



**Virginia Funeral Directors Association
2021 General Assembly Weekly Report
for Week Ending January 22, 2021**

RECAP:

The regular General Assembly Session convened on Wednesday, January 13th. Each year on the first day of session members vote on a procedural resolution that establishes the session schedule. While a 46-day session in odd-numbered years has become the norm for some time, two-thirds of the members of the House and Senate must formerly agree to extend the odd-numbered year 30-day session required by the Virginia Constitution to a 46-day session. As the minority party issued a statement at the end of the 84-day 2020 Special Session that ended on November 9th, 2020, they would not agree to a 46-day session, the 2021 General Assembly session is scheduled to end on February 11, 2021. It is possible that there will be a special session immediately following the regular session.

The House of Delegates is conducting its floor sessions and committee hearings virtually with only the Speaker of the House, House Clerk and required staff physically present in the Capitol for floor sessions. The Senate is conducting its business at the Virginia Science Museum which allows for a social distanced environment due to public health concerns. Capitol Square remains closed to the public.

The deadline to submit legislation for consideration for the 2021 General Assembly Session passed Friday, at 3:00 pm. Below is a statistical summary update of the status of the 1179 bills and resolutions introduced.

Type	Introduced	Passed House	Passed Senate	Passed	Cont'd from last session	Failed	Pending	Approved	Vetoed
H.B.	604	85	0	0	242	258	588	0	0
H.J.R.	113	25	25	25	5	6	87	0	0
H.R.	25	12	0	12	0	0	13	0	0
S.B.	368	0	63	0	123	156	335	0	0
S.J.R.	55	10	22	10	15	15	45	0	0
S.R.	14	0	8	8	0	0	6	0	0
Totals	1179	132	118	55	385	435	1074	0	0

COMMITTEE AND FLOOR SCHEDULES:

Due to the 30-day shortened session, both the House and Senate have compressed their schedules and adjusted their floor session meeting time. The House convenes its floor sessions at 4:00 pm each day with the Senate floor session being held at 12:00 pm.

The House is using a block scheduling system with two-hour blocks of committees and/or subcommittees occurring at 7:00 am, 9:00 am, 11:00 am and 1:00 pm daily. The Senate's committee schedule is in-line with a traditional regular session schedule. The full daily schedule of all House and Senate sub-committees, full committees, and bills that on each day's floor session calendar is can be found on the [2021 Meeting Schedule](#). The meeting and floor schedules are updated daily.

THIS WEEK – (January 18-22 – Week 2):

Both the House and Senate settled into the accelerated "short" session this week with over 90 subcommittee and committee hearings held this week along with daily floor sessions. Some bills are following the normal legislative process which is to hear the bill first in sub-committee, then committee and then a vote on the floor by all the members (provided they advance through the committee process). Due to the shortened session, some bills that are typically more straight-forward in nature are being assigned directly to full committee – bypassing the subcommittee process. If a bill is heard at the sub-committee, public testimony is limited in full committee.

If the bill has been sent directly to committee, the normal public testimony and debate generally heard in sub-committee is being conducted.

Legislation addressing COVID-relief, election administration, energy, healthcare, housing, policing, public education, and utilities are already being heard on the House and Senate floors with 85 bills having passed the House and 63 bills having passed the Senate and will now be considered by the other body.

Additionally, Dr. Danny Avula, Virginia's Vaccine Coordinator provided a [Vaccinate Virginia](#) update to the House Appropriations Committee Friday.

The Media Clips contained in this report provide insight in some of the key legislative agenda items that will be debated this week and next week before the February 5th deadline to cross-cover to the other body.

BUDGET:

Both the House and the Senate heard budget amendments requested by members this week. Budget amendments do not receive an up or down vote when they are heard but are considered during the development of each body's budget which is finalized later in the session. Both the House and Senate Money Committees are to complete their work on the budget by midnight on February 7th.

Key Budget Presentations this week:

[Virginia Employment Commission Update](#)

[December Economic and Revenue Update](#)

PARTICIPATING IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS:

The public and interested groups may participate in session, by speaking at a committee hearing. The agenda for each House and Senate committee hearing includes a link to sign up to speak during committee. The committee clerk will send a link to the email used on the sign-up form thirty minutes before the start of the committee hearing. The sign-up link for each committee hearing is activated once the committee clerk posts the agenda for the hearing and can be viewed on the [LIS Meeting Schedule](#). The House of Delegates also provides an option to submit written comments on a bill that is being heard in committee. These written comments are able to be viewed by all members of the committee and the general public. To look up who represents your legislative district, visit [Who Is My Legislator](#).

