



2019 GENERAL LAWS POLICY STATEMENT

1 The basic purpose of local government is to
2 provide essential services and protection for
3 the community that citizens cannot provide
4 for themselves. Local governments should
5 decide which services and programs are of
6 primary importance to the community.
7 Virginia's counties, cities and towns need
8 legislation that provides the maximum
9 opportunity to foster improved quality of life
10 and high-quality growth.

11

12 **I. EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT**

13

14 **GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE**

15 The General Assembly should allow
16 significant diversity among municipal
17 charters and not impose uniformity.

18

19 The General Assembly should promote the
20 sharing of the economic, social, cultural,
21 fiscal and educational benefits and burdens
22 of urbanization among all local governments
23 involved.

24

25 The addition of sub-state and special district
26 governments should be controlled. New
27 districts should not be created by the
28 General Assembly unless local governments
29 are unable to furnish services. In addition,
30 no sub-state districts, including planning
31 district commissions, should be granted real
32 or quasi-legislative authority to undertake
33 other functions except when expressly
34 directed by their member jurisdictions,
35 including those towns not directly
36 represented in the entity.

37

38 VML urges a careful review of the statutes
39 concerning consolidation of local
40 governments to ensure (a) that citizen-
41 initiated petitions are signed by a reasonable
42 number of affected citizens who reside in

43 the jurisdiction, and (b) adequate periods of
44 time elapse between consolidation or
45 annexation actions. The Virginia Municipal
46 League supports the General Assembly's
47 provision of financial incentives to promote
48 consolidation of local government services
49 and cooperative agreements among local
50 governments.

51

52 **INTERGOVERNMENTAL ISSUES**

53 Local governments have a vital role in the
54 Commonwealth. They must have sufficient
55 powers and flexibility to meet this role. The
56 General Assembly should adopt legislation
57 to promote and expand, to the extent
58 necessary, municipal powers, to (a) enhance
59 the ability of local governments to provide
60 services required by their citizens, and (b)
61 allow local governments to meet their
62 responsibilities in state/local partnerships.

63

64 VML opposes intrusions into the way local
65 governments conduct their business,
66 including burdensome regulations relating
67 to:

- 68 1. meetings of governing bodies;
- 69 2. purchasing procedures;
- 70 3. matters that can be enacted by resolution
71 or ordinance;
- 72 4. procedures for adopting ordinances; and
- 73 5. procedures for filling vacancies on local
74 governing bodies.

75

76 State intervention in local affairs is only
77 warranted in significant matters where
78 regional or statewide issues that are of great
79 importance exist. No changes should be
80 made in the laws or regulations affecting
81 local government without substantial local
82 input from affected jurisdictions and
83 participation in developing those changes.

84

- 1 VML opposes legislation that:
2 1. bars courts from awarding attorney's
3 fees to local governments when a
4 frivolous suit is filed; and
5 2. eliminates the notice of claim
6 requirement found in Va. Code,
7 § 15.2-209.

8
9 Membership on all state and regional
10 commissions or committees dealing with
11 matters affecting local governments must
12 include local officials who represent a
13 demographic and geographic cross-section
14 of counties, cities, and towns.

15
16 VML supports legislation to transfer
17 responsibility from local governments to the
18 state government for the liability,
19 administration and cost of community
20 service options for persons upon whom
21 court costs and fines are levied.

22 **TOWNS**

23 The General Assembly and the executive
24 branch should recognize towns as essential
25 units of local government, with important
26 roles in providing services to citizens living
27 in a concentrated environment. As such,
28 towns with their centrality and economic
29 efficiency represent the future of the
30 urbanizing areas of the Commonwealth.
31 Towns should have clear and full authority
32 to be formed and to act in a timely manner
33 on matters which protect public health,
34 safety, and welfare.

35
36
37 The General Assembly should respect and
38 support the sovereignty, utility, and urban
39 powers of towns. No legislation should be
40 enacted that allows counties to usurp or
41 diminish the authorities of towns. Excise
42 taxes that counties are authorized to levy
43 generally must not apply within towns
44 without the explicit approval by the town's
45 governing body.

