



## City of Richmond News Release

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Contact: Tammy Hawley  
(804) 646-3110  
[Tammy.Hawley@RichmondGov.com](mailto:Tammy.Hawley@RichmondGov.com)

### **Mayor, City Council and School Board Present Unified Front** *~2011 legislative breakfast with state delegation lays out legislative priorities~*

**Richmond, VA** - The City of Richmond presented its legislative priorities for the 2011 Virginia General Assembly during a breakfast meeting with members of the state delegation. This is the first year that the Mayor, City Council and Richmond Public Schools have presented a unified legislative agenda.

"The Mayor, City Council and the School Board are figuratively and literally on the same page with our legislative program," said Mayor Dwight C. Jones. "In order for our city to reach its fullest potential it is imperative that we as leaders of this city - Senators, Delegates, City Council and Richmond Public School Board Members - work together to meet the needs of our residents."

The City is calling for help from the state delegation in moving forward with educational opportunities for all of Richmond's children; reducing urban blight; increasing economic development; creating and retaining businesses and jobs; and investing in workforce readiness, training and development. "One of our key 'asks' today is that you protect state funding to local governments," continued Mayor Jones. "The fiscal relationship between local government and the state must remain strong, so that cities like Richmond can provide their residents with the basic services they need, like education and libraries, and police, fire and human services."

Regarding the possibility of ABC privatization, the City asked that it be given the tools through zoning and regulation to control the location and number of liquor stores if privatization were to move forward. Council President Kathy Graziano also underscored concern about any unfunded mandates and asked the delegation to work against such actions.

"Hearing one voice from the City as opposed to fragmented messages is very much appreciated," noted Delegate Jennifer McClellan. "We can see a clear difference in how the City is working together."

"In these challenging economic times, it is in the city's best interest to show a united front with established priorities," said Manoli Loupassi.

*(more)*

Following are the legislative requests, funding priorities, and legislative priorities as presented:

#### **Legislative Requests**

1. Enabling legislation for cities to establish an enhanced derelict building rehabilitation process for residential property to combat blight, crime and neighborhood decay.
2. Authority to establish defense manufacturing zones.
3. Grant the City the power, prospectively only, to authorize partial exemptions for non-profit organizations from taxes on real estate.
4. Allow the waiver on accrual of interest on criminal or traffic fines or costs to apply to any case of an incarcerated defendant.
5. Provide state income tax credit to businesses that provide employee transportation assistance.
6. Study to review the Composite Index in order to ensure equitable treatment of urban localities.

#### **Funding Priorities**

1. Public Education: Increase the current level of state funding for basic aid, at-risk programs, Virginia Preschool Initiative, and other education funding streams.
2. HB 599 Funding: Increase funding for state aid to localities with police departments.
3. General Aid to Local Governments: Increase state aid job training, job readiness training, job retention, job creation, state enterprise zone program, brownfields, mass transit, combined sewer overflow projects, juvenile & adult drug court programs and justice services.

#### **Funding Priorities - Schools**

1. Continue composite index "hold harmless" for additional year due to unprecedented change in Richmond's composite index.
2. Protect Virginia Preschool Initiative funding.
3. Prevent basic aid supplanting with Federal Education Jobs Funding.
4. Give flexibility on unfunded Standards of Quality/Standards of Accreditation mandates.
5. Give flexibility on K-3 reduction funds.
6. Fully fund Virginia Retirement System based on actuarial requirement.

#### **Legislative Positions**

##### **Support:**

1. Legislation to close the "gun show loophole".
2. Legislation to support Technology, Nanotechnology and Biotechnology Investment Fund.
3. Funding and tax incentives for "green initiatives".
4. Legislation that would provide relaxation of the Dillon Rule by giving localities greater local autonomy.
5. Support legislation directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study the feasibility of creating state financial incentives for localities in developing/operating facilities and services on a multi-jurisdictional or regional basis.
6. Support legislation that would reduce federal and state mandates when funding is reduced, so that localities are not required to spend additional local dollars to comply with those mandates.
7. Support continued state financial assistance for local jail construction.
8. Funding for alternatives to incarceration programs.
9. Legislation to allow localities to charge higher fees for registering vacant buildings and include derelict properties on registries.

##### **Monitor:**

1. ABC Privatization and its impact on the city of Richmond.
2. 2010 SJR 63 – Y. Miller: Study of passenger rail operations funding.
3. Legislation/studies related to the school funding formula.

##### **Oppose:**

1. Any legislation that would reduce local tax authority.
2. Any legislation that increases mandated services without appropriate resources.
3. Adverse changes to the funding formula for local jail construction.