



LEGISLATIVE AGENDA 2021

THE VOICE OF BUSINESS IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA™



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Dear Chamber Member,



Julie Coons



Kathryn Falk

I am pleased to present to you the 2021 Legislative Agenda of the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce. For more than 95 years, the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce has been recognized as The Voice of Business in Northern Virginia™.

This document was prepared by a group of your fellow members, working with our government relations team, and reflects the policy priorities of the Northern Virginia business community for the upcoming Virginia General Assembly session and beyond. The 2021 Agenda is presented in a new format, focused on succinct and direct statements of our priorities. It contains the Chamber's long standing, pro-business priorities as well as new priorities generated via the Policy Committee process. The Policy Committee, led by Matt McQueen of Peraton, met five times over six weeks to produce this Agenda. Your Chamber is proud to be your voice in Richmond and regionally on these issues.

We had historic elections in 2019 and are on the cusp of a major campaign year in 2021 with the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General all on the ballot. With these changes come many opportunities as well as challenges. Key leadership positions in both the House of Delegates and the Senate of Virginia are now held by Northern Virginia representatives. There were policy proposals that challenged Virginia's business friendly reputation in 2020, and our long-standing relationships with these leaders helped us navigate troubled waters and ensure The Voice of Business continues to be heard. No doubt 2021 will require even more vigilance as the global economy continues its recovery from the effects of COVID-19.

Our advocacy in Richmond and virtually this year will be led by Vice President of Government Relations Clayton Medford. Clayton will hold weekly conference calls on Fridays during the General Assembly session. For information and to RSVP for the weekly calls, please email Clayton at cmedford@novachamber.org.

Thank you all for your time and your commitment to the Northern Virginia Chamber.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Coons".

Julie Coons

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn Falk".

Kathryn Falk

BOARD OFFICERS



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NG CENTER NOVABIZPAC



NOVABIZPAC's mission is to utilize the resources of the regional business community to ensure the future successes of key business issues.

One of the most influential PACs in the Commonwealth of Virginia, NOVABIZPAC uses the Northern Virginia Chamber's legislative agenda as its guide as to which candidates to support in Northern Virginia and across the state.

Ensuring that Northern Virginia has a voice in the legislative process, the Chamber established the Northern Virginia Business Political Action Committee (NOVABIZPAC) in 2002 to support Virginia legislators and policymakers who champion a pro-business agenda. NOVABIZPAC is administered by a Board of Trustees composed exclusively of members of the Chamber. The Board is comprised of business leaders familiar with the regional business community's agenda and top priorities. NOVABIZPAC also receives strategic advice and oversight from the Chamber Board of Directors. NOVABIZPAC meets regularly throughout the year, interviewing and evaluating candidates and elected officials.

The success of NOVABIZPAC is not possible without the effective participation of the Northern Virginia business community in the political process and the financial support of Chamber members. Member contributions enable NOVABIZPAC to support worthy candidates and ensure the Chamber has a voice in the policy and legislative process.



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COVID-19



The spread of COVID-19 and measures to reduce it have wreaked havoc on the global economy.

Virginia, while somewhat insulated from economic shifts due to our reliance on federal spending, was severely impacted.

The hospitality, tourism and service industries were hardest hit but no sector was completely spared. The Northern Virginia Chamber believes investment in education and workforce training, continued easing of regulations to allow business to operate under COVID-related restrictions, and more direct support for businesses will help keep our economy on track to recovery.

Continued investment in small businesses through Rebuild Virginia

Other States' Business Relief Investment Totals

Maryland	\$375 million
Illinois	\$225 million
Ohio	\$125 million
Washington, DC	\$100 million
Virginia	\$70 million

In the first 6 months of the pandemic, 1.3 million Virginians filed for unemployment benefits requiring a \$210M investment from the General Assembly via the CARES Act.

Priority 1: Focus use of emergency powers in pandemics to strict health measures first, restriction of movement last

Emergency powers granted to the Governor by the Constitution of Virginia should be used to respond to a health crisis with health remedies – remedies like contact tracing, rapid testing, use of masks, and social distancing. Restriction of the movement of people, and rapid closures of a large number of businesses, should only be used if health remedies fail.

The General Assembly should consider its role in future health emergencies, particularly when executive authority is used to shut down the economy.

