

State Public Policy and the Legislative Process

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2015 Legislative Session

- ❖ 45 day session – January 14 thru February 28
- ❖ Amendments to existing budget, which had already been cut in special session to address a projected \$2.4 billion revenue shortfall
- ❖ 2270 bills and resolutions were introduced by the first 10 days of the session

State Government

Like the Federal Government, there are three main branches of government.

Executive Branch

Governor Terry McAuliffe, Democrat
One 4-year term

Legislative Branch

House of Delegates - 100 members
Unlimited 2-year terms
(68 Republicans, 32 Democrats)

State Senate - 40 members
Unlimited 4-year terms
(21 Republicans, 19 Democrats)

Annual Legislative Session

The General Assembly meets each year, beginning on the 2nd Wednesday in January.

The Commonwealth operates on a biennial budget. A new budget is developed and approved in even numbered years, so the session lasts 60 days. In odd numbered years, amendments are made to the existing budget and the session lasts 45 days.

Legislation is introduced in each chamber, referred to committee, and then sent to the full chamber for consideration.

Supreme Court of Virginia

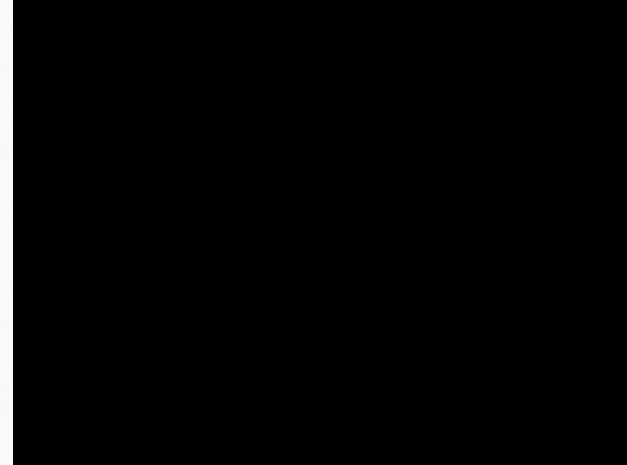
The Supreme Court is made up of 9 justices, who are elected by the General Assembly of Virginia. Unlike the US Supreme Court, the governor does not make appointments unless the General Assembly is adjourned, then his appointment is temporary.

VAND Legislative Day

- On January 24, roughly 70 VAND members convened in Richmond to meet with legislators and advocate for the profession and other important policy and budget issues.



Delegate Roxann Robinson Introduces VAND



“Breakfast After the Bell”

- VAND worked with First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe to advocate for \$500,000 to increase access to school breakfast by providing it after the bell.
- These funds were included in the final budget with some tweaks that limited their use to Elementary Schools with free or reduced lunch eligibility of at least 45% of students.

Food Safety

- VAND joined a coalition of health and agriculture professional organizations in support of food safety
- Opposed legislation and constitutional amendments that would remove requirement for food safety programs/inspections for direct sales between farmers and consumers.
- Ultimately all of the proposals were either withdrawn or defeated in committee.

Food Allergies

- ❖ VAND commented on and supported various bills related to food allergies and helping people who go into shock.
- ❖ Kelsey Guth provided input to her Delegate (at his request) on food allergy approved legislation that will require certain training standards for restaurants on how to handle food safety and food allergies. That legislation was signed by the governor.
- ❖ VAND supported legislation to put in place guidelines so that private facilities to stock epinephrine, similar to public schools. That legislation was sent to a study.

Other Approved Legislation

- ❖ Legislation permits school fundraisers to sell foods that do not meet nutritional guidelines, but no more than 30 times per year.
- ❖ Legislation was approved to put guidelines in place for private schools to stock and administer epinephrine.
- ❖ Legislation will also require restaurants to post information on allergy awareness and associated risks, and convenes a study related to restaurants and food allergies.

Other Defeated Legislation

- ❖ Legislation that would have defined and required labeling of Genetically Engineered Foods
- ❖ Legislation requiring development of an ID card for individuals with Crohn's disease, etc to allow emergency use of restrooms.
- ❖ Establishment of a 30% tax credit for food crops grown and donated to a nonprofit food bank.

Sine Die and Campaigns

- ❖ The legislature adjourned one day early on February 27
- ❖ The governor signed each of the bills we followed, including the budget, without any amendments
- ❖ All 140 legislative districts are on the ballot this November 3rd
- ❖ 6 competitive State Senate races, which will determine control of the State Senate
- ❖ Roughly the same number of competitive House races, including Delegate Joseph Yost's race in Blacksburg

2016 Legislative Session

A brand new General Assembly will convene at noon on January 13th, 2016.

Legislators will begin filing legislation for the session on November 16th of this year, and they will be able to file an unlimited number of bills. House rules limit legislation in the odd numbered years, but not the Senate.

The 60-day session is expected to adjourn Sine Die on Saturday, March 12th.

VAND Legislative Day is currently scheduled for
Wednesday, February 24th
(Snow day March 2nd)