

VIRGINIA HOUSE OF DELEGATES
House Republican Caucus
POLICY WORK GROUP



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House Republican Caucus Discusses Government Reform Agenda for the 2012 Session

RICHMOND, VA – This morning the House Republican Caucus held their weekly Policy Work Group press conference, this week discussing various government reform proposals the Caucus has introduced this session. Following the press conference, the Policy Work Group issued the following statement:

“As Vice-Chairman of the Governor’s Commission on Government Reform, I have worked with Governor McDonnell and the House Republican Caucus over the last few years developing and implementing common-sense reforms to improve Virginia’s government. Increasing efficiency, eliminating waste and developing innovative solutions are critical to the ongoing improvement of our government,” said Speaker William J. Howell (R-Stafford).

The press conference featured various proposals from the McDonnell administration and members of the House Republican Caucus, including a government reorganization plan introduced by Delegate Todd Gilbert (R-Shenandoah). The government reorganization plan proposes the elimination or consolidation of various boards, commissions and agencies.

“[House Bill 1291](#) lays the groundwork to eliminate or merge over 40 boards, commissions and agencies, and proposes the deregulation of three industries in the Commonwealth,” said Gilbert. “Many of these agencies are outdated, unnecessary or duplicative. Amalgamating the functions of these groups with pre-existing government entities reduces costs, increases cooperation and improves overall administration. Other boards and commissions have simply outlived their usefulness and will be eliminated to simplify government and reduce taxpayer costs,” he continued.

The McDonnell Administration estimates the reorganization plan submitted will save at least \$2 million annually. While the executive reorganization plan addresses statewide efficiency, Delegate Kathy Byron (R-Bedford) has a bill that would eliminate various mandates on Virginia’s localities.

“As Conservatives we believe in small, effective, streamlined government. While we work towards eliminating various unfunded federal mandates weighing down the Commonwealth, we must also eliminate mandates on our localities. [House Bill 1295](#) eliminates a variety of requirements our localities labor under,” said Byron. “From procurement requirements to land use regulations, localities carry a heavy burden. Doing away with all but the most necessary mandates is the first step in a series of legislative, regulatory and administrative actions to reduce these burdens, save money and simplify government.”

Freshman Delegate Peter Farrell (R-Goochland) is building upon 2011 legislation that created a new Office of the Inspector General. “[House Bill 520](#) strengthens and clarifies the duties of Virginia’s Inspector General. Under this bill, every executive agency in the Commonwealth will undergo a performance audit, at least every four years, administered by the Inspector General. Such deliberate and consistent oversight will enable the General Assembly to ensure citizens that government agencies are performing as efficiently as possible,” said Farrell.

Speaker Howell also discussed his plans for reforming the Virginia Retirement System. “Various analysts, including the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission have made it clear that Virginia’s Retirement System has significant structural issues which require serious attention, today,” said Howell. “To combat these issues, the Governor has proposed legislation to improve the long-term funding and administration of VRS.”

The proposed changes to VRS are expected to net \$160-170 million in annual cost savings and additional contributions. Alongside the Governor’s proposed \$2.2 billion employer contribution, a total of \$5.8 billion in additional funding and savings would flow to VRS in the coming years.

“Keeping government lean, efficient and innovative are the keys to prosperity,” said Delegate Chris Peace (R-Hanover), who hosts the weekly Policy Work Group press conference. “The proposals we’re discussing today cut unnecessary government programs, strengthen oversight measures and propose innovative strategies to improve the provision of core government services. As always, we look forward to working with the Governor and our colleagues in the Senate on these important issues.”

The House Republican Caucus Policy Work Group will hold a press conference each Monday at 11:00 am.

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