Priority 2: DOLI Workplace Safety Standards should be temporary and the General Assembly should lead this process going forward

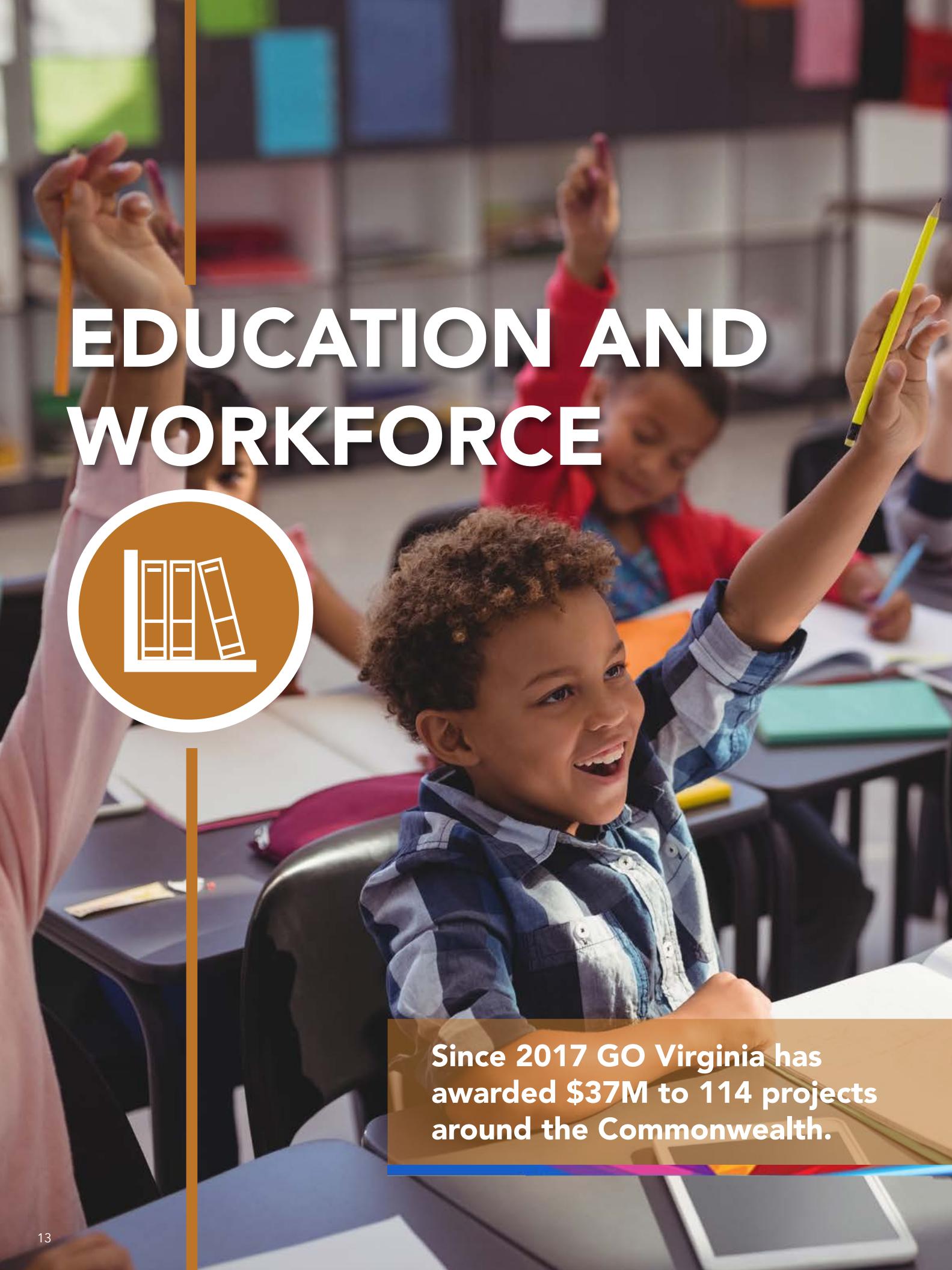
Virginia was the first and still only one of two states in the country to put into place temporary workplace safety standards in response to the spread of COVID-19. Those standards should remain temporary, expiring when the Governor's emergency declaration expires.

The General Assembly should engage with the Administration and create a better process for developing similar regulations. Any process must allow for more engagement with all stakeholders than the current administrative process allowed.

Rent and Mortgage Relief

The Chamber supports funding for a dedicated rent and mortgage relief program. Additional funding allows tenants and landlords to apply for relief, will help tenants keep a roof over their heads, prevent owner foreclosures, keep more rental housing available, and help avoid a major rental housing crisis. New eviction moratoria will only serve to exacerbate the problem without providing lasting relief to tenants or landlords.





EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE



Since 2017 GO Virginia has awarded \$37M to 114 projects around the Commonwealth.

Northern Virginia is home to almost 40 percent of Virginia's jobs.