46

47 The General Assembly should scrutinize
48 bills dealing with laws of general
49 applications to local governments, to avoid
50 enacting any laws that could be sources of
51 possible conflicts between counties and
52 towns. The following list provides
53 examples of conflicts between towns and
54 counties exacerbated by legislative action:

55

- 56 1. taxation of town residents by county
57 governments at the same rate as that
58 applied to those living in the
59 county's unincorporated areas, when
60 comparable benefits and services are
61 not provided;
- 62 2. county imposition of a merchants'
63 capital tax on businesses located
64 within the town at the same rate as
65 that applied to businesses located in
66 unincorporated areas of the county,
67 when the town levies a business,
68 professional and occupational license
69 tax;
- 70 3. unequal town zoning and planning
71 authority for land straddling or
72 abutting town corporate boundaries
73 and unincorporated county areas;
- 74 4. funding of county sheriffs' and
75 deputy sheriffs' salaries by the State
76 Compensation Board and other state-
77 funded amenities not provided to
78 town police departments;
- 79 5. unequal statutory authority of towns
80 in relationship to that of cities and
81 counties; and
- 82 6. allowing county excise tax within a
83 town without approval of the town
84 government.

85

86 The General Assembly should recognize the
87 unintended consequences of inadvertently
88 omitting towns or cities or counties from
89 legislation. The state laws on local taxes
90 must allow towns to determine how tax
91 dollars collected from residents and
92 businesses of the town will be used.

1
2 Towns should retain the right to annex lands
3 and otherwise expand their boundaries.
4 Towns over 5,000 population should have
5 the right to become independent cities; and
6 cities should have the right to revert to town
7 status.

8

9 **ELECTION LAWS**

10 **Redistricting.** VML recognizes that while
11 redistricting is a political process, the
12 process should be conducted with the end
13 goals of ensuring a strong and responsive
14 representative form of government that
15 enables citizens with communities of like
16 interest to influence election outcomes
17 through participation in the political process.

18

19 VML supports redistricting reform,
20 including the use of a non-partisan
21 independent commission to draw state
22 legislative and Congressional lines based on
23 specified and consistent criteria, including
24 insofar as possible preservation of the
25 integrity of existing city, town, county and
26 precinct lines.

27

28 **Non-partisan local elections.**

29 VML opposes attempts to require that
30 candidates nominated by political parties for
31 local elections be identified by party labels
32 on ballots.

33

34 Non-partisan elections at the municipal level
35 are an outgrowth of the municipal reform
36 movement that began developing at the end
37 of the 19th century in reaction to corruption
38 at the local level. Another outgrowth of the
39 excesses of local political machines was the
40 development of the council-manager form of
41 government and the development of a civil
42 service personnel system. Nationwide,
43 about 75 percent of municipalities have non-
44 partisan elections. Virginia is not unique in
45 this regard.

46

47 There is not a partisan way of responding to
48 public safety, street improvements,
49 enforcing the codes, or taxation required for
50 the various services that the state requires
51 localities to offer (and to pay for). The
52 result of requiring party identification will
53 be increased partisanship at the local level,
54 which will not improve local governance.
55 In addition, requiring party identification
56 will hinder the ability of Federal Employees
57 including our Military to participate as local
58 elected officials.

59

60 **Administration of election laws.** Cities
61 and counties have very little control over the
62 administration of elections, yet pay the
63 majority of costs, including office overhead,
64 voting equipment, equipment storage and
65 security maintenance, training of staff, and
66 printing of ballots. Cities and counties also
67 pay a portion of the costs of the salaries for
68 registrars and members of electoral boards,
69 to include salaries for staff other than the
70 registrar, but have no direct connection to
71 the appointment of these officials. The state
72 should provide an adequate level of funding
73 for local election administration that is
74 commensurate with the State's extensive
75 control of the process. The General
76 Assembly should not increase the cost of
77 election administration without providing
78 state funding to pay for the increased
79 expenditures.

80

81 Localities often use schools as polling places
82 and support the continuation of schools as
83 polling places.

84

85 **Timing of municipal elections.** VML
86 opposes legislative attempts to require that
87 municipal elections be held in November.
88 Localities should continue to retain the
89 ability to determine if their municipal
90 elections are held in May or November.

91

1 Primaries should be moved to the third week
2 in June so schools can continue to be used as
3 polling places.

7 **STATE AND FEDERAL MANDATES**

8 The state and federal governments must
9 provide adequate funding for any local
10 programs or responsibilities that are
11 mandated or expanded by state and federal
12 laws or regulations.

