



## **VICPP'S KEY PRIORITY ISSUES FOR 2018 GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION**

### **Healthcare Expansion**

Virginia is one of 19 states that has not expanded its Medicaid program or used federal dollars to establish a Virginia plan to cover those low-wage workers who “fall in the gap,” where they make too much to qualify for Medicaid but too little to be able to afford to purchase coverage. Virginia could tap federal dollars that would allow it to expand healthcare coverage to 300,000 Virginians, mostly workers in low-income jobs. Expanding healthcare would create 15,000 new jobs, bring in \$1.7 billion in new federal funding and help bolster rural and struggling hospitals. The Commonwealth can its own plan, a “Virginia plan,” but the budget must include tapping the federal dollars.

### **Wage Theft**

Virginia needs to strengthen its laws against wage theft to ensure that workers are paid all their legally-owed wages, level the playing field for employers that do pay workers fairly and compete against unscrupulous employers, strengthen the economy, and provide needed government resources by ensuring that all employers are paying their share of payroll taxes, unemployment taxes and workers compensation insurance. VICPP worked with Senator Wagner, Delegate Habeeb and Delegate Krizek to draft and introduce legislation to strengthen both the Minimum Wage Act and the Payment of Wages.

### **Welcoming All**

There has been an increase in anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim rhetoric at the national level. This has trickled down to Virginia, with both immigrants and Muslims report feeling targeted and fearful. This should not be happening in Virginia. VICPP believes Virginia must remain a welcoming state – welcoming to immigrants and all faith groups. (What state has a prouder history of freedom of religion?) We will stand against all legislation that challenges this idea and support bills to create a driver’s permit for immigrants, enable all Virginia students to receive in-state tuition, and direct Virginia law enforcement officers not to cooperate with ICE at schools, hospitals or congregations.

### **Increasing the Felony Threshold**

The felony threshold is the amount of money or value of items taken at which a person is charged with a felony, as opposed to a misdemeanor. Once convicted of a felony, the person faces multiple years in prison and/or major fines, and are labeled a convicted felon, which has far-reaching consequences. Virginia’s legal threshold for felony robbery charges has not changed since 1980, when it was set at the current level of \$200, the lowest in the nation. It is well past time to increase it, if only to keep up to date with inflation. There are other good reasons, including saving Virginia taxpayers millions annually. They are multiple bills filed in this session to address this issue.