



Roanoke Valley-Alleghany

**REGIONAL**  
**commission**

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## **2016 REGIONAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

Presented by the Counties of Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, Franklin and Roanoke;  
the Cities of Covington, Roanoke and Salem;  
and the Towns of Clifton Forge, Rocky Mount and Vinton

**December, 2015**

### **EDUCATION & WORKFORCE ISSUES**

- **Enhancing Career & Technical Education Programs through Regional Collaboration**

The Governor and the General Assembly have recognized workforce development as a key priority for the Commonwealth. In 2012, JLARC called for incentives to promote regional collaboration for Career & Technical Education (CTE). The State could encourage CTE collaboration by providing additional operating funds to support regional approaches, especially regional CTE centers. Incentives from the State could help school divisions with recurring costs of a regional center's faculty and transporting students to the center. The State currently provides school divisions with additional funds for Governor's schools for these purposes under an annual appropriation, including \$15 million per year for fiscal years 2013 and 2014. Additional funding for regional CTE centers could help pay for the cost of non-instructional positions at these centers that are not accounted for under the State's current funding formula. State funding may also help ensure that school divisions do not withdraw from regional partnerships.

In order to ensure that career and technical education programs in our school districts are coordinated with a strong regional workforce development effort, we propose that a strategic plan be developed at the planning district level between school districts, the Workforce Development Board and community colleges in region. The Plan will: outline a general vision for how various career and technical programs in our school districts interact; provide a feeder mechanism for next step programs; and avoid duplication in a given region.

**Member Governments:** Counties of Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, Franklin and Roanoke, Cities of Covington, Roanoke and Salem, Towns of Clifton Forge, Rocky Mount and Vinton

- **Workforce Training**

The State should provide funding, in the form of performance incentives, for the completion of industry recognized credentials. This funding would help to lower the cost of training and instruction for students and enable community colleges to expand their capacity to meet the vital needs of businesses in our region and in the Commonwealth. Using a performance-based funding model, community colleges should receive State funds for each student who successfully completes training at a community college through non-credit workforce training and then obtains an industry recognized-credential identified regionally as in high demand by business and industry. Additionally, the State should establish specific funds for On-The-Job programs (apprenticeships/internships) to provide greater opportunities for training.

- **Permit Local School Boards To Set Their Own Calendars**

The General Assembly should repeal the “Kings Dominion Law” to permit local School Boards to establish a school calendar that reflects the needs of the locality and fulfills the instructional time requirements established by the State Board of Education.

- **Support Education Funding**

Localities already shoulder a much larger portion of K-12 expenditures than intended by State policy. The Commonwealth should “follow the rules of the road” as described in the *State’s Role in Funding Public Education*. Unnecessary State mandates and cost burdens to local school divisions should be eliminated (from Virginia Superintendents’ Blue Print for Education Reform).

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ISSUES**

- **Legal Advertising**

Local governments and our citizens expend tens of thousands of dollars annually to publish legal ads in newspapers, as required by various State laws for certain types of notices. State law should be changed to permit some of these notices to be given by the Internet or by radio and television, in order to reduce costs, or the required number of publications of such ads should be reduced.

- **Support Local Revenue Authority**

The Commonwealth should not further restrict local revenue authority or sources without providing alternative sustainable revenue sources. This includes, without limitation, the BPOL and Machinery & Tools taxes. Additionally, the General Assembly should: eliminate the distinction in taxing authority of Virginia's cities, counties and towns -- counties and towns should possess the same authority as cities to levy taxes on tobacco products, lodging, meals and admissions; and refrain from re-directing local general funds and special funds to the State treasury. Furthermore, local government representatives should be included on a "blue ribbon" commission or other body established by the State that has as its purpose to change local revenue authority or governance.

## **TRANSPORTATION ISSUES**

- **Improvements to I-81 and Construction of I-73**

The Governor, General Assembly and the Virginia Department of Transportation, working with the Federal Highway Administration, should take the steps necessary to pursue all available funding for improvements to expand and improve Interstate 81 and commence construction of Interstate 73 from Interstate 81 to the North Carolina border. These projects are critical components in the improvement of transportation infrastructure in our region and all of Southwest Virginia.

- **Western Virginia Regional Intermodal Facility**

It has never been more important to be part of the global supply chain. The proposed Western Virginia Regional Intermodal Facility would allow our region to connect to the worldwide logistics networks and expedite the flow of commerce. The linkages would improve Western Virginia's economic competitiveness and create jobs. We ask that the Commonwealth maintain the approximately \$25 million dollars allocated for construction of the Intermodal Facility and not reassign these funds.