14 The federal and state governments should
15 not use project funding as a means of
16 forcing local land use decisions in
17 contravention to local land use plans. These
18 actions violate the principles of local
19 authority and weaken the local tax base.

21 Federal and state mandates must be reduced
22 when funding is reduced, so that localities
23 are not required to spend additional local
24 dollars to comply with the mandates.
25 Further, funds should be distributed in the
26 most efficient way possible with the least
27 regulatory control.

29 The Governor and General Assembly should
30 promote state-local partnerships by
31 requiring:

- 32 1. A review of mandates in specific
33 program areas to (a) establish the full
34 cost to local governments of
35 implementing mandates and (b)
36 develop an equitable basis for
37 determining state-local funding
38 responsibilities.
- 39 2. Completion of cost estimates for
40 proposed legislation prior to its first
41 full review by a legislative
42 committee, with legislation
43 negatively affecting local
44 governments' revenue-raising ability
45 being submitted to the Commission
46 on Local Government "COLG" for a
47 fiscal impact analysis.

- 48 3. Use of a performance-based
49 approach to mandates that (a)
50 focuses on outcomes, (b) offers
51 incentives for achieving state
52 objectives, and (c) gives local
53 governments autonomy to determine
54 the best way to achieve the desired
55 result.
- 56 4. Simplification of state reporting
57 requirements associated with
58 mandates, greater efficiency and
59 coordination, and making better use
60 of reporting technology.

62 The alarming tendency of state and federal
63 agencies to treat guidelines authorized by
64 enabling legislation as having the stature of
65 law itself must cease. In addition, the state
66 should avoid unessential and arbitrary
67 implementation of federal regulations.

69 **STATE AND LOCAL 70 RESPONSIBILITIES**

71 The state requires local governments to
72 provide certain services, such as education,
73 corrections, social services, health and
74 community mental health. The local
75 government does not have the option of not
76 being the state's service provider in these
77 areas. "State aid" to localities is the state's
78 payment for the implicit contractual
79 arrangement for this assignment of duties.
80 In addition, local governments must
81 contribute local funding to these services.

83 In addition to the state-mandated services,
84 localities provide other services that are
85 either necessary (water and sewer, police
86 and fire protection, etc.) or desired by
87 residents (parks and recreation, cultural
88 activities, etc.). Local governments need the
89 flexibility and resources to collect revenues
90 to meet all their responsibilities.

92 Two fundamental problems in Virginia's
93 intergovernmental structure are first, the

1 state does not fund at adequate levels,
2 existing services, particularly education, that
3 it requires local governments to provide; and
4 second, local officials have very limited
5 revenue options, which forces them to rely
6 heavily on real estate, personal property
7 taxes and other local revenue sources to pay
8 for services.

9
10 Further, to improve the relationship of the
11 state and local governments, the state
12 should:

- 13 1. Not restrict the taxing authority and
14 revenue sources of local
15 governments without local
16 concurrence.
- 17 2. Strengthen the partnership of the
18 state with local governments by
19 granting local government full
20 authority to deal effectively with
21 issues affecting their own locality.
- 22 3. Participate as a financial partner with
23 local governments in the costs of
24 education, including school
25 construction and renovation, and, as
26 an active partner, fully fund the
27 state's fair share of the costs of
28 education.
- 29 4. Follow specific procurement
30 procedures before purchasing
31 property, including adequate inquiry
32 into the purchase, public hearings
33 and notice, and notice of intent to
34 settle sent to the locality. In
35 addition, the state should consider
36 remuneration to the locality for the
37 loss of real estate taxes as well as
38 any loss in economic development
39 potential.

40
41 The General Assembly should continue its
42 involvement with and financial support of
43 the Virginia Institute of Government.

44
45 **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**

46 VML strongly supports the free flow of
47 information to citizens and the media
48 through the conduct of governmental affairs
49 at all levels in the open, in good faith
50 compliance with the Freedom of
51 Information Act. VML also supports efforts
52 to educate local government officials about
53 the Act, and the importance of extensive and
54 accurate reporting of government affairs.

