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## **Virginia Association for Career & Technical Education Legislative Report 1-19-2026**

The 2026 Virginia General Assembly convened on January 14, 2026, marking the start of what promises to be a consequential 60-day legislative session. With Democrats now holding expanded majorities in both the House and Senate and control of the executive branch following the November 2025 elections, the session opened with aggressive early action on high-profile priorities.

House and Senate members were quickly engaged: committee hearings began, and several key deadlines were set. Member budget amendment filings were due January 16, just two days after the session began. The final deadline to introduce regularly filed bills is January 23. We will continue to see any remaining legislation filed and posted over the next week. Additionally, legislators are working toward Crossover Day on February 17, 2026, the statutory deadline by which the House must act on House bills and the Senate on Senate bills if they are to continue advancing. The formal session is scheduled to adjourn March 14, 2026, with a reconvened session on April 22 to consider gubernatorial vetoes and amendments.

A centerpiece of the first week was the swift legislative approval of four constitutional amendments that will now go before Virginia voters. These amendments, which passed both chambers during the opening days of session, include protections for abortion and reproductive healthcare, automatic restoration of voting rights for people who have completed felony sentences, marriage equality, and a controversial congressional redistricting for Virginia.

Under Virginia's constitutional process, these measures must be approved in two consecutive General Assembly sessions with a House election in between, which they have now done, and then be placed on the ballot for a statewide referendum. The redistricting amendment is expected to appear in a special spring 2026 referendum, possibly as early as April. If approved by voters, it would allow the legislature to redraw congressional districts outside the normal decennial cycle.

The Public Education Program (PEP) state budget amendments were submitted this week by Delegate Betsy Carr and Senator Dave Marsden. The amendment seeks to appropriate existing Department of Health (VDH) funds for the sole purpose of utilizing the discounted PEP advertising. The amendment would direct VDH to use \$75,000 of their budget, in collaboration, with OAAV, to run various health related advertising campaigns. As we continue to build support among General Assembly members and the new administration, our priority is to ensure this collaboration with VDH is the first of many working partnerships with state agencies.



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In addition to our budgetary priority, there are several bills currently being monitored and are included below in this report. I would specifically like to draw your attention to House Bill 649, patroned by Delegate Cliff Hayes, who is a supportive of the association's PEP. The bill provides some procedural reinforcement for billboard owners, clarifying local governments cannot authorize volunteers to remove outdoor signage as defined in the code.

To conclude, the first week of the 2026 session set a fast pace for lawmaking in Richmond. With major deadlines on the horizon, a reshaped political balance, and consequential policy questions headed for the ballot, lawmakers face intense pressure in the weeks ahead to translate campaign promises into enacted law.

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Bill	Catch line	Legislation Status	Chief Patron
<a href="#">HB53</a>	Student bullying; adjusts definition, characteristics of victim.	In Committee	Cole, J.G.
<a href="#">HB132</a>	Graduation with an advanced studies diploma; requirements, complet. of Int'l Baccalaureate diploma.	In Committee	Simon
<a href="#">HB138</a>	Public high schools; career coach required	In Committee	Simonds
<a href="#">HB171</a>	Student instruction; internet safety, policy to include key modern digital safety topics.	In Committee	Askew
<a href="#">HB178</a>	Public schools; student support services, student personal information and data security, report.	In Committee	Anthony
<a href="#">HB180</a>	Work-Based Learning Coordinator Pilot Program; established, report, sunset.	In Committee	Anthony
<a href="#">HB189</a>	Certain student assessment requirements; calculation of final course grade.	In Committee	Convirs-Fowler
<a href="#">HB206</a>	College partnership laboratory schools; transparency.	In Committee	Keys-Gamarra



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<a href="#">HB279</a>	Teachers; timeline and process for increasing salaries to at least national average.	In Subcommittee	Clark
<a href="#">HB298</a>	Public elementary or secondary school students; evidence-based restorative disciplinary practices.	In Committee	McQuinn
<a href="#">HB299</a>	SOL assessments and related assessment methods; development, administration, scoring, and release.	In Committee	Helmer
<a href="#">HB332</a>	Teacher licensure; three-year license to teach career and technical education, etc.	In Committee	Rasoul
<a href="#">HB412</a>	Local governing bodies; school division budgets, funding levels.	In Committee	Cole, N.T.
<a href="#">HB428</a>	High school graduation requirements; alternative pathway to standard diploma established, report.	In Committee	LeVere Bolling
<a href="#">HB478</a>	Diploma seal for excellence in fine arts; established, industry-recognized workforce credential.	In Committee	Watts
<a href="#">HB551</a>	Nondegree workforce training programs; accreditation.	In Committee	Anderson
<a href="#">HB595</a>	Advanced studies diploma; requirements for graduation, approval for certain credit requirements.	In Committee	Simonds
<a href="#">HB643</a>	Board of Education; School Performance and Support Framework; certain changes required.	Committee Referral Pending	Rasoul
<a href="#">HB647</a>	Board of Education; Regulations Governing Allowable Credit for Teaching Experience; certain credit substitution allowance permitted.	Committee Referral Pending	Kent
<a href="#">HB698</a>	Virginia Workforce Development and Career Connection and Training Foundation and Fund.	Committee Referral Pending	McAuliff
<a href="#">HB753</a>	Public school funding; composite index of local ability-to-pay.	Committee Referral Pending	Runion
<a href="#">HB785</a>	Teacher licensure; three-year license to teach career and technical education, etc.	Committee Referral Pending	Austin
<a href="#">HB849</a>	Public school employees; suspension; notice and opportunity for a hearing.	Committee Referral Pending	Cousins
<a href="#">HB1039</a>	Department of Education; College and Career Ready Virginia Program; administration; advisory committee and work group composition.	Committee Referral Pending	Carr
<a href="#">HJ7</a>	High school graduates; Dept. of Workforce Dev. & Advancement to study optional service year program.	In Committee	Helmer
<a href="#">SB90</a>	Equity in public school funding and staffing; at-risk Program established, standards of quality.	In Subcommittee	Favola
<a href="#">SB102</a>	School boards; high school courses or dual enrollment programs for certain certifications.	In Subcommittee	Stanley
<a href="#">SB105</a>	STEM+C Competition Team Grant Program; eligibility for grants.	In Subcommittee	Stanley
<a href="#">SB108</a>	School boards; student cell phone and smart device possession and use policies, prohibition.	In Subcommittee	Pekarsky
<a href="#">SB117</a>	Public school teachers; reemployment of teacher who has not received continuing contract status.	In Subcommittee	Pekarsky
<a href="#">SB134</a>	Public education; early childhood care and education, funding formula calculations, report.	In Subcommittee	Locke
<a href="#">SB147</a>	Alternative graduation pathways to earn Standard Diploma; development, approval, and implementation,	In Subcommittee	Pekarsky
<a href="#">SB151</a>	Elementary school students; water safety instruction required, guidelines.	In Subcommittee	Craig



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<a href="#">SB203</a>	Teacher licensure; career and technical education or dual enrollment; three-year licenses.	In Subcommittee	Suetterlein
<a href="#">SB217</a>	National Board Certification Incentive Reward Program and Fund; eligibility.	In Committee	Boysko