Our thriving regional economy is built upon a world-class public school system and access to a highly educated workforce. The Northern Virginia Chamber believes that the future growth of the Northern Virginia economy, and consequently Virginia's economy, is dependent on meaningful investment in pre-K-12 and higher education, access to high quality early childhood education, innovation in education delivery, aligning the needs of businesses with the expectations of students, support for all populations to access education, especially veterans and historically disadvantaged people, and a more streamlined, coordinated and demand-driven workforce development ecosystem.

Budget Priorities

Establish G3 Program

G3 can reach 40,000 students across the Commonwealth pursuing degrees in high demand fields.

Fully Fund pre-K-12 Schools

Reallot the Cost of Competing Adjustment eliminated due to COVID-19 budget constraints.

Initiate a comprehensive review and modernization of the Local Composite Index (LCI) formula as well as the Standards of Quality, as they currently place Northern Virginia at a disadvantage.

Support increased per student funding for higher education to keep college affordable

Grants, loans or other tuition support opportunities may not provide access for all, particularly minority and first-in-family students.

Priority 1: Align support of and requirements for students with workforce needs

Beginning with early childhood education through higher education, Virginia needs a cradle-to-gray focus on workforce readiness driven by the demand for talent in the Commonwealth.

- Ensure the Standards of Learning align with 21st century workforce needs, particularly through dual-enrollment and dual-admissions programs like the NOVA-Mason ADVANCE partnership.
- Improve ability for industry leaders to participate in K-12 classroom instruction.
- Continue to expand STEM-H offerings to students at all levels.

Priority 2: Create a more streamlined and demand-driven workforce development system that reaches all potential job seekers

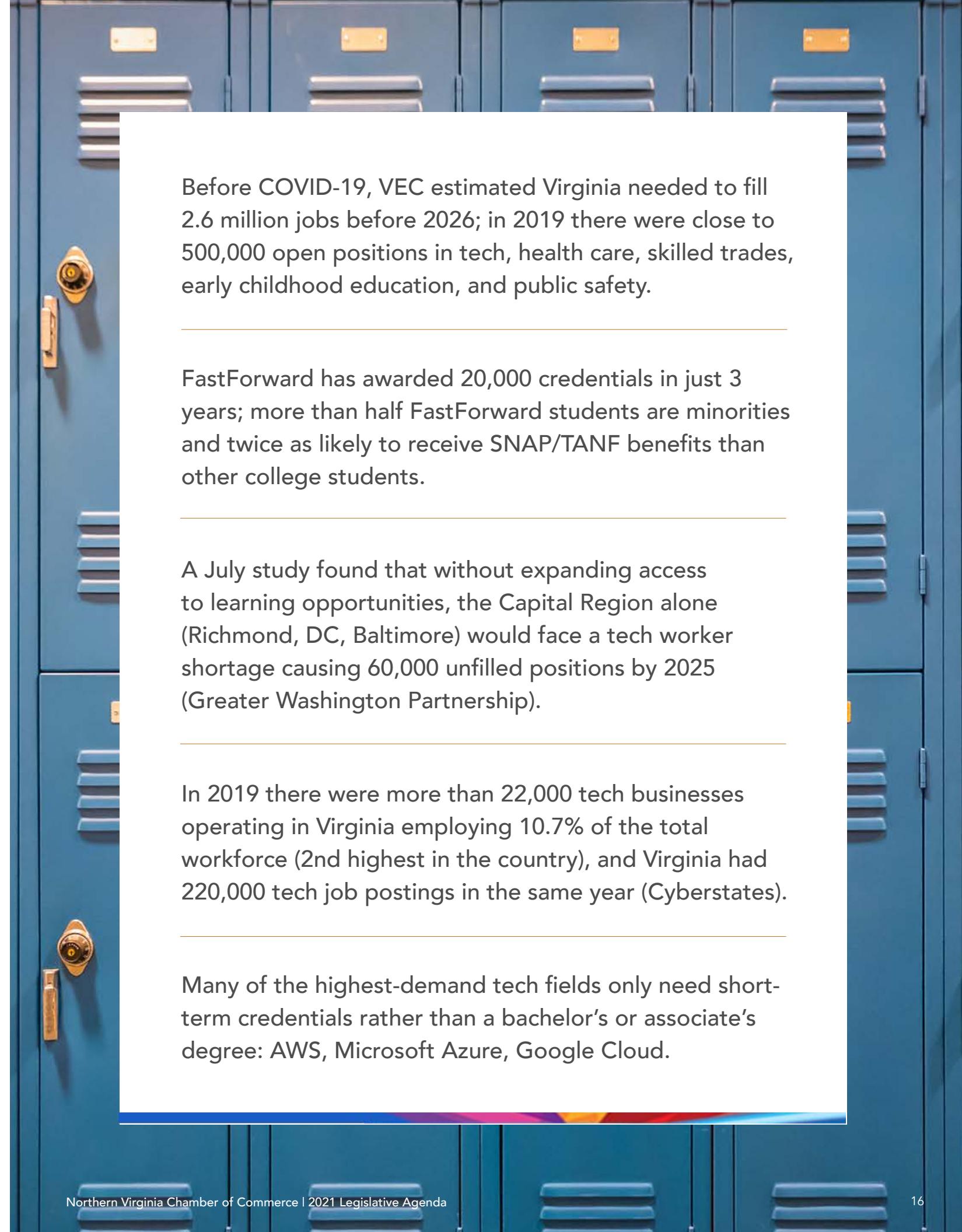
The workforce development ecosystem in the Commonwealth must be founded on collaboration among all stakeholders, including business, academia, workforce boards and other training providers.

