

Coalition for a Strong Virginia Economy

While Virginia's economy continues to grow and garner accolades such as the *2019 CNBC Best State to Do Business*, threats to Virginia's prosperity loom. Each year more and more proposals are introduced to meddle in the employer-employee relationship, mandate additional employee benefits, and increase the cost of doing business in the Commonwealth.

To address these challenging economic headwinds, a diverse coalition of business trade associations, have created the **"Coalition for a Strong Virginia Economy."**

The Coalition believes fostering a climate for economic growth is achieved by consistently championing the principles of the free enterprise system. The Coalition's mission is to educate policymakers on economic challenges and to provide policymakers with the information and perspective necessary to advance sound public policy that supports strong economic growth.

The Coalition for a Strong Virginia Economy is committed to:

- A free enterprise system that limits government intrusion in the marketplace and creates personal freedom;
- Fair and stable laws and regulations that encourage economic development, job creation, and do not mandate unreasonable costs on businesses and consumers;
- A strong, robust education and workforce development system that prepares Virginians to compete in the marketplace;
- Maintaining Virginia's AAA Bond Rating; and
- Balancing the state budget with existing resources.



Membership

Associated Builders & Contractors of Virginia

Associated General Contractors of Virginia

Hampton Roads Chamber

National Federation of Independent Business

Virginia Agribusiness Council

Virginia Automobile Dealers Association

Virginia Forest Products Association

Virginia Manufactured and Modular Housing Association

Virginia Manufacturers Association

Virginia Peninsula Chamber of Commerce

Virginia Poultry Federation

Virginia Retail Federation

Virginia Trucking Association

Virginia Wholesalers & Distributors Association

Coalition for a Strong Virginia Economy Policy:

The Coalition has prepared this policy document, which is intended to serve as a statement of its policy priorities for maintaining Virginia's competitiveness and improving the cost-of-doing-business in the Commonwealth.

Right-to-Work: Virginia's "Right to Work (RTW)" was established on January 12, 1947 and is the 5th oldest RTW statute in the United States (§ 40.1-58 Code of Virginia). The Virginia RTW law guarantees that no person can be compelled, as a condition of employment, to join or not to join, nor to pay dues to a labor union. Virginia's RTW also assures that no person or organization may use intimidation, use of force, threat of use of force, reprisal or threat of reprisal, or interrupt the work of any employee.

§ 40.1-57.2 of the Code of Virginia prohibits against public sector collective bargaining. It specifically states that no state, county, municipal, or like governmental officer, agent or governing body is vested with or possesses any authority to recognize any labor union or other employee association as a bargaining agent of any public officers or employees, or to collectively bargain or enter into any collective bargaining contract with any such union or association or its agents with respect to any matter relating to them or their employment or service.

Virginia's business community is committed to Virginia's RTW statute and prohibition against public sector collective bargaining. This commitment is uniform and Virginia's economic competitiveness rests upon these statutes remaining unabridged.

Employment Compensation: Support a Federally approved U.S. minimum wage that requires transparent reporting on the profile of all workers earning the minimum wage as well as how many workers are subject to labor agreements whereby their contracts are directly or indirectly tied to the U.S. minimum wage. Oppose legislation establishing a state minimum wage higher than the federal minimum wage. Oppose legislation requiring prevailing wage in state and local public works contracts.

Mandated Employee Benefits: Oppose any statutory intrusion into the area of employee/employer relationships, including but not limited to mandated benefits such as paid family and medical leave.

Energy Costs: Oppose efforts to institute a "Green New Deal" in the Commonwealth that would require 100 percent carbon-free electricity by 2050.

Workforce Development: Support efforts to continuously improve Virginia's workforce development system to become demand-driven and outcomes focused. Support improved alignment of workforce development across K-12 education and higher education (including community colleges) with relevant state boards and agencies.

Misclassification of Workers: Support reasonable enforcement efforts and penalties for employers who knowingly misclassify workers. Oppose efforts to use the misclassification of workers to erode the definitions of "employee" and "contractor."

Legal Reform: Ensure an efficient and effective civil justice system by supporting legal reforms to improve Virginia's business climate and opposing those efforts which will lead to a lawsuit friendly environment such as creating a new private cause for unpaid wages.