

VIRGINIA HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
**House Republican Caucus**  
POLICY WORK GROUP



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**Contact:** Kate Kruk  
(804) 698.1028

## House Republican Caucus Unveils 2012 Public Safety Initiatives

**RICHMOND, VA** – This morning the House Republican Caucus held their weekly Policy Work Group press conference. Various public safety initiatives introduced and supported by the House were discussed. Following the press conference, the Policy Work Group issued the following statement:

“As Chairman of the Virginia Crime Commission and Chairman of the House Courts of Justice Criminal Law Subcommittee, I spend a tremendous amount of time developing, evaluating and implementing proposals that will protect Virginia’s children and families from various criminal activities,” said Delegate Rob Bell (R-Albemarle). “Ensuring the safety of Virginians is one of the core functions of government, so I am pleased to sponsor several measures that will address criminal activities throughout the Commonwealth. [House Bill 968](#) will increase penalties for habitual drug traffickers, keeping our kids away from drugs and drug-related violence.”

“At the same time, [House Bill 973](#) would impose a mandatory life sentence for raping a child under the age of 12. Over the last two years, 228 children under the age of 12 have been victims of these horrific crimes. Only 10 of these cases resulted in a life sentence, with a median sentence of only 13 years. Pedophiles remain a danger for their entire lives. Toughening our penalties is the best way to ensure our children remain as safe as possible,” continued Bell.

Delegate Dave Albo (R-Fairfax), Chair of the House Courts of Justice Committee, has long worked on legislation that would make Virginia’s families safer on our roads. This year he introduced to bills, [House Bill 49](#) and [House Bill 50](#), which respectively increase the jail time for DUI-maiming and DUI-manslaughter.

“These measures ensure that those who choose to drink and drive and injure or kill innocent Virginians will be adequately penalized. Under current law, if an individual is maimed as a result of an accident with a drunken driver, the responsible party is not subject to mandatory confinement. DUI manslaughter carries no mandatory jail sentence and aggravated DUI manslaughter carries only a one-year mandatory term. House Bill 49 would require a mandatory one-year sentence for DUI-manslaughter and increase the jail time for aggravated DUI-manslaughter to a minimum five-year term,” said Albo.

Delegate Ben Cline (R-Rockingham) introduced two bills to address strangulation and gang recruitment.

“Strangulation of a family member is one of the last warning signs that spousal violence will elevate to a life-threatening level. [House Bill 752](#) raises the penalty of assault and battery via strangulation in an attempt to curb the elevation of domestic violence,” said Cline. “We want to keep women, children and families safe from domestic violence. Likewise, we want to keep our families intact and children safe from criminal gang activities. My colleagues

and I recognize that with technological developments have changed the nature of criminal activities like everything else in our lives. Gangs now recruit and solicit membership and specific criminal acts using the internet, telephones and texting. [House Bill 751](#) makes it a felony to induce criminal activity or gang membership using these 21<sup>st</sup> Century recruiting techniques,” he continued.

“No one can argue that one of the most essential duties of government is protecting the citizenry,” commented Delegate Chris Peace (R-Hanover) and host of the weekly event. “Our Caucus is the leader in Richmond when it comes to protecting children and families from the dangers of this world. The issues we’ve laid out for you today are just a small number of the initiatives we’re working on this Session to make every Virginian as safe and secure as humanly possible.”

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

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