- Support short-term certification opportunities, in particular the Fast Forward program.
- Support GO Virginia and its ability to adequately fund innovative and demand-driven regional workforce development initiatives.
- Workforce development opportunities must be designed to reach all potential job seekers, including veterans and historically disadvantaged people, new entrants to the workforce, and those seeking greater or new employment due to COVID-related job loss.

Priority 3: Expand broadband access

The need for greater broadband access in Virginia has never been clearer. Students, employees, job-seekers and employers all required reliable, consistent broadband in order to succeed in a more virtual world caused by the pandemic.

- Continue support for the Virginia Telecom Initiative to bring broadband to unserved areas.



Before COVID-19, VEC estimated Virginia needed to fill 2.6 million jobs before 2026; in 2019 there were close to 500,000 open positions in tech, health care, skilled trades, early childhood education, and public safety.

FastForward has awarded 20,000 credentials in just 3 years; more than half FastForward students are minorities and twice as likely to receive SNAP/TANF benefits than other college students.

A July study found that without expanding access to learning opportunities, the Capital Region alone (Richmond, DC, Baltimore) would face a tech worker shortage causing 60,000 unfilled positions by 2025 (Greater Washington Partnership).

In 2019 there were more than 22,000 tech businesses operating in Virginia employing 10.7% of the total workforce (2nd highest in the country), and Virginia had 220,000 tech job postings in the same year (Cyberstates).

Many of the highest-demand tech fields only need short-term credentials rather than a bachelor's or associate's degree: AWS, Microsoft Azure, Google Cloud.



TRANSPORTATION



The Northern Virginia Chamber has always advocated for common sense transportation proposals that enhance connectivity and achieve congestion relief in the region.

With dramatic changes happening now in how we interact with personal and public transportation, the Chamber encourages a forward-looking approach to transportation technologies. The Chamber supports performance-based, prioritized, and cost-effective regional transportation solutions focused on congestion relief, economic development, time savings, equitable access, and enhancing public safety.

Loudoun (122.5%) and Prince William (69.7%) counties are projected to be the two fastest growing in Virginia between 2010 and 2040.

Statewide traffic volume is down 15% from pre-pandemic levels, from a low point of 60% in April.

Metrobus ridership is down 60% and nearly 90% for Metrorail, resulting in a loss of around \$2M per day in operating revenue.

Between 2014-2025, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority will distribute \$3.1B for local and regional projects.

Priority 1 – Supports local, regional and state funding in order to ensure timely delivery of transportation projects that achieve the Chamber's transportation goal of performance-based, prioritized, and cost-effective solutions that enhance connectivity and deliver congestion relief, economic development, time savings, equitable access, and enhance public safety

- Supports efforts to protect and restore regional transportation dollars.
- Supports the ability of the Commonwealth to select and approve transportation projects without the requirement of legislative approval.
- Supports the use of a performance-based project prioritization process to identify the most cost-effective regional solutions to 21st century transportation challenges with a focus on enhancing connectivity, congestion relief, time-savings, equitable access, and enhancing public safety.
- Opposes any legislative efforts

that would alter the Public-Private Transportation Act's (PPTA) current review and selection process or limit the authority or ability of the Office of Public Private Partnerships to choose projects consistent with state, local and metropolitan transportation plans.

