

## 2025 General Assembly Report

### **General Update**

#### *Legislative Composition*

Republicans held all three seats in the Executive Branch. In the 40-seat Senate, Democrats held a 22-19 majority over Republicans; while in the House of Delegates, Republicans held a 51-49 majority. Lieutenant Governor Winsome Sears presided over the State Senate, consistent with her responsibilities as lieutenant governor. Delegate Don Scott (88th District) served as the Speaker of the House of Delegates.

The General Assembly meets for 60 days in even-numbered years and 30 days in odd-numbered years.

### **Affordable Housing/Accessory Dwelling Units**

Virginia, like much of the nation, is grappling with a housing crisis that affects everything from workforce retention to community stability. Employers struggle to retain staff, and localities face challenges in maintaining enough teachers, first responders, and essential workers to support their communities. This crisis can be understood in three main areas: the need for more housing supply, the need for greater subsidies to encourage new development and preserve existing affordable units, and the need for stronger stability initiatives to support both current and future residents.

VaOurWay's priority legislation focuses on addressing the supply gap by promoting proven innovative solutions. These include the use of accessory dwelling units (ADUs), also known as "granny flats", and creative strategies like repurposing faith-owned land for affordable housing development, a model already gaining traction in other parts of the country. Additionally, HB2533 was passed to enable localities to include tiny homes and ADU) in their comprehensive plans.

Accessory dwelling units are secondary, independent living spaces that typically include a separate kitchen, sleeping area, and bathroom. They can take various forms, such as basement apartments, converted garages, or newly constructed detached structures. Historically, ADUs have provided communities with diverse and flexible housing solutions. They offer several advantages: they can be brought to market more quickly due to their lower resource and infrastructure demands compared to large-scale developments, and they allow property owners to make productive use of underutilized land while helping to meet local housing needs.

HB2137 allowed the City of Falls Church to join other jurisdictions in creating an Affordable Dwelling Unit (ADU) program aimed at expanding the supply of affordable housing options.

VaOurWay championed multiple bills this session aimed at expanding affordable housing options and making it easier for localities to permit ADUs as a practical, community-based solution. The goal of these bills is to equip localities with additional tools to address the ongoing housing shortage.

### **Education**

A well-educated population benefits all of us by strengthening our communities, economy, and future workforce. That's why we remain committed to championing legislation that makes targeted, strategic investments in education at every level across the Commonwealth.

### *Staffing Gaps*

VaOurWay continues to prioritize closing staffing gaps in education. This year, HB1983 and SB968 focused on improving transparency by requiring the annual collection and public reporting of support services personnel salaries. Additionally, HB2201 and SB1230 extended the maximum period school boards can employ temporary teachers and established clearer rules, requirements, and deadlines for their employment.

### *Early Childhood Education*

In early childhood education, HB1685 removed state regulatory requirements for military child care programs, while HB2265 created a pathway for experienced preschool special education teachers to gain licensure. This includes individuals with 15 years of relevant experience and a current license, along with a process for certification.

Overall, these efforts aim to strengthen Virginia's education workforce, improve teacher retention, and ensure students have access to qualified educators at every level. The goal is to expand the talent pipeline, remove unnecessary regulatory barriers, and promote equity across the education system.

### **Healthcare Workforce**

#### *Licensure*

Virginia has continued its recent trend of modifying certain licensure requirements to address workforce shortages and remove unnecessary regulatory barriers. One example is HB1861, which directs each health regulatory board under the Department of Health Professions to enact regulations establishing a licensure-by-endorsement pathway for qualified applicants. The bill designates the Board of Medicine as the first to implement this change. SB1438 was an identical bill.

HB1940 removes the sunset provision that previously limited foreign dental school graduates from teaching dentistry in Virginia. The bill allows these individuals to teach if they pass an additional exam, making it easier to fill critical teaching roles in dental education. SB1188 was the companion bill.

HB2548 aims to streamline the transition for licensed practical nurses (LPNs) to become registered nurses (RNs). By reducing course duplication and financial barriers, the bill supports a more efficient transfer pathway that helps meet Virginia's growing healthcare workforce needs. SB953 was the identical Senate bill.

SB1475 establishes a work group under the Virginia Board of Dentistry to develop expedited licensure pathways for dentists and dental hygienists. The board is required to provide recommendations by November 2025.

These bills reflect a broader effort to modernize Virginia's licensure processes and strengthen the healthcare workforce by removing outdated barriers. The goal is clear: create more efficient pathways for qualified individuals to enter and advance in critical professions, ensuring that communities across the Commonwealth have access to the care and services they need.

## **Campaign Reform**

### *Campaign Finance Reform*

Virginia has long lagged behind other states in implementing meaningful campaign finance reforms. Most notably, Virginia has stood out as one of the few states that permitted the personal use of campaign funds—a practice prohibited in 47 other states.

That changed in 2025 with the passage of HB2165 and SB1002, which explicitly ban the personal use of campaign funds. These new laws prevent campaign money from being spent on non-campaign-related expenses, such as personal travel, clothing, or household bills. This marks a significant step forward in improving transparency and restoring public trust in the electoral process.

With this reform, Virginia lawmakers are now aligning with what is effectively a national standard. By closing this loophole, the Commonwealth has taken a critical step toward greater campaign finance accountability and ethical governance.

### **Conclusion:**

VaOurWay's mission is to champion good governance in Virginia by promoting non-partisan and informed discourse between citizens and legislators. While not all our legislative priorities were signed into law, we are pleased our elected officials did recognize the merit of our policy suggestions in the 2025 legislative session. We will continue to ensure new laws are effectively enacted through strong agency and local follow-through, while also monitoring and shaping the regulatory processes behind the scenes.

At the heart of our work is a commitment to fighting for the issues that matter most to our communities. Whether it's access to quality education, affordable housing, or a stronger local workforce, we advocate for policies that reflect the real needs and everyday concerns of Virginians. Our legislative priorities are grounded in listening to the people we serve and ensuring that state policy helps create safe, equitable, and thriving communities for everyone.

We will restart our advocacy efforts soon, ideally with another Wolf Trap Legislative Reception similar to this year's where we convened 29 legislators including senior leaders such as Senate Republican Leader Ryan McDougle, House Caucus Chair Amanda Batten, House Appropriations Chair Luke Torian, and Legislative Black Caucus Chair Lamont Bagby.

Thank you for your continued support and advocacy throughout the legislative session. Your engagement, whether through sharing your stories, contacting legislators, or staying informed, has been essential in advancing these important efforts. Together, we're making meaningful progress toward a stronger, more equitable Virginia for all.

[VaOurWay](#) is a non-partisan advocacy organization dedicated to advancing pragmatic, pro-family, pro-business policy solutions. We work across party lines to address shared priorities with a results-oriented, business-informed approach. Your support empowers us to continue.

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