55
56 Citizens have the right to have personal
57 information protected. Government also
58 must be able to control its work processes so
59 that public business can be conducted. It is
60 in the public's interest to conduct some
61 matters outside public view prior to official
62 action. Accordingly, VML strongly opposes
63 extending limitations on closed meetings
64 and exempt records, which would upset the
65 Act's careful balance among a fully
66 informed public, the protection of
67 individuals' privacy, the ability of
68 government to conduct its work and those
69 matters for which the premature release
70 would not be in the best interest of the
71 locality or its citizens.

72
73 In addition, localities should be able to
74 continue charging reasonable fees for any
75 and all records, including for research time
76 and for computer records that must be
77 provided under the Act to avoid shifting the
78 cost of copying from the requestor to the
79 general taxpayers. The Act should continue
80 to limit rights to documents to citizens of the
81 Commonwealth and news organizations that
82 publish here.

83
84 VML opposes legislation that would require
85 localities to record closed session in any
86 manner.

87
88 VML opposes legislation that would control
89 the time allotted for public comment at
90 public meetings. While VML supports
91 public comment, localities should have the

1 discretion to determine procedures for when
2 public comment should be taken.
3
4 VML opposes legislation to limit the use of
5 any legitimate means of communications
6 from one elected official to others, including
7 letters, emails and conversation. The
8 General Assembly should not exempt itself
9 from anything that it imposes on a locality.
10
11 State policy must assist local governments to
12 contact and notify their citizens in the most
13 efficient and cost-effective manners
14 possible. Ads required by the *Code of*
15 *Virginia* are increasingly more expensive to
16 run in the newspaper and often are only seen
17 by a decreasing number of citizens. The
18 current trend is for local newspapers to
19 reduce the number of times they are
20 published weekly and/or going to an online
21 platform. This has resulted in localities
22 needing to meet certain advertising
23 requirements with only expensive
24 newspapers available for legal notices.
25
26 A locality's internet presence, social media,
27 local cable access channels, local radio and
28 TV provide alternative methods to contact
29 the citizens much more broadly and
30 effectively than newspaper ads in many
31 areas of the Commonwealth. In addition,
32 the cost of contacting the citizens through
33 new technology can be much lower than
34 advertising in the newspaper. The state code
35 should be amended to allow local
36 governments electronic and other alternative
37 means of communicating with their citizens
38 when providing required legal notices.
39
40 In addition, small towns should be allowed
41 to use first class mail instead of newspaper
42 advertising to notify the citizens of
43 government actions such as advertising a
44 budget hearing or advertising a land use
45 hearing to save the citizens money and to

46 communicate more effectively with the
47 citizens.

48

49 **GOVERNMENTAL & MUNICIPAL** 50 **OFFICIAL LIABILITY**

51 VML calls upon Virginia's congressional
52 delegation to support legislation to restore
53 suits brought under 42 U.S.C. Section 1983
54 to traditional civil rights actions, and to
55 preclude the award of damages if the court
56 finds that the government or its officials
57 were acting in good faith.

58

59 Expanding liability and eroding immunities
60 at the state level across the nation have had a
61 chilling effect on the actions of local
62 government officials contributing to local
63 government insurance problems, creating
64 immense financial risks (particularly for
65 legal costs), and posing a substantial
66 obstacle to the provision of needed public
67 services.

68

69 The Virginia General Assembly should
70 strengthen and must maintain the principles
71 of sovereign immunity for local
72 governments and their officials.

73

74 VML strongly opposes bringing local
75 governments under the Virginia Tort Claims
76 Act. This action would seriously erode the
77 sovereign immunity now enjoyed by
78 Virginia local governments and lead to a
79 substantial increase in frivolous suits.

80

81 The tort reparations system in the U.S.
82 creates many difficulties in the
83 administration of justice. VML supports
84 efforts at the national and state levels to
85 address tort reform, such as limitations on
86 the tort liability of local governments in
87 areas where local governments do not enjoy
88 sovereign immunity.

89

90 The General Assembly should adopt
91 legislation to codify the proposition that real

1 property of local governments shall be
2 exempt from liens created by statute or
3 otherwise. This proposition has already
4 been recognized by the Virginia Supreme
5 Court for mechanics liens.