- Supports improved North-South regional connectivity including improvements to the Fairfax County Parkway, Route 28, and a new Western Crossing between Fairfax County and Montgomery County, MD.
- Supports the continued autonomy of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority.
- Recognizes that the lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are unclear.
- Teleworking and work from home, to the current degree, is temporary.
- Return to transit will be slow, adding more single occupant vehicles to the roadways.
- Congestion and connectivity was a critical problem for our region before COVID-19 and will continue to be after.
- Recognizes that transportation solutions should be future-focused and strike the balance between solving problems and over-reacting to current situation.
- Recognizes that on demand travel options including ridesharing is an important component of the transportation network.



Priority 2 -Supports investment in safe, reliable, equitable, affordable and efficient mass transit projects and service

- Supports a safe, reliable, and sustainable Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) system, that is efficiently operated, well-governed, and fiscally responsible.
- Long term operational funding impact of COVID-19 on WMATA will be felt for years as riders will be slow to return during peak hours on which Metro relies.
- Supports an integrated regional bus system that serves the entire National Capital Region and is efficient, reliable, affordable and safe.
- Supports efforts to protect Virginia's share of WMATA's regional dedicated capital funding. Additionally, the Chamber supports the federal extension and continued state match of Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) funding tied to enhanced oversight and accountability and continuation of existing commuter benefits.

Priority 3 – Supports major transportation infrastructure projects that will deliver benefits to

employers and families in Northern Virginia:

- Rebuilding and expansion of passenger rail capacity of the Long Bridge.
- Rebuilding and expansion of the American Legion Bridge to increase multi-modal options.
- Building a new Western Crossing between Fairfax County and Montgomery County, MD.
- Investment in the Virginia Railway Express.
- A unified, competitive and modern rail network from Richmond to DC to Baltimore.
- Fulfillment of existing plans to increase highway and transit capacity on I-66, both inside and outside of the Capital Beltway.
- Extending the 495 Express Lanes to I-270 & I-95 in Maryland.
- Supports completion of the DC to Richmond portion of the Atlantic Gateway project, which will unlock the I-95 corridor and build upon the successes of the I-95 Express Lanes.
- The on time and on budget completion of the WMATA's Silver Line.
- Investment in projects at National Landing previously identified as regional priorities being advanced as a result of the arrival of Amazon HQ2.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS CLIMATE



The Washington Post published a summary of more than 120 studies showing overwhelming evidence of racism in the criminal justice system. Highlights include:

- A study of 95 million traffic stops found black motorists were more likely to be stopped and searched than white motorists
- Data from the U.S. Sentencing Commission found that black men receive a sentence almost 20 percent longer than white men who commit the same crime

The economic recovery and success of the Commonwealth depends on a competitive, inclusive and diverse economy.

This requires a regional approach to economic development, public-private sector collaboration, and support of innovation and research and development. Our members are continuing to make the deliberate changes to policies and practices to create an equitable workplace. The Northern Virginia business community supports efforts to reduce racially disparate outcomes of public policies. A more equitable Virginia where all have access to the same opportunities is more competitive, better able to attract a talented and diverse workforce, and more economically sustainable.



Priority 1 – Support regional collaboration between the public, private and non-profit sectors

- Supports increasing funding for the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP), which will promote improved employment opportunities, a broadened tax base, and increased governmental revenues.
- Supports focus on regional economic strategies to guide state and local economic development initiatives consistent with regional growth targets.
- Encourages state support for regional collaborative partnerships like the Northern Virginia Economic Development Alliance.
- GO Virginia remains a critical component to workforce and economic development in the Commonwealth.

Priority 2 – Support for entrepreneurship and innovative industries to help diversify our economy

- Supports the use of economic incentives and performance grants with continued use of objective, definable metrics to enhance the economic competitiveness of the Northern Virginia region as well as the Commonwealth for targeted growth industries.
- Supports policies that grow our entrepreneurial and innovation economy. This includes support for Virginia employers with major research and development here, efforts to encourage commercialization of research and development conducted at Virginia's colleges and universities, and capitalizing on Virginia's advantages in the unmanned, autonomous systems, and autonomous vehicles industries to promote research and commercialization.
- Virginia Innovation Partnership Authority must involve public and private institutions in order to achieve the best economic outcome.

