



Virginia General Assembly Report February 21, 2023

The 2023 Virginia General Assembly session has reached its final week. The General Assembly is officially scheduled to adjourn sine die by February 25.

The Chamber's policy priorities remain in a positive position. Here is a summary of the Chamber's priority legislation and activity through Tuesday, February 21:

Transportation Funding

For years, the Chamber has advocated for greater transportation funding for the Commonwealth for projects that would benefit Arlington and the regional economy. Thus, the Chamber is a strong supporter of Delegate Adams' [HB2302](#) and Senator Newman's [SB1106](#), which would create a new Transportation Project Fund for projects that were directly tied to economic development projects. This bill would allocate \$100 million out of the biennial budget over three years to create a Fund of \$300 million. These bills have passed their respective chambers of origin and the Senate bill has passed both chambers.

Workforce Development

The Chamber strongly supports Delegate Byron's [HB2195](#) and Senator Ruff's [SB1470](#), which would create a Consolidated Department of Workforce Development that would serve as the sole administrator and fiscal agent for all workforce development programs within the Commonwealth. We are part of a broad coalition of chambers and other business organizations in support of the legislation and signed on to a coalition letter. We gave testimony and emailed members of the relevant Committees as the legislation moved through the legislative process. Each bill has passed their respective chamber of origin. HB2195 passed the Senate on Tuesday February 21, while SB1470 will be voted on in the House on February 22.

Promoting Flexibility in Hiring and Tax Filing for Businesses

Delegate Bennett-Parker's [HB1730](#) would provide restaurant owners with the additional flexibility of hiring front of house staff even if the staff had previously committed a felony and served time. In the wake of a major workforce shortage, the Chamber supported this bill as a means to help restaurants in hiring, as well as opening the workforce to those who have paid their debt to society. The bill initially died in subcommittee, but upon amendments to the proposed regulations it passed committee. It was passed by the House, and was passed by the Senate on February 21.

Delegate McNamara's [HB1405](#) and Senator Surovell's [SB796](#) would greatly simplify the corporate income tax filing process for Virginia corporations. Currently corporations choose to pay corporate income tax filings via the separate or the consolidated methods. After 12-year

period corporations may choose to pay through the same method or the alternative for another 12 years, provided they meet certain criteria. This legislation would simplify significantly the criteria needed to switch methods of filing taxes. As corporations grow one method can be advantageous than another, and this legislation allows for flexibility. We signed onto a coalition letter of support for these bills. Both these bills have passed both chambers, and now will be sent to the Governor.

Greater Flexibility in Online and Hybrid Meetings

The Chamber supported two bills that would expand the flexibility of government bodies to host online and hybrid-format public meetings. The first was Delegate Bennett-Parker's [HB2050](#) and Senator Marsden's [SB1351](#), which would allow local public elected and appointed bodies to convene as frequently online or in a hybrid format as they so choose. Currently, such bodies are limited to a specific number of online meetings. The House bill died in subcommittee, but the Senate bill passed in the Senate. SB1351 was however laid on the table at the House General Laws Committee.

The Chamber additionally supported Delegate Sewell's [HB2034](#), which would require the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board to record its meetings and allow for online engagement as a means to ensure more people can access their Board meetings. This bill passed the House of Delegates and passed the Senate on Tuesday, February 21.

Preventing Frivolous Litigation and Higher Health Care Costs

The Chamber was part of a coalition of business organizations who are opposed to Delegate Freitas' [HB2427](#) and Delegate Hodges' [HD2435](#). These pieces of legislations are intended to permit greater transparency of hospital prices, but as written would create a duplicative regulatory structure on top of existing rules for hospitals. It would also open hospitals up to potentially frivolous litigation based on a vague definition of "material compliance" to regulations. The Chamber doesn't find the additional regulations and additional litigation liability to be beneficial to hospitals, patients or the health care system. The Chamber signed onto a coalition letter of opposition and contacted Delegates to urge them to oppose the final passage of the bills. Both bills were defeated in their House floor votes.