6
7
8 **PERSONNEL**

9 Management has the responsibility to ensure
10 that employment, training, and promotional
11 opportunities are provided without regard to
12 any unlawful discriminatory factor, qualified
13 persons with disabilities or any other factors
14 not related to job performance.

15 VML supports:

- 16 1. Compensability for work-related
17 heart/lung/cancer employee
18 disability benefits for any class of
19 employees should be determined by
20 establishing whether work or non-
21 work related risk factors are more
22 likely the primary cause of the
23 claimant's condition.
- 24 2. the current injury by accident
25 definition in the Virginia Workers'
26 Compensation Act.
- 27 3. the current Workers' Compensation
28 Act provisions for use of an
29 employer selected panel of
30 physicians to treat injured workers.
- 31 4. maintenance of the exclusive remedy
32 provisions of the Virginia Workers'
33 Compensation Act.
- 34 5. local governments' authority to
35 establish hours of work, salaries and
36 working conditions for local
37 employees.
- 38 6. VML continues to support the
39 current rules for work-related
40 disability benefits and the cancer
41 presumption statutes.

42
43 VML opposes:

- 44 1. Any attempt to impose collective
45 bargaining or 'meet and confer'

- 46 requirements for public employers or
47 employees; and
- 48 2. Any attempt by the federal
49 government to stipulate grievance
50 procedures for state and local
51 employees, such as the police
52 officers bill of rights.

53
54 **Line of Duty Act**

55 The cost of the current Line of Duty Act is
56 not sustainable for either the state or local
57 governments.

58
59 VML supports recommendations and
60 options made by the Joint Legislative Audit
61 and Review Commission for the Line of
62 Duty Act program that would ensure the
63 fiscal sustainability of the program and
64 ensure that the benefits are available to those
65 who need and deserve them. Further, VML
66 supports a new, dedicated funding source to
67 pay for LODA benefits, but opposes any
68 funding approach that would rely on or
69 adversely affect existing local revenue
70 sources.

71
72 **TELECOMMUNICATIONS, LOCAL
73 GOVERNMENT PRINCIPLES**

74 VML sets forth the following principles to
75 guide any federal or state legislative action
76 regarding telecommunications issues.

- 77
78 1. Public Rights-of-Way. Local rights-
79 of-way are public property. The
80 rights-of-way contain numerous
81 utility and other facilities. Proper
82 management and maintenance of
83 rights-of-way are essential to ensure
84 public safety, to protect the integrity
85 of the property, to guarantee the
86 safety of workers and to maintain the
87 efficiency of local streets, utility
88 systems and transportation facilities
89 and networks. Private use of public
90 rights-of-way significantly increases
91 management responsibilities and

1	maintenance costs. Any private use	46	affecting citizen access to new
2	of public rights-of-way should be	47	technology are minimized.
3	valued at fair market value.	48	
4		49	
5	2. Franchise authority. Neither the	50	5. Competition. Local governments are
6	federal government nor the state	51	interested in healthy competition in
7	should enact any laws to shift the	52	the field of telecommunications. To
8	award of franchises to use the public	53	ensure a competitively neutral and
9	rights of way from the local	54	non-discriminatory market, all
10	governing body to any state or	55	service providers must pay fair
11	federal agency. Individuals and	56	compensation for the use of public
12	businesses in the community help to	57	property. Governments should not
13	buy and maintain rights-of-way	58	be forced to subsidize some
14	through their taxes. Rights-of-way	59	participants in this free-market
15	should not be used for private	60	competition through lower-than-fair-
16	purposes without approval by and	61	market charges or any other means.
17	compensation to the local	62	
18	government for the right to use the	63	6. Local Government as Customers.
19	space, and local governments must	64	Local governments are important
20	have authority to control the rights-	65	consumers of telecommunications
21	of-way.	66	services. In many communities, the
22		67	local government is the single largest
23	3. Equitable Taxation.	68	customers of telecommunications
24	Telecommunications providers are	69	services through its government
25	valued members of our corporate	70	offices, education facilities and
26	community. All members of the	71	emergency communications. As
27	corporate community must pay taxes	72	valuable customers, local
28	on an equitable basis, as	73	governments should be treated
29	appropriately determined by the local	74	equitably.
30	government. No legislation should	75	
31	restrict the ability of local	76	7. Private Equipment placed on Public
32	governments to impose equitable	77	Facilities. Local governments
33	taxes on telecommunications	78	should continue to have the authority
34	providers.	79	to approve the location and fees for
35		80	any attachment or co-location of
36	4. Universal Service and Consumer	81	communications infrastructure on
37	Access. Important educational and	82	local government buildings and
38	community services are provided via	83	facilities.
39	telecommunications.	84	
40	Telecommunications providers must	85	8. Broadband and Local Governments.
41	be responsive to citizen needs and	86	VML appreciates Governor Ralph
42	concerns and provide appropriate	87	Northam's efforts to make
43	customer services to all segments of	88	broadband access available to all
44	our community so that disparities	89	Virginians within a decade. VML
45	due to income or geographic location	90	believes there are several ways to
		91	achieve this goal and no one
			technology or method of delivery

