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VICPP 2026 Policy Priorities

Health Equity

Lead on Maternal Health:

- **Reducing Bias (SB 22).** This bill would require evidence-based bias reduction training for health care professionals with the goal of improving outcomes and reducing racial disparities. (Patrons: Sen. Locke and Del. Hayes, Sen. Head supports)
- **Expanding access to Midwives.** This budget amendment will direct DMAS and VDH to convene a work group that brings stakeholders together to study barriers that prevent Virginia moms on Medicaid from accessing Cardinal Care with all midwives that are licensed by the state upon entry into care. (Patrons: Sen. Deeds, Del. Willett)
- **Increase access to nurses in schools (SB 33).** This budget amendment allows school districts with at-risk add-on funding to use some of that money to pay for a school nurse. (Patrons: Sen. Favola and Del. McQuinn)

Support:

- **Protect Medicaid/FAMIS Coverage.** VICPP strongly supports this coalition effort, a Healthcare for All Virginians priority, to protect benefits which are currently under threat due to federal H.R.1.
- **Strengthen Safety Net Facilities (Community Health Centers and Free Clinics).** These community-centered clinics are already straining to serve families and will need financial support to catch the growing population of Virginians who don't have access to healthcare.
- **Increase Children's Health Coverage Eligibility to 300% of Federal Poverty Line.** Virginia is below the United States average for covering uninsured children.

Affordable Housing

Lead:

- **Expediting Affordable Housing.** VICPP is leading on a bill to allow localities to streamline the zoning approval process for increased density when developing affordable housing. (Patron: Del. Simonds)
- **State-wide YIGBY/ Faith and Housing.** VICPP is co-leading a bill that would automatically allow congregations to build multi-family housing on land that they own, sometimes called "Yes in God's Backyard". (Patrons: Sen. Carroll-Foy, Sen. McPike and Del. Cole)

Support:

- **Money for affordable housing.** VICPP supports the VA Housing Alliance proposals around money for Virginia's housing trust fund, vouchers for renters, and first-time homebuyer assistance.
- **Tenant reforms.** VICPP supports various protections for renters in coalition with the Allies for Housing Action.

Criminal Justice Reform

Lead:

- **Higher Education in Prison.** VICPP supports a bill to expand access to college programs in state prisons, establish a state-level Advisory Group, and include educational data from VDOC in the Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS) to enable assessment of employment impacts. (Patron: Del. Carr)

- **Protect the mother/baby in a pregnancy with substance exposure (SB 133).** This is a bill to encourage Virginia moms to enter into prenatal care. Virginia's law currently triggers child abuse and neglect referrals when an infant is born affected by substance use even when the mother is engaged in medicated assisted treatment (MAT), or when the substance involved, such as cannabis, has been decriminalized. (Patrons: Sen. Locke and Del. Hayes)

Support:

- **Restoration of Rights (SJ 2/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, and 2026 is the second referral of the amendment. (Patrons: Sen. Locke and Del. Bennett-Parker)
- **Counsel at First Appearance (HB 127).** People detained before trial 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 that legal counsel is provided to everyone in custody at their first appearance in court, and would allow the defendant to have their arguments for bond to be heard on that day. (Patron: Del. Callsen)

Working Family Supports

Lead:

- **Paid Sick Days (HB 5).** VICPP is working to require five days off for all workers to use when they are sick. Workers accrue the time based on hours worked. (Patrons: Sen. Favola and Del. Convirs-Fowler)

Support:

- **Child Care.** VICPP supports the initiatives of the Virginia Promise Partnership to ensure Virginia families can access quality, affordable child care by eliminating (or reducing) waiting lists for subsidized child care and establishing a predictable funding formula that appropriately anticipates fluctuations in parent demand.
- **Paid Family and Medical Lead (SB 2).** VICPP co-leads the Paid Leave for All Virginians coalition to ensure hardworking Virginians have paid time to care. Paid Sick Days and Paid Family and Medical Leave are two sides of the same coin. (Patron: Sen. Boysko and Del. Sewell)
- **Raise the Minimum Wage (SB 1 / HB 1).** VICPP supports raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour over the next two years. (Patrons: Sen. Lucas and Del. Ward)
- **Remove the Farm Worker Exemption from Minimum Wage (HB 20).** This bill would ensure that farmworkers make VA's minimum hourly wage. (Patron: Del. McClure)
- **Overtime Pay for Domestic Workers (SB 28 / HB 27).** This bill would add domestic workers to provisions related to overtime pay. (Patrons: Sen. Carroll Foy and Del. Henson)

Other

- **Common sense gun reform.** If there are viable proposals that could use our support, VICPP will participate in coalition efforts to increase background checks for people purchasing firearms, and raise barriers to automatic weapons.
- **Tax reform.** As part of the "fair share" tax coalition, VICPP supports two bills to create higher tax rate categories for high income earners. The Commonwealth Institute leads the work on this issue.
- **Immigrant protection.** As part of the Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights, VICPP supports bills to offer protections for the immigrant community, including reducing collaboration between local police and federal Immigrations and Customs Enforcement.