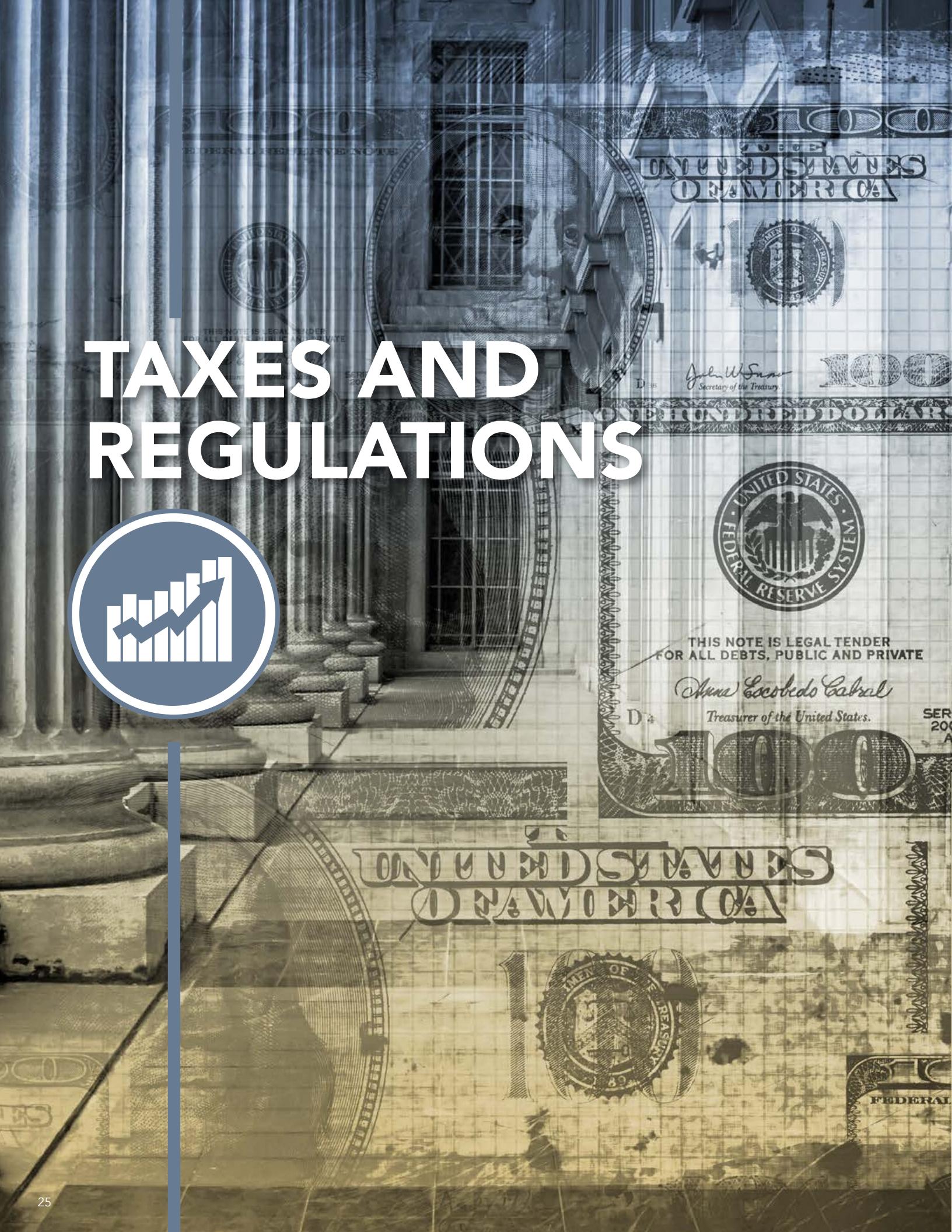
Women, already lagging men in workforce participation, and that gap is expected to widen as reports of women leaving the workforce to take care of school aged children are increasing.

Priority 3 – Create a more equitable Virginia

- Encourage policy makers to provide support to families in need of childcare to prevent women, single parents and older adults from leaving the workforce.
- Support greater opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals.
- Expand broadband delivery and improve affordability in all areas of the Commonwealth.
- Support continued statewide reforms to policing and court practices that reduce disparate racial outcomes.

Priority 4 – Maintain policies that support a competitive economy

- Oppose new, broad programs supported by increased business taxes, particularly in those sectors hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Unemployment Insurance system will need new revenue from Virginia's employers, absent federal intervention. Please do not create new broad programs whose implementation would compete for employer tax revenue needed to replenish the unemployment insurance fund.
- Maintain Virginia's status as a right-to-work state.
- Supports the efforts of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) to promote the use, accessibility and airport compatible development of Dulles International Airport and Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.
- Oppose any new regulations on home offices.



TAXES AND REGULATIONS



As the Voice of Business in Northern Virginia™, the Northern Virginia Chamber supports a consistent, simple and fair taxing and regulatory environment in the Commonwealth.

We believe modernizing the collection and distribution of tax revenue in a way that supports economic prosperity and job creation and recognizes the importance of equitable distribution of burden across industries and regions will lead to economic recovery and growth.