1 should be chosen as the answer for
2 our geographically-diverse states.
3 While public-private partnerships
4 between a local government and a
5 broadband provider may be the right
6 approach for some communities, a
7 municipal government broadband
8 authority owning and operating a
9 new project may be better for others.
10 State grants should allow localities,
11 groups of localities, municipal
12 broadband authorities and public-
13 private partnerships to submit
14 applications for state grants without
15 prejudice to the applicant.

16 **TECHNOLOGY**

17 State law should allow all counties, cities,
18 and towns to make full and appropriate use
19 of modern technology to promote public
20 safety. Localities should have maximum
21 flexibility to contract with the private sector
22 to implement all aspects of such technology.
23 VML supports legislation that promotes and
24 protects the ability of localities to establish,
25 operate, and maintain sustainable broadband
26 authorities to provide essential broadband to
27 all communities throughout the
28 Commonwealth of Virginia.

29
30
31 Local governments should have authority to
32 regulate the use of unmanned aerial vehicles
33 in their jurisdictions insofar as is consistent
34 with FAA regulations. Especially when such
35 systems are utilized to support a local
36 governing body or authority authorized
37 under title 15.2 for purposes of inspecting
38 their own facilities, assessing damage
39 caused by natural or manmade disasters, and
40 by fire and rescue personnel for purposes of
41 assessing an emergency to which they are
42 responding.

43
44 Pursuant to the 1996 Telecommunication
45 Act, the cellular phone industry is
46 developing technology to provide for the

47 identification of the origin of cellular
48 emergency calls. Until this technology is
49 implemented and revenue sources have been
50 identified to finance it, the state police
51 should continue to handle the E911 calls
52 they currently handle. Next Generation 911
53 is vital to public safety in the
54 Commonwealth; we support this technology
55 as a funded mandate.

56 **UTILITIES**

57 Fundamental policies should be honored by
58 the state in promoting the delivery of utility
59 services by local governments and the
60 authorities they create:

- 61
62 1. Each provider of service must be free
63 to set its rates without interference
64 from other local governments or the
65 state.
- 66 2. Each local government providing
67 utility services must be able to
68 compete fairly with any other
69 providers without state interference.
- 70 3. Each local government that provides
71 utility services must be able to
72 manage its revenues and
73 expenditures related to the services
74 without state interference.

75
76 Virginia's localities and water and sewer
77 authorities must retain the ability to enforce
78 liens against landlords' properties for the
79 unpaid water and sewer bills of their tenants
80 to have the ability to collect monies owed.

81
82 Municipal utility systems must continue to
83 have the authority to set their own rates.
84 Any attempt by the State Corporation
85 Commission to regulate rates for utility
86 services furnished by local governments
87 would violate the Virginia Constitution.
88 Local governments that provide utility
89 services must continue to have the authority
90 to negotiate the rates, terms and conditions
91 for any attachments to or joint use of
92 municipally-owned utility infrastructure.

1 The safe and efficient operation of the
2 municipal utility requires that final approval
3 for any joint use or co-location on its
4 facilities remain with the locality.

5
6 The State Corporation Commission should
7 develop a structure to ensure that the
8 amounts that utilities can charge localities
9 and other entities for placing electric utility
10 lines and other facilities underground are
11 based on the most cost-effective,
12 competitive, yet safe methods.

