



2022 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

On behalf of the 750+ members and more than 43,000 employees that comprise the Alliance, the Government Relations Committee shall advocate for reasonable, well-researched, and debated legislation that is favorable to businesses; complements economic development initiatives; encourages Free Enterprise; and continues to elevate the business competitiveness of the Lynchburg region.

EDUCATION

Stem Academy: The Alliance **supports** a line item or per pupil funding support for STEM Academy's student expansion.

Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant: The Alliance **supports** the Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant. The Alliance **opposes** converting the Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant from a benefit for all of Virginia's students to one that is needs-based.

Public/Private Higher Education Congruency: The Alliance **supports** policies in education that do not neglect private institutions of higher learning from receiving similar grant or funding opportunities.

FastForward Funding: The Alliance **supports** increased funding for Virginia's FastForward short-term training program and funding for childcare/early childhood education.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Central Virginia Training Center: The Alliance **supports** efforts for realistic transition of the property, including: (i) disposition of the bonds to another state property, to facilitate the swift sale and redevelopment of the CVTC; (ii) funding the Department of General Services to demolish structures incapable of refurbishment; and (iv) to aggressively market the facility to national and international developers.

Incentives: The Alliance **supports** incentives to promote business expansion and economic growth. Funding for economic development programs available through the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, specifically the expansion of the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program, the Virginia Talent Accelerator Program, and extending the sunset on the Major Business Facilities Job Tax Credit.

ENERGY & INFRASTRUCTURE

Energy Costs: The Alliance **opposes** policies and regulations that increase energy costs for businesses.

Broadband: The Alliance **supports** action for broadband development, and an "all of the above" technology approach that includes Fiber and Fixed Wireless technology solutions for broadband infrastructure projects, regional collaboration between government entities, as well as efforts that quicken and ease the ability to engage public private partnerships. Furthermore, the Alliance **supports** initiatives that will encourage existing providers to expand their existing service areas to cover unserved or underserved residents that cannot be provided for by VATI funds.

HEALTHCARE

Insurance: The Alliance **opposes** “Medicare for all” programs.

Association Health Plans: The Alliance **supports** Association of Health Plans’ proposals. The Alliance continues to support proposed benefits consortium bills. The Alliance **supports** legislation that allows the creation of Multiple Employer Welfare Arrangements (MEWAs) which offer health plans to support health care affordability and accessibility for employers and employees.

Mandated Paid Leave Programs: The Alliance continues to **support** businesses providing their own employee benefits, that may include Paid Leave Programs instead of a mandated policy by the Commonwealth or Federal Government that increases or creates additional taxes, financial, and regulatory burdens.

Mental Health: The Alliance **supports** funding a comprehensive, multipronged strategy to address the Commonwealth's behavioral health crisis to remedy issues like long waits in Emergency Departments waiting for state psychiatric beds and relieving law enforcement from monitoring Temporary Detention Orders (TDOs).

TAXATION

Simplification: The Alliance **supports** proposals that simplify the tax code and reduce the cost of compliance on businesses and individuals.

TRANSPORTATION

Air Service: The Alliance **supports** the continued expansion of air service to the Lynchburg region.

Rail: The Alliance **supports** expansion of Amtrak passenger rail from Lynchburg to the west, with continued exploration of expansion to Bristol.

Surface: The Alliance **supports** continued efforts toward timely implementation of the I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan (CIP) and continued funding and additional VDOT SMART SCALE weighting to meet transportation needs in our region.

WORKFORCE

Minimum Wage: The Alliance **supports** the repeal of minimum wage mandates, which would allow businesses to recruit, retain and incentivize employees appropriate to their industry and labor market. The Alliance **opposes** mandates for increasing the minimum wage outright and **opposes** the failure to adjust increases for economic differences between the regions of the Commonwealth. The market drives growth.

Right to Work: The Alliance **opposes** laws or regulations that undermine Virginia’s Right to Work status, including Fair Share or any other initiative that compels employees to pay union dues as a requirement of employment.

DOLI Regulations: The Alliance **supports** the repeal of the permanent COVID-19 mandatory workplace safety rules and supports efforts to withdraw or modify the rules.

Business Liability: The Alliance **supports** business liability protections and civil immunity for employers who take good faith efforts to follow government guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Questions? Contact Barry Butler, Director of Government Relations, at BButler@LynchburgRegion.org or call (434) 207-8585.

Note: Any legislative position the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance takes that is not specifically identified in this document is reviewed by the Government Relations Committee, under the direction of the Legislative Guiding Statements, and by Alliance staff, as prescribed in the Committee Policies and Procedures.