Priority 1: Supports tax and regulatory policies that put Virginia in a firmly competitive position in the national and global economy in order to create economic opportunity and prosperity. The Chamber recommends a new dialogue on comprehensive modernization of the Commonwealth's system for collecting and expending state and local tax revenue to reduce the unequal collection and distribution of tax revenue in Virginia.

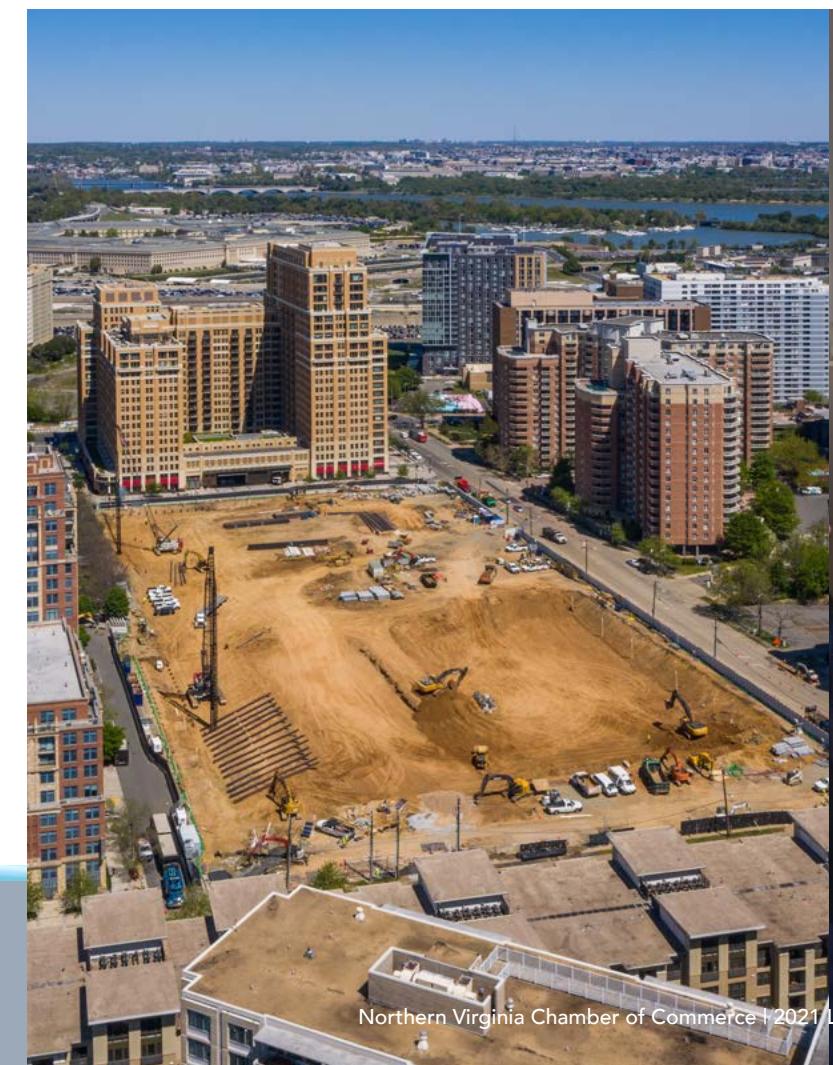
- Recognize the burden on local governments to raise and spend revenue particular in high income areas like Northern Virginia.
 - As personal income growth of Northern Virginia residents continues to outpace income growth statewide, the transfer of tax revenue away from local governments in Northern Virginia to the Commonwealth undermines the ability of local governments to support the growing public infrastructure and service requirements of this highly productive economy.
- Opposes single industry taxes unless the targeted industry expresses its support for the measure.
- Oppose granting taxing authority to local school boards.

Priority 2: Supports a tax and regulatory environment that encourages regional cooperation. Regionalism not only brings high visibility accomplishments like Amazon HQ2, but

high value, ongoing partnerships among and between regions.

- Maintain the Dillon Rule, including opposing efforts to erode it, to maintain a more predictable business climate across the Commonwealth.
- More on the importance of regionalism can be found in the Economic Development and Business Climate section.

Priority 3: Supports ongoing review of the regulatory environment to ensure efficacy and necessity of existing regulations while placing the burden on government to show need for new regulations.





The Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce supports initiatives that promote a diverse, reliable, efficient, and affordable energy portfolio to support a growing economy, while contributing to the Commonwealth's economic development and environmental goals.

Adoption of the Virginia Clean Economy Act in 2020 has put Virginia on a path to sustainability, and the business community will continue to be a major stakeholder in Virginia's transition to a clean energy Commonwealth.

Losses due to weather related events have grown from \$12B over a ten year period in 1980 to \$119B in 2019.

