicaid without waiting for up to 45 days for Medicaid paperwork to be processed. Mississippi just passed this. Partnering with VPLC. (Patrons: Sen. Locke and Del. Feggans) ***Language included in budget to utilize the Cover Virginia call center to enroll pregnant women faster.***
- **Keep Labor and Delivery Units Open (HB 1904).** At the request of south and west side VICPP advocates, VICPP drafted this bill to address a problem in maternity care deserts to enable nursery and OB units to remain open. (Patron: Del. Willett) ***GOVERNOR SIGNED BILL!!!***

Support:

- **Perinatal Health Hub (Item 277).** VICPP supports the Governor's line item in the budget to support perinatal health hubs which are community-based navigation centers to improve health outcomes for pregnant women and infants. ***INCLUDED in final budget.***
- **Cover All Kids.** VICPP strongly supports this coalition effort, led by TCI, to provide health coverage for undocumented children who would normally be eligible for Medicaid except for their documentation status. (Budget Amendment Sponsors: Sen. Hashmi and Del. Tran) ***Died in committee.***
- **Community Health Workers.** A budget amendment directs DMAS to conduct a rate study and benefit analysis of a community health worker benefit - a first step toward Virginia creating a CHW Medicaid benefit. (Budget Amendment Sponsors: Sen. Pillion and Del. Sickles) ***Died in committee.***

Affordable Housing

Lead:

- **Faith and Housing (HB 2153/SB 1178).** VICPP is leading on a bill to enable localities to streamline the process for congregations to use their land to build affordable housing. (Patrons: Sen. Hashmi, Del. Carr/Del. Tata) ***A heavily amended bill passed, providing one small step forward.***

Support:

- **Money for affordable housing.** VICPP supports the VA Housing Alliance proposals around more money for Virginia's housing trust fund, vouchers for renters, and first-time homebuyer assistance. ***Increases were not included, but the two-year budget maintains increases from 2024.***

- **Tenant reforms.** VICPP supports various protections for renters in coalition with VPLC, HOME of Virginia, and New Virginia Majority. **Multiple bills VETOED by Governor.**

Criminal Justice Reform

Lead:

- **Expanding Education in Prison (HB 2158).** VICPP is helping lead on a bill to expand education in prison, including VICPP's priority around higher education. The bill seeks to standardize educational programs and opportunities throughout the prison system to increase literacy, prepare people for taking the GED and offer higher education classes in every prison. (Patron: Del. Carr) **Vetoed by the Governor.**
- **Youth Shackling (HB 2222).** Shackling young people is still a practice being used in courtrooms in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Virginia is one of only 11 states in the country to continue the practice. (Patrons: Sen. Bagby and Del. Cousins) **GOVERNOR SIGNED BILLS!**

Support:

- **Restoration of Rights (SJ 248/HJ 2).** This bill would amend the Virginia Constitution to restore voting rights to persons convicted of a felony after they have completed their sentence. Currently, the governor has the sole authority to restore voting rights. Constitutional amendments must pass the legislature two consecutive years before going to the voters. (Patrons: Sen. Locke and Del. Bennett-Parker) **PASSED SUCCESSFULLY THROUGH SENATE AND HOUSE.**
- **Counsel at First Appearance (HB 2217).** People detained pretrial can sit in jail for days or weeks before they can challenge their detention, often resulting in a loss of employment, housing, access to medical care, and more. This bill would ensure counsel is provided to everyone in custody at their first appearance and would allow the defendant to have their arguments for bond to be heard on that day. (Patrons: Sen. Aird/Sen. Stanley and Del. Callsen) **Died in committee.**

Working Family Supports

Lead:

- **Paid Sick Days (HB 1921).** VICPP is working to keep the issue alive in 2025, because workers deserve to get five days off when they are sick. (Patron: Del. Ward) **Governor VETOED.**

Support:

- **Eliminate Childcare Waitlists.** Despite allocating new money for childcare assistance last year, there are growing waitlists around the commonwealth. VICPP supports the initiatives of the Virginia Promise Partnership to eliminate (or reduce) childcare waitlists for subsidized childcare. **Limited subsidies included in final budget.**
- **Minimum wage (HB 1928).** VICPP supports raising the minimum wage. (Patron: Del. Ward) **Governor VETOED.**
- **Remove the Farm Worker Exemption from Minimum Wage (HB 1625).** This bill would ensure that farmworkers make VA's minimum hourly wage. (Patron: Del. McClure) **Governor VETOED.**

Other

- **Voter protection (SB 813/HB 1657).** VICPP supports a bill to prevent eligible citizens from being purged from voter lists because of outdated or inaccurate data from the DMV. (Patrons: Sen. Rouse and Del. Henson) **Governor VETOED.**
- **Common sense gun reform.** If there are viable proposals that could use our support, VICPP will participate in coalition efforts. **Governor VETOED multiple bills.**
- **Tax reform (HB 2333 and HB 1754).** VICPP supports two bills to create higher tax rate categories for high income earners. The Commonwealth Institute leads the work on this issue. (Patrons: Del. Hernandez & Del. Watts). **Bills died in committee.**
- **Immigrant protection.** As part of the Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights, VICPP opposed bills criminalizing the immigrant community. **These bills died in committee.**