MEDIA CLIPS:

[Virginia General Assembly to tackle marijuana, COVID-19, ex-convicts' rights](#)

The Virginia General Assembly session will be overshadowed by 10 months of pandemic and a week of post-insurrection ... Times News

[Coronavirus puts spotlight on paid leave during General Assembly session](#)

Virginia Democrats have revived bills to mandate that businesses provide paid family and medical leave for employees. The National Federation of Independent Business is concerned about the effects ... roanoke.com

[Senate marijuana panel proposes changes to Northam legalization bill, would delay sales until 2024](#)

Localities that don't wish to have marijuana retailers in their jurisdictions may be able to opt out via referendum, according to a recommendation from a Senate panel examining a proposal.... richmond.com

[Virginia set to implement permanent standards for COVID-19 workplace safety](#)

Virginia is set to adopt workplace safety standards for COVID-19 prevention that will be in place at least until Gov. Ralph Northam's state of emergency declaration is lifted. ... richmond.com

[After tiebreaker, Senate passes bill moving local elections to November - Virginia Mercury](#)

The Virginia Senate passed legislation Thursday to move all May local elections to November, with Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax casting a tiebreaking vote to put it over the top. Many cities and counties...
www.virginiamercury.com

[Va. House budget leader pushes mandatory retirement savings plans for private businesses](#)

House Appropriations Chairman Luke Torian, D-Prince William, wants employees to have the option of contributing part of their paychecks to a retirement plan, so he proposes to require their employers. ... richmond.com

[State Lawmakers Push Tax Credits For Affordable Housing](#)

Virginia lawmakers want to make it easier for developers to secure financing for affordable housing projects by providing tax credits. ... vpm.org

[New bike bill hopes to make streets safer for cyclists - Virginia Mercury](#)

Last year cyclists in the commonwealth scored a big win in the General Assembly as part of a coalition backing a hands-free law to prevent distracted driving. This year the state's bike lobby is ba... www.virginiamercury.com

[New jobless claims in Virginia dropped 25%, but pandemic-related relief jumps](#)

The number of first-time Pandemic Unemployment Assistance claims in Virginia jumped to 5,251 during the week ending Jan. 16, up from 3,387. www.pilotonline.com

[Virginia unlikely to see major changes in redistricting](#)

FALLS CHURCH, Va. (AP) — A relatively static population means Virginia's legislative maps will be less affected by redistricting than any time since World War II, according to a leading member of...
apnews.com

[Emergency legislation aims to speed up vaccine rollout in Virginia](#)

Senator Siobhan Dunning and 13 other legislators are sponsoring a bill to help assemble an army of vaccination volunteers.
richmond.com

[New Virginia House bill clarifies funeral home personnel as "essential workers"](#)

ROANOKE, Va. (WFXR) — Staff members at funeral homes are now considered "essential workers" in Virginia, thanks to a bill passed by several House delegates. This comes as local fu...
www.wfxrtv.com

LEGISLATIVE TRACKING UPDATE:

The following update on legislative requests contained in the Virginia Funeral Directors Association 2021 Legislative Agenda and other bills that may impact the industry.

[VA - HB1785](#) Employment health and safety standards; heat illness prevention.

Categories: human resources

Primary Sponsor: Jeion A. Ward

Summary:

Employment health and safety standards; heat illness prevention. Requires the Safety and Health Codes Board to adopt regulations establishing standards designed to protect employees from heat illness, defined in the bill. The measure authorizes an employee to bring an action based on a violation of such standards in which injunctive relief and monetary damages may be sought.

Actions:

January 19, 2021

- Assigned L & C sub: Subcommittee #1

VA - HB1856 Estate planning documents; electronic execution, codifies Uniform Electronic Wills Act.

Categories: estate law

Primary Sponsor: Richard C. "Rip" Sullivan, Jr.

Summary:

Electronic execution of estate planning documents; Uniform Electronic Wills Act. Permits trusts, advance medical directives, and refusals to make anatomical gifts to be signed and notarized, as appropriate, by electronic means. The bill also codifies the Uniform Electronic Wills Act, which permits a testator to execute a will by electronic means. The Act requires that the will be signed by two witnesses who are in the physical or electronic presence of the testator and acknowledged by the testator and attesting witnesses in the physical or electronic presence of a notary public.

VA - HB2005 Disposition of the remains of a decedent; persons to make arrangements for funeral.