Commercial electricity rates in Virginia are 40% lower than the national average.

Virginia's natural gas industry supports more than 73,200 jobs.

Carbon dioxide emissions in Virginia were reduced by 9% from 2000-2017, thanks in part to natural gas.

Priority 1: Supports cost-effective, future-focused and data-driven climate resiliency standards, particularly in land use, design and energy infrastructure to protect infrastructure investments and promote positive economic development

- The Commonwealth must consider the impact of rising sea levels and increased nuisance flooding on public infrastructure. The Chamber supports climate mitigation efforts that are cost-effective, data-driven and utilize the best available science.
- The state should consider a variety of incentives, such as tax credits and design flexibility, in order to make climate resiliency standards more affordable as well as achievable in the near term. Such incentives should focus on outcomes, rather than inputs like materials preferences.

Priority 2: Supports continued and appropriate use of energy sources such as natural gas, nuclear power, renewable energy, and cost-effective green building construction, as well as transit-oriented development, to help reach Virginia's climate goals

- The Chamber supports new energy infrastructure as well as improvements to existing energy infrastructure in order to maintain affordable and reliable energy sources to help achieve Virginia's economic development and quality of life goals.
- Any energy conservation legislation must be evaluated on a cost-benefit basis and allow for the appropriate amount of energy necessary to run the region's economy, or include assurances that equally reliable and affordable substitute renewable energy will be available.

Priority 3: Localities that set local or regional energy and environmental goals above and beyond state and federal goals must take into account the limited power of local governments to achieve ambitious targets

- The Chamber opposes the over-application of land use authority in the service of ambitious energy and environmental goals which will have negative unintended consequences on the economy.
- The Chamber encourages local and statewide policies and programs, such as Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs, that serve as cost-effective incentives to build and maintain a robust energy sources portfolio to enhance Virginia's competitiveness in the global market place.





HEALTHCARE



The Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce and the Northern Virginia business community strongly support efforts by policy makers to promote a healthy Virginia workforce while bringing down the costs of healthcare in the Commonwealth.

Through the expansion of Medicaid, Virginia was put on a more sustainable path through the introduction of new care models, promotion of wellness, and new funding strategies that defray the cost to employers as well as Commonwealth taxpayers. We encourage the General Assembly and the Administration to continue to engage with the private sector on smart, cost reduction initiatives, recognize the investment of hospitals and health systems, and to strengthen its funding commitment in partnership with the private and non-profit sectors.

Budget Priorities

- Support funding for the Commonwealth's implementation of a re-insurance program to stabilize the individual insurance market.
- Only 24% of Virginians' health insurance plans are regulated by the state.
- 8% of Virginians remain uninsured.
- Smarter Care Virginia Has Identified 10 Low Value Services That Cost Over \$70 Million Annually.



Priority 1: Supports reforms that increase access to healthcare while lowering costs for consumers and employers

- Modifying the existing fee-for-service model to one that emphasizes greater coordination of care through value-based payments.
- Streamlined regulatory processes that seek to ensure greater access to care, and initiatives seeking to preserve a robust insurance marketplace, while preserving quality and lowering costs for employers and enrollees alike.
- Continued work on innovation and reduction in unnecessary medical procedures through initiatives like Smarter Care Virginia.

Priority 2: Supports maintaining private and non-profit sector delivery of health care

- The Chamber believes the best way to receive adequate and affordable care is through gainful employment and access to the private marketplace, and supports efforts to enhance what works and fix what does not in our current system.

- The Chamber recognizes that job losses from the COVID-19 pandemic have caused thousands to lose health insurance coverage. We support robust public supports for those individuals who are between Medicaid-eligibility and private, employer supported health insurance.

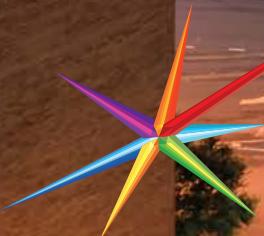
Priority 3: Supports innovation in delivery of medical and behavioral health care services

- Supports increased resources dedicated to increasing access and delivering innovation and improvements to the behavioral health delivery system that closes gaps between existing services with a full array of evidence based, trauma informed services from early intervention and prevention services to crisis and residential services and that enables individuals and families to choose among competitive community-based services.
- Expand broadband delivery to increase access to telemedicine and telehealth services.

2020 CHAMBER SPONSORS

Businesses often combine the COF with other grant and incentive programs, all of which require concrete investments and transparency. These incentives make Virginia a great place for workers, and one of the most competitive markets for major corporate investments.





**NORTHERN
VIRGINIA**
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
The Voice of Business in Northern Virginia®

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