13 14 **II. PUBLIC SAFETY**

15
16 VML supports legislation that preserves law
17 and order and promotes the safety, quality of
18 life and administration of justice within our
19 communities. The Commonwealth should
20 enhance its efforts to prevent juvenile crime,
21 minimize violence in the schools, reduce the
22 formation and operation of gangs by
23 providing funding for programs that prepare
24 our youth to be productive, responsible, self-
25 reliant members of society.

26
27 The state should continue to assist localities
28 in their efforts to coordinate public safety
29 activities including emergency services.

30
31 VML supports legislation that will clearly
32 establish the relationships between State and
33 localities to assure efficient and appropriate
34 command, control and communications
35 during local emergencies.

36
37 Greater latitude should be given to localities
38 in encouraging innovative methods of
39 combating traffic violations and crime.

40
41 VML supports legislation that ensures our
42 children have the ability to carry, obtain and
43 receive sunscreen at their schools to protect
44 them from sunburn.

45

46 VML supports local jurisdictions efforts to
47 maintain animal shelters in a fiscally
48 responsible manner and does not support
49 any state or federal mandate that would
50 provide a financial burden on local animal
51 shelters.

52 53 **WEAPONS IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS**

54 VML supports legislation to allow local
55 governments to restrict carrying weapons in
56 any building where a local governing body
57 meets during the meeting, to the same extent
58 weapons are prohibited in public schools.

59 60 **COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS**

61 VML requests both increased funding and
62 an equitable distribution formula for
63 services provided under the Comprehensive
64 Community Corrections Act (CCCA) and
65 the Pre-Trial Services Act (PSA). Since the
66 advent of these programs in 1995, caseloads
67 have effectively doubled at the local level,
68 while state resources have failed to meet the
69 caseload increases. These resources are
70 allocated to localities on a discretionary
71 grant basis. Given the statewide character of
72 this program, it is now time to allocate these
73 funds through an equitable formula that
74 recognizes regional costs and benefits of
75 these services.

76 77 **COURT FEES**

78 A user of the court system should not force
79 increased costs on the general population.
80 VML supports legislation to increase court
81 fees to pay for courthouse maintenance,
82 security, renovation and construction and
83 other court-related projects.

84 85 **COURT SECURITY**

86 The General Assembly should adopt
87 legislation making it clear that local judges
88 do not have the authority to order localities
89 to fund more deputy positions for court
90 security than are provided for in the State
91 Code and Appropriations Act.

1
2 **INTERNAL AFFAIRS**
3 **INVESTIGATIONS**
4 Legislation should be enacted to restrict the
5 use, in civil matters, of information gathered
6 in internal investigations.
7
8 **OVERCROWDING/STATE SUPPORT**
9 The state should live up to its commitment
10 to remove state prisoners from local jails.
11 The state should fully fund the per diem
12 reimbursement for all state prisoners.
13
14 Jails built by a single large locality should
15 be made eligible for the same state
16 reimbursement rate for construction as a
17 regional jail facility.
18
19 Local governments should not be forced to
20 pay for state prisoners. The state
21 reimbursement rate must be restored to an
22 amount that is fair to localities reflecting
23 actual costs.
24
25 **TRAINING ACADEMIES**
26 The state should fully fund all mandated
27 criminal justice training provided through
28 certified academies.
29
30 **VIOLENCE/TERRORISM**
31 The General Assembly should enable
32 localities to help communities deal with
33 violence and terrorism issues by:

34 1. reducing the accessibility of weapons
35 by criminals and persons with mental
36 illness that present a risk of harm to
37 themselves or others,
38 2. expanding state and local
39 cooperative efforts in neighborhoods
40 and localities,
41 3. promoting additional prevention and
42 intervention programs to deal with
43 youths who may adopt a violent way
44 of life, and
45 5. granting localities more flexibility to
46 handle problems of abandoned and
47 blighted structures.
48
49 **NOISE CONTROL**
50 Local government must retain the authority
51 to determine the appropriate measure for
52 establishing unacceptable levels of nuisance
53 noise and to enact local ordinances to
54 address its curtailment.
55
56 **FULL TIME AND ATTENTION TO**
57 **DRIVING**
58 The General Assembly should continue to
59 take steps to prohibit other activities by a
60 driver while operating a motor vehicle.
61
62 The General Assembly should also confirm
63 that local governments have the ability to
64 enforce full attention and time to driving
65 ordinances.