Categories: vfda-legislative priority

Primary Sponsor: [Delegate Mark D. Sickles](#)

Summary:

Disposition of the remains of a decedent; persons to make arrangements for funeral and disposition of remains. Establishes an order of priority for persons who have the right to make arrangements and otherwise be responsible for a decedent's funeral and the disposition of his remains, provided that any such person is 18 years of age or older and of sound mind. The bill sets out, among other things, the circumstances under which such persons forfeit the right to make arrangements and otherwise be responsible for a person's funeral and the disposition of his remains and sets out assertions that a person seeking to exercise the right to make such arrangements must attest to in a signed written statement to be delivered to the funeral service establishment. Any funeral service establishment, funeral service establishment manager of record, funeral service licensee, funeral director, embalmer, registered crematory, registered crematory owner, registered crematory manager of record, or certified crematory operator that relies upon such a written statement shall be immune from civil or criminal liability for any act, decision, or omission in connection with following such person's direction related to the decedent's funeral and the disposition of his remains, unless such act, decision, or omission resulted from willful neglect or bad faith. The bill sets out rights of funeral service establishments when there is a dispute regarding the arrangements of a decedent's funeral or his

remains or the identity of any persons who have the right to make arrangements for the decedent. The bill specifies that the provisions do not apply to cemeteries or cemetery companies.

VA - HB2116 Declared states of emergency, certain; funeral service licensees designated as essential workers.

Categories: public health

Primary Sponsor: [Delegate Martha M. Mugler](#)

Cosponsors:

[Delegate Patrick A. Hope](#)

[Delegate Sam Rasoul](#)

[Delegate Marcus B. Simon](#)

[Delegate Lee J. Carter](#)

[Delegate Ibraheem S. Samirah](#)

[Delegate Shelly A. Simonds](#)

Summary:

Certain declared states of emergency; essential workers; funeral service licensees; emergency. Provides that in any case in which the Governor has declared a state of emergency related to a communicable disease of public health threat, funeral service licensees shall be considered essential workers and shall be included in any group afforded priority with regard to (i) access to personal protective equipment and (ii) administration of any vaccination against such communicable disease of public health threat during such emergency. The bill contains an emergency clause.

Actions:

January 22, 2021

- Read first time

January 21, 2021

- Reported from Health, Welfare and Institutions with amendment(s) (20-Y 0-N)

VA - SB1121 Birth certificates; creates a new process for the amendment of certificates.

Primary Sponsor: [Senator Mamie E. Locke](#)

Summary:

Birth certificates; amendments. Creates a new process for the amendment of birth certificates other than an amendment to show paternity if paternity is not shown on the birth certificate. The bill requires the State Registrar of Vital Records to amend a birth certificate upon receipt of an application, a sworn affidavit testifying to the corrected information, and such other evidence as may be required by regulations of the Board of Health and provides that regulations of the Board specifying the minimum evidence required for an amendment to a birth certificate shall not require a copy of a court order or a federal census transcript as evidence.

Actions:

January 22, 2021

- Constitutional reading dispensed (37-Y 0-N)

January 21, 2021

- Committee substitute printed 21103272D-S1
- Reported from Education and Health with substitute (12-Y 2-N)

January 18, 2021

- Assigned Education sub: Health

VA - SB1268 Disposition of the remains of a decedent; persons to make arrangements for funeral.

Categories: vfda-legislative priority

Primary Sponsor: [Senator R. Creigh Deeds](#)

Summary:

Disposition of the remains of a decedent; persons to make arrangements for funeral and disposition of remains. Establishes an order of priority for persons who have the right to make arrangements and otherwise be responsible for a decedent's funeral and the disposition of his remains, provided that any such person is 18 years of age or older and of sound mind. The bill sets out, among other things, the circumstances under which such persons forfeit the right to make arrangements and otherwise be responsible for a person's funeral and the disposition of his remains and sets out assertions that a person seeking to exercise the right to make such arrangements must attest to in a signed written statement to be delivered to the funeral service establishment. Any funeral service establishment, funeral service establishment manager of record, funeral service licensee, funeral director, embalmer, registered crematory, registered crematory owner, registered crematory manager of record, or certified crematory operator that relies upon such a written statement shall be immune from civil or criminal liability for any act, decision, or omission in connection with following such person's direction related to the decedent's funeral and the disposition of his remains, unless such act, decision, or omission resulted from willful neglect or bad faith. The bill sets out rights of funeral service establishments when there is a dispute regarding the arrangements of a decedent's funeral or his remains or the identity of any persons who have the right to make arrangements for the decedent. The bill specifies that the provisions do not apply to cemeteries or cemetery companies.

VA - SB1424 Funeral service establishments; defines "manager of record."

Categories: vfda-legislative priority

Primary Sponsor: [Senator John A. Cosgrove, Jr.](#)

Summary:

Funeral service establishments; manager of record. Defines "manager of record" as a person who manages and handles all operations of a licensed funeral service establishment and sets out the conditions under which a funeral service licensee or a funeral director may serve as a manager of record. The bill requires that funeral service establishments employ a full-time manager of record.