



**Virginia General Assembly
Crossover Report
February 13, 2024**

The 2024 Virginia General Assembly session began on January 10. To be considered for adoption, all bills must pass their chamber of origin by the crossover deadline of February 13. Following that date, all bills must now “cross over” to the other chamber of the General Assembly for adoption and consideration by the Governor.

The Chamber’s policy priorities are in a positive position at the conclusion of crossover. Here is a summary of the Chamber’s priority legislation and the results.

Government and Business Climate

The Chamber is opposing HB951 (Lopez)/SB247 (McPike), which would allow localities to institute new mandates for the retention of building service contract staff of buildings in that locality. This would allow localities to create unreasonable restrictions on building service employers, and limit employers’ abilities to choose their employees upon beginning new contracts for building services. HB951 passed the House by a vote of 51-48 on February 13. The Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee voted to continue consideration SB247 to the 2025 General Assembly session.

Economic Development

The Chamber is a strong proponent of HB1125 (Carr)/SB217 (Locke), the Virginia Business Ready Expedited Permitting Act. The Act would permit the Department of Economic Development to select up to ten economic development sites or projects and allocate resources to expedite all local permitting needed to achieve those projects. HB1125 was reported out of the House Appropriations Committee and passed the House by a 94-5 vote on February 13. SB217 was reported out of Senate Finance and Appropriations and passed the Senate unanimously on February 13.

The Chamber has supported HB1514 (Torian)/SB718 (Surovell), which would establish the Virginia Sports and Entertainment Authority and Financing Fund. This Authority would be empowered to issue bonds, backed by Virginia’s AAA credit rating, for the purpose of raising funds for the proposed Potomac Yards entertainment district. The Chamber supports the entertainment district as a significant opportunity for economic growth in Northern Virginia, right at Arlington’s doorstep. A substituted version of HB1514, including a reenactment clause for the 2025 session and an Arlington seat on the Authority Board, passed the House by 59-40 vote on February 13. SB718 was not included on the final Senate Finance and Appropriations docket on February 12, and the bill was thus not brought before the Senate for a vote.

Housing Affordability and Workforce Housing

The Chamber supports HB1124 (Carr)/SB233 (Hashmi), the Faith in Housing for the Commonwealth Act. The Act would have removed regulatory red tape that pertains to houses of worship who currently own land and wish to develop affordable housing on their property. The Chamber supports removing restrictions on houses of worship for creating housing in their communities if they choose to do so. Both bills were continued by respective committees, to be considered again during the 2025 General Assembly session.

The Chamber opposes legislation that would create rent control policies that would harm the rental housing market and discourage much-needed investment in rental housing. HB721 (Clark)/SB366 (Boysko) would have allowed localities to adopt provisions intended to mitigate “rent price gouging,” but would have implemented rent control measures. HB733 (Sewell), concerning landlord and tenant regulations, would have also created similar policies if implemented. The Civil Subcommittee of the House Courts of Justice Committee voted to continue HB721 to the 2025 session on February 7. SB366 was defeated in a committee meeting of Senate General Laws on February 7. HB733 was struck from the committee docket on February 6.

Land Use, Zoning and Planning

The Chamber is a strong champion for SB13 (Favola)/HB281 (Reaser), which would remove regulatory red tape to allow office buildings to include child care facilities. This would encourage employers and commercial real estate owners to permit much-needed child care facilities, benefiting their employees and reducing vacancy rates. SB13 passed the Senate unanimously on January 25, and HB281 passed in block vote on the House Floor on January 31.

Transportation

The Chamber supports SJ28 (Ebbin), which would commence a JLARC study to investigate the best policy solution possible to create dedicated funding for WMATA and Metrorail. The Chamber has been active in the past year in working with other business groups and valued business and government stakeholders to develop a long-term solution to WMATA funding. SJ28 was reported out of the Senate Rules Committee and passed by the Senate on January 31.

Business and Community Infrastructure

The Chamber is opposing SB14 (McPike)/HB458 (Callsen), legislation that would permit localities to levy a new sales or use tax for further school construction. SB14 passed the Senate on January 30 by a vote of 27-13. HB458 was merged, along with other similar legislation, into HB805 (Rasoul), which would permit all Virginia localities to levy such a tax. HB805 passed the House on February 13 by a vote of 69-28.

Additionally, the Chamber is opposing HB959 (Lopez) and HB1287 (McClure), legislation that both concern towing. HB 959 would allow localities in Planning Districts 8 and 16 to enact second signature requirements for businesses in order to have illegally parked vehicles towed from their property. HB1287 would enact requirements for towing companies operating solely within counties to be subject to new permit requirements. The Chamber considered both bills to be creating unproductive restrictions and regulations on businesses. The House of Delegates voted to adopt both bills on February 12.

Energy and Environment

The Chamber opposed HB28 (Jones), legislation that would have instituted a full moratorium on all fossil fuel projects in the Commonwealth. This legislation went against the Chamber's policy position of urging availability to consumers of a diverse range of energy choices. The Senate Committee on Rules laid the bill on the table on January 29.

Taxes and Fiscal Policy

The Chamber is advocating for the passage of SB556 (Williams Graves), creation of a tax credit for buildings and areas under historic preservation. The Commonwealth of Virginia has many valuable historic properties that are part of our community as well as being major drivers of tourism. This bill would facilitate investment in these iconic landmarks. SB556 passed the Senate unanimously on February 12.

Education and Workforce Development

Child care policies are a major workforce priority for the Arlington Chamber. In addition to SB13/HB281, the Chamber supports HB1216 (McClure), which incentivizes employers to invest in their employees' child care by providing employers with matching funds from the Commonwealth. We support such policies that incentivize businesses to invest in their workforce's needs. HB1216 passed the House on February 6 by a vote of 87-8.

Regarding secondary education, the Chamber supports HB1009 (Lovejoy)/SB199 (Diggs), which would require the Board of Education to create a list of workforce credentials that students may pursue while counting towards credits needed for a high school diploma. This legislation would broaden the scope of how students can prepare in their high school education for any type of career that they plan to pursue. SB199 passed the Senate on February 6 with a vote of 39-0. HB1009 was incorporated into a similar bill, HB1345 (Anthony), which was passed by the House unanimously on February 13.

Additionally, the Chamber is supporting HB825 (Cousins)/SB609 (Aird), bills which would establish an at-risk add-on funding program; and HB1247, a bill which would change the ratios of support funding for school districts to support teachers of English language learners. The Chamber has supported these policies in previous responses to Arlington County School Board policy priorities. HB825 and HB1247 both passed the House by votes of 55-44 and 58-41, respectively, on February 13. SB609 was merged with another bill, SB105 (Lucas), which passed the Senate unanimously on February 13.

Hospitality and Tourism

The Chamber is advocating for the passage of HB688 (Leftwich)/SB635 (Rouse), which removes the sunset on the permission of restaurants serving cocktails to-go. This was a policy supported by our restaurants, who have found takeout cocktails to be a significant opportunity for sales. Both HB688 and SB635 passed the House and Senate respectively on January 31, with strong bipartisan majorities.