

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF ROANOKE COUNTY, VIRGINIA, HELD AT THE ROANOKE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION CENTER, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2019

**RESOLUTION 120319-2 ADOPTING A LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM FOR THE 2020 SESSION OF THE VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND PETITIONING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO FAVORABLY CONSIDER THE TOPICS AND ISSUES ADDRESSED HEREIN**

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Roanoke County, Virginia, has identified major legislative issues of local and statewide concern to be considered by the 2020 session of the Virginia General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Board adopts this resolution as its Legislative Program for the 2020 session of the Virginia General Assembly.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors of Roanoke County, Virginia, that the following initiatives are submitted as its Legislative Program for the 2020 session of the Virginia General Assembly, for its favorable consideration and adoption.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. Transportation .....	2
2. Economic Development.....	3
3. Health and Human Services.....	3
4. Education .....	5
5. Public Safety .....	6

## **1. Transportation**

- a. The County supports expedited action to address the causes for declining growth in transportation revenues and to develop recommendations to grow revenue over time to meet increasing demands for new construction and maintenance for existing transportation infrastructure. Such action must address the secondary road needs of counties throughout the Commonwealth, as such funding has been vastly reduced over the past 10 years.
- b. The County supports directing additional funds to SMART SCALE, as the available funding has decreased almost 40 percent between Round One (\$1.4 Billion) and Round 3 (\$850 Million). Further, the County supports changes to simplify the Smart Scale process for allocating transportation funds to reduce time and costs to prepare and review applications.
- c. The County requests continued study and consideration of projects to improve U.S. Route 460.
- d. The County encourages continued funding of the Capital Improvement Projects identified in the I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan; completion of this project is imperative to the VDOT Salem District to improve safety, reliability and economic development potential.
- e. The County opposes any legislation that seeks to increase truck size or weight beyond the current federal standards, thereby stressing the capacity

of the Commonwealth's road systems and putting highways, roads, and bridges at risk of increased damage or deterioration.

## **2. Economic Development**

- a. Broadband
  - i. The County urges the Commonwealth to provide adequate funding assistance to counties to build the necessary telecommunications infrastructure to deploy universal affordable access to the internet for all areas, particularly in underserved rural areas.
  - ii. The County supports legislation that provides additional tools for counties to finance, build and operate open access networks in partnership with commercial internet service providers.
  - iii. The County encourages the Commonwealth to increase funding for grants provided through the 2020 Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI).

## **3. Health and Human Services**

- a. Children's Services Act
  - i. The County supports enhancing the ability of local school divisions to serve children with disabilities in their neighborhood schools, to include flexibility in use of state pool funds to serve children with high-level needs in local or regional programs tailored to meet those needs, and additional support for special education wraparound services to help support children in their communities.

- ii. The County supports legislation to allow public schools to establish and fund (together with the local governing body and school board) special education programs (and related services) within public day schools.
- iii. In the alternative, the County requests that the Department of Education develop a pilot program, in certain local school divisions, allowing a process for redirecting federal, state and local funds (including CSA funds), for the purpose of providing services currently offered in a private day setting in the public school setting.

b. Mental Health

- i. The County strongly supports a sustained focus by the state on Virginia's mental health services system to ensure, through evaluation and investment, that appropriate and effective outpatient and in-patient services are available across the Commonwealth.
- ii. The County encourages reforms that provide for alternative placement for local jail inmates with serious mental health issues which should not be left to be addressed by jail personnel.
- iii. Catawba Hospital currently serves the needs of the local and regional public safety agencies, jails, and community hospitals by providing accessible inpatient emergency services for community members in crisis. Catawba Hospital's services are unique and essential; it provides geriatric services to approximately half of geographical area of the Commonwealth in addition to the regional

needs of adult consumers with serious mental illness. The County supports legislation that would appropriate necessary and vital funding for Catawba Hospital to expand its capacity to meet the ongoing emergent needs of the Commonwealth.

#### **4. Education**

- a. The County urges the General Assembly to provide full state funding for public education (k through 12). Full state funding should be achieved without reduction to other parts of state public education budgets or to other core local services.
- b. The County requests elimination of the Support Staff Funding Cap. The support staff cap, which was implemented during the Great Recession, disproportionately limits local capacity to serve students with special needs, at-risk students, English learners, and other challenged populations. Positions such as Mental Health Specialists, Instructional Assistants, and other classroom supports are a cost-effective way to put caring adults in the lives of our most needy students, but the Support Staff Funding Cap arbitrarily excludes the actual cost of educating challenged populations. The funding for these critical positions currently falls completely to local school divisions. Legislative action is requested to remove the funding cap on such positions.
- c. The County supports legislation to increase funding for teacher compensation. County schools and school divisions across the

Commonwealth face both quantity and quality issues regarding the recruitment and retention of teachers and other professional staff positions.

- d. The County supports increased licensure flexibility. To assist local school divisions in attracting and retaining qualified and effective teachers and other staff, positions in the Standards of Quality should be funded by function (for example, curriculum development and support, instructional technology, school leadership, student support) rather than individual position title. Division superintendents also need the flexibility to hire effective teachers to teach in hard-to-fill content areas, regardless of rigid state licensure requirements.

## **5. Public Safety**

- a. The County opposes proposals to extend the time frame during which an emergency custody order remains valid; any extension beyond the present 8-hour period would be to the detriment of the individual suffering from mental illness (by delaying needed treatment), and would unreasonably burden local law enforcement officers (who would continue to retain custody and provide supervision of the individual).
- b. The County affirms its commitment to citizens' Second Amendment rights (memorialized in the Second Amendment of the Constitution of the United States and Article I, Section 13 of the Constitution of Virginia) , and opposes gun-control measures that would unconstitutionally infringe upon the rights of County citizens to bear arms. The County's position on this issue is more

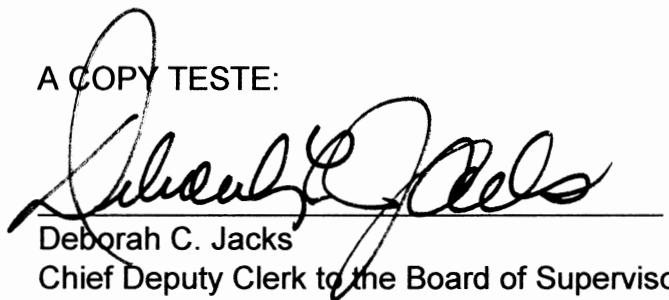
fully set forth in Resolution 120319-1, considered by the Board on December 3, 2019.

On motion of Supervisor North to adopt the resolution, seconded by Supervisor Hooker and carried by the following recorded vote:

AYES: Supervisors Assaid, Hooker, Radford, Peters, North

NAYS: None

A COPY TESTE:



---

Deborah C. Jacks

Chief Deputy Clerk to the Board of Supervisors

cc: Peter S. Lubeck, Acting County Attorney