



March 1, 2018

The Honorable Emmett W. Hanger, Jr.
Co-Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
Pocahontas Building, Room E507
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable S. Chris Jones
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
Pocahontas Building, Room W1312
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable Thomas K. Norment, Jr.
Co-Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
Pocahontas Building, Room E603
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Chairman Hanger, Chairman Norment, and Chairman Jones:

On behalf of the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce and the organizations we represent, thank you for your efforts on the 2018-20 biennium budget. With numerous worthy requests, we recognize the challenge you face in making funding decisions. As the Conference Committee deliberates over final negotiations, we ask for your support for the following priorities:

- Accessing available federal funding to **reform and expand Virginia's Medicaid program**, including market-based alternatives to limit the shifting of escalating and unsustainable costs of uncompensated care on the business community.
- The **Commonwealth Cyber Initiative (CyberX)**, a strategic degree program led by Virginia Tech that will enhance cybersecurity and technology activities.
- The Virginia Economic Development Partnership's (VEDP) **Business Ready Sites Program and marketing initiative** to strengthen the Commonwealth's competitiveness in attracting new and expanding businesses.
- Increased grant funding for the **Virginia Growth & Opportunity Fund (GO Virginia)**. This innovative tool has shown early results in advancing regional collaboration and strategic approaches to economic development.
- Higher investment in the **Workforce Credential Grant Program**, which has a proven track record of success in addressing the skills gap by helping students earn high-demand credentials and enter the workforce.
- **Mental health** funding to combat the opioid crisis, an epidemic that is plaguing communities and adversely impacting our workforce.
- Funding for the **Virginia Grocery Investment Fund** to help underserved communities with limited food accessibility achieve better health outcomes.
- Increased support for **Virginia Telecommunications Initiative**, which brings critical broadband services to unserved and underserved areas.
- Funding to fill General District Court **judicial vacancies** to ensure efficiency in business litigation and the administration of justice.

We appreciate your commitment to putting forward a responsible budget that invests in valuable programs and services. The priorities outlined in this letter are important as we work to build on Virginia's strengths and take advantage of additional opportunities for growth.

Thank you for your leadership and diligence throughout the budget process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebekah Gunn". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Rebekah Gunn
Vice President of Public Policy & Strategic Issues



