



In 2019, VOICE conducted face-to-face listening sessions with over 4,500 people in Northern Virginia. Below is the agenda that emerged from our on-the-ground organizing.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The focus of Virginia's criminal justice system should be restorative, and at the very least, to work towards ending crime and violence—not to profit off of People of Color, those without wealth and people with mental illness.

House Chair: Del. Charniele Herring (D46) & Del. Vivian Watts (D39) [House Courts](#) *Senate Judiciary*
Chair: Sen. John Edwards (D21) [Senate Courts](#)

- **Public Defender's Office in PWC** – \$5.4 million to win the creation of a desperately-needed Public Defender's Office in Prince William County to replace the current, deeply inadequate court-appointed system of representation. Prince William County is by far the largest jurisdiction in the state that lacks a PD office. While this has a fiscal note of \$5.4 million, the real cost will be closer to \$400,000 since the bulk of the funds will be transferred from the state's court-appointed fund to the Public Defender fund. **Bills related to this issue:** Sen. Surovell – [SB 72](#), Del. Foy – [HB 366](#)
- **Driver's License Suspension** – \$9 million to permanently end Virginia's horrible practice of suspending driver's licenses solely for unpaid court fees and fines, giving 627,000 Virginians the opportunity to get to support themselves and their families. **Bills related to this issue:** Del. Foy – [HB 17](#), Del. Lopez – [HB 261](#), Sen. Stanley – [SB 1](#)
- **Felony Larceny** – increase the threshold for felony larceny from the appallingly-low \$500, to \$2,500. **Bills related to this issue:** Del. Lopez – [HB 263](#) (raise to \$2,000), Del. Lindsey – [HB 101](#) (raise to \$750), Sen. McClellan - [SB 788](#) (raise to \$1,000), Del. Hayes – [HB 263](#) (raise to \$1,500)

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Northern Virginia must ensure communities that have lived here for decades can continue to afford to do so and to be welcoming to new low-income families.

House Chair: Del. Kaye Kory (D38) & Del. Steve Heretick (D79) [House Counties, Cities, & Towns](#)
& *Senate Chair:* Sen. Lynwood Lewis (D6) [Senate. Local Government](#)

- **Virginia Housing Trust Fund** - The Governor's budget calls for an increase of \$63 million for the Virginia Housing Trust Fund, bringing the total to \$84 million over 3 years. VOICE asked for \$100 million in 2020-2021 in the Trust to deal with a major lack of affordable



housing in Northern Virginia and other jurisdictions around the state. There are no separate bills related to this issue. Del. Lopez created the VHTF six years ago.

- **Research - Zoning & Affordable Housing** - Over the last three years, the Arlington and Alexandria VOICE teams have done local research actions regarding density and zoning as market tools to address the affordable housing crisis. This year, there are three bills looking into zoning changes as a way to address affordable housing.
 - *Del. Kaye Kory* - [HB545](#) - Requires cities and towns to create a plan based on the inclusion of safe & affordable housing for all current and projected residents
 - *Del. Ibraheem Samirah* - [HB151](#) - Allows for the development of Auxiliary Dwelling Units (ADUs) & [HB152](#) - Allows middle housing (townhomes and duplexes) to be built on lots zoned for single family homes.

EDUCATION

VOICE believes in equitable first opportunities for our children.

House Chair Del. Roslyn Tyler, D75 & Del. Elizabeth Guzman D31 (D--includes part of [PWCO](#))
[House Education](#): & *Senate Chair*: L. Louise Lucas (D-Portsmouth) [Senate Education & Health](#)

- **School Counselors** – \$90 million to lower the student-to-counselor ratio in Virginia elementary schools from 500:1 to 250:1 in order to help deal with the growing mental challenges among Virginia’s youth. *Bills related to this issue:* Del. Keam – [HB 398](#)
- **Pre-K** and **After-School Investment**. Significantly increase state investment to support new Pre-K classrooms and after-school programs for families who need it most.

[Committee Chairs of Senate & House](#)