

Legislative Report to the Board of Directors

Blacksburg AARP May 2014

VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. Budget

As of May 28, 2014 no budget has been passed by the General Assembly due to continued disagreement over Medicaid Expansion. The current budget ends on June 30, 2014. Due to a projected shortfall in revenue, passing a budget becomes more important as there is no “rainy day” fund to fall back on.

2. Medicaid Expansion

No progress on this issue. Frequently stated positions of the Governor, the Senate and the House of Delegates have not changed much. The Governor has promised ‘no Government shutdown’ but the legal details of administrative spending without a General Assembly-approved budget are not entirely clear. This is a new situation. The Senate Democrats and some Republicans want the Medicaid Expansion included in the budget. The House of Delegate is opposed along partisan lines.

Options include: decouple the budget from Medicaid Expansion and pass a Budget, talk about Medicaid Expansion later; approve the budget with a Senate-proposed version (Marketplace Virginia) of Medicaid Expansion; approve a 2-year ‘pilot’ version of Medicaid Expansion that would expire if the Federal government does not continue to fund it; approve a version with some conservative friendly provisions recently approved by Indiana (to be submitted to the Federal government for approval).

3. Regulatory Changes to Long Term Care Insurance notification

Virginians should no longer lose their Long Term Care Insurance due to lost/misunderstood/ignored notices mailed from the insurance company to the insured. It is now the company’s responsibility to notify and receive confirmation that the notification was received by the insured person and their identified backup person.

UNITED STATES CONGRESS

1. Postal Service

The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, on an 18-13 party-line vote, approved a bill 5/21/14 to direct the U.S. Postal Service to convert 15 million addresses over the next decade to communal or curbside boxes (less costly) rather than delivered to their door (more convenient). This does not include street mailboxes, but the door slots found often in urban areas. Postal officials have asked repeatedly for comprehensive legislation giving them more control over personnel and benefit costs and more flexibility in pricing and products. Though various legislative proposals have been advanced, Congress has not been able to agree on a bill with broad changes.

2. Federal Trade Commission

The FTC wants more transparency for consumers as to data collected by data brokers after studying nine major brokers: Acxiom, CoreLogic, Datalogix, eBureau, ID Analytics, Intelius, PeekYou, Rapleaf and Recorded Future. Data brokers collect from government, commercial and other publicly available sources, some offering protection from identity fraud, but also possibly releasing incorrect information or information that could be misapplied. Sources include consumer transactions, such as any purchase made with a credit card or with a customer loyalty card, and can improve the quality of offers to consumers by businesses. The FTC recommends that Congress consider legislation to require the creation of a central database where people could see who the data brokers are and descriptions of the information they collect. It also says consumers should be allowed to opt-out of the collection. The report also recommends that brokers be required to disclose the names and categories of their data sources so people could correct faulty information.

3. Pentagon

In reaction to the Veteran Affairs issues, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel has ordered a 90-day review of the military health care system. It will assess the quality of the health care at military treatment facilities as well as the care the department buys from civilian providers. The system provides care for more than 9.6 million active duty personnel, retirees and eligible family members.

4. Pentagon Budget

The House of Representatives defied the Pentagon on Thursday, backing a \$601 billion defense authorization bill that saves the Cold War-era U-2 spy plane, military bases and Navy cruisers despite warnings that it will undercut military readiness. The White House has threatened to veto. The measure includes a 1.8 percent pay raise for the troops and adds up to hundreds of thousands of jobs back home. Regarding the problem of sexual assault in the military, the bill would change the military rules of evidence to prohibit the accused from using “good military character” as defense in court-martial proceedings unless it was directly relevant to the alleged crime.

Leaders of the Senate Armed Services Committee announced the completion of its version of the bill that backs several of the Pentagon proposals: creating a path to close Guantanamo, some personnel benefits and a 1 percent pay raise for the military. The Senate bill breaks with the administration by sparing the A-10 Warthog close-support plane and an aircraft carrier and a provision that would authorize the military to train and equip vetted Syrian rebels.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

In its May 27, 2014 meeting the Board unanimously approved a request to the Virginia Department of Transportation that VDOT restore funding for the Route 460 Southgate Drive Interchange Project.

TOWN OF BLACKSBURG COUNCIL

In the May 13, 2014 Town Council meeting, amendments to the restrictions on Public (downtown) and Private (South Main) Farmers Markets were approved as Ordinance 1722: requirements (1) for the farm to be within a radius of 50 miles was removed and (2) for the seller to also be the producer of the material

changed to: *Any restrictions on the type of producers or the location where agricultural products or handcrafted products are to be grown, raised or produced shall be included in the by-laws or regulations of the market.*

TOWN OF CHRISTIANSBURG COUNCIL

FEE CHANGES FOR WATER & SEWER

Water Fees:

IN TOWN	OUT OF TOWN
Minimum bill from \$18.00 to \$19.00 for the first 4000 gallons.	Minimum bill from \$27.00 to \$28.50 for the first 4000 gallons
The next 96,000 gallons from \$4.90 to \$5.50 per 1000 gallons.	The next 96,000 gallons from \$7.35 to \$8.25 per 1000 gallons.
Over 100,000 gallons from \$2.90 to \$3.20	Over 100,000 gallons from \$4.35 to \$4.80

Sewer Fees:

IN TOWN	OUT OF TOWN
Minimum bill will remain \$28.00 for the first 4000 gallons.	Minimum bill will remain \$42.00 for the first 4000 gallons
All above 4000 gallons \$8.50 per 1000 gallons which was \$7.50	All above 4000 gallons \$12.75 per 1000 gallons which was \$11.25

Water and Sewer Connection Fees will remain:

Base Water Connection Fee \$2,500

Base Sewer Connection Fee \$2,500 In Town