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Virginia State Firefighters Association Bill Report 2-20-26

The week of February 13-20 marked a pivotal transition point in the 2026 session of the Virginia General Assembly, as lawmakers worked through the immediate aftermath of the February 17 crossover deadline. Crossover is the point at which most policy bills must pass their chamber of origin to remain alive for the remainder of session, and its passage significantly narrowed the legislative field. With that deadline behind them, attention shifted toward House-Senate negotiations, remaining committee work on surviving bills, and the increasingly time-sensitive budget process ahead of adjournment in mid-March.

A dominant theme during the week was budget preparation. While neither chamber had yet adopted its introduced budget, both House Appropriations and Senate Finance & Appropriations intensified work on their respective versions. Subcommittees continued meeting to finalize amendments, hear remaining agency presentations, and address unresolved funding priorities, including K-12 education, employee compensation, health and human services, and public safety. At this stage, lawmakers were still shaping their initial budget positions, with final committee action and floor votes expected in the days immediately ahead. Each money committee will be reporting their version of the state budget Sunday, February 22.

Several key procedural deadlines framed legislative activity during this period. Following crossover on February 17, committees shifted focus to considering bills from the opposite chamber. Looking ahead, budget committee reporting deadlines were approaching, with expectations that House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations would report their respective budgets to the floor in late February. In addition, legislators were mindful of the March 4 deadline for the chambers to complete action on the budget. These timelines compressed negotiations and elevated the importance of informal, behind-the-scenes discussions.

The week also brought notable changes to committee assignments. On February 20, the Senate adopted changes to committee rosters, including Senate Finance and Appropriations. Such mid-session adjustments are uncommon and drew attention given the committee's central role in shaping the state budget and major fiscal legislation. Leadership did not publicly detail the rationale for the changes, but the move highlighted the internal intensity of policy and budget decisions.

Policy themes that remained front and center during the week included economic and workforce issues, education funding priorities, health care access, and regulatory oversight in areas such as gaming and consumer protection. With fewer bills remaining after crossover, floor debate and committee hearings became more focused, and leadership in both chambers emphasized advancing measures with a clear path to final passage. At the same time, legislators began signaling which initiatives were more likely to be resolved through the budget rather than through standalone legislation.

Political dynamics continued to influence the tone of the session as well. Ongoing court activity related to the April congressional redistricting referendum, recent special elections, and adjustments following executive-branch appointments all contributed to a heightened awareness of electoral and institutional balance. While these issues were largely external to day-to-day committee work, they provided an important backdrop as lawmakers weighed strategic decisions in the closing weeks of session.

As the General Assembly moved beyond crossover and toward the final stretch, the focus increasingly turned to budget completion, conference committee preparation, and final floor action. With statutory deadlines approaching and adjournment on the horizon, the pace of legislative activity accelerated, setting the stage for consequential decisions in the weeks to come.



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Bill	Catch line	Legislation Status	Chief Patron
HB7	Law-enforcement officers; restrictions on wearing of facial coverings, exceptions, civil liability.	Failed	Jones
HB11	Emergency custody orders; transportation to treatment center, etc.	Failed	McNamara
HB38	Public schools; mental health awareness training and instruction, requirements.	In Subcommittee	Henson
HB43	Suicide; abolishes common-law crime, delayed effective date, report.	In Senate	Simon
HB48	Suicide prevention; VDH to convene work group to develop plan to reduce among at-risk populations.	Failed	Reid
HB169	Emerg. management; Secretary of Public Safety & Homeland Sec. shall convene work group to evaluate.	In Committee	Askew
HB204	Virginia Law Officers' Retirement System; extends membership to emergency dispatchers.	Failed	Cherry
HB205	Va. Retirement System; enhanced retirement benefits for 911 dispatchers, delayed effective date.	Failed	Cherry
HB209	Peer recovery specialists; VDH & DOC to develop guidelines for hiring.	In Committee	Price
HB227	Line of Duty Act; transitional coverage.	Failed	Cornett
HB230	Motor vehicles; use of safety belt systems, certain emergency medical services personnel exempted.	In Senate	McQuinn
HB233	Motor vehicles; use of safety belt systems, exempts certain emergency medical services personnel.	Failed	Wachsmann
HB240	Admission to bail; fixing terms of bail, mental health considerations.	Continued	Gardner
HB246	Mental illness, neurocognitive disorder, etc.; affirmative defense or reduced penalty.	In Committee	Watts
HB248	Interjurisdictional law-enforcement agreements; development of behavioral health co-response teams.	In Committee	Watts
HB249	Marcus alert system; external database information removal.	In Senate	Watts
HB273	Law-enforcement officers; duty to render aid upon danger to life or limb, civil immunity.	In Committee	Helmer
HB289	Electric utilities; small portable solar generation devices.	Incorporated	Anderson
HB325	Fire Programs, Department of; development of mental health awareness training.	In Committee	Sullivan
HB393	Firefighters Cancer Screening Grant Program and Fund; established.	In Committee	Askew
HB394	Fire Programs Fund; increases assessment.	Failed	Askew
HB457	Land development; solar canopies in parking areas, definition.	Incorporated	Krizek
HB585	Va. Retirement System; enhanced retirement benefits for animal control officers and 911 dispatchers.	Failed	Ballard
HB682	Fire Programs Fund; aid to localities, redistribution of funds.	Failed	Zehr
HB735	Agritourism purposes; Bd. of HCD to review regulations for temporary tents.	In Committee	Leftwich
HB1054	Virginia Fire Personnel and Equipment Grant Program; established, report.	Failed	Phillips
HB1269	Virginia Law Officers' Retirement System; extends membership to emergency dispatchers.	Failed	Nivar
HB1314	Civil action for deprivation of rights; liability of persons acting under color of law.	Continued	Maldonado
HB1333	Paid firefighters; hours of work.	In Committee	Feggans
SB80	Virginia Fire Personnel and Equipment Grant Program; established, report.	Continued	Mulchi



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SB87	Local government sporting events and sporting facilities; automated external defibrillators.	In Committee	Stanley
SB98	Emergency management; work group to evaluate existing needs in the Commonwealth, report.	In House	Stanley
SB100	Volunteer emergency responders, protection of employees; civil action.	In Committee	Stanley
SB101	Med. assistance serv.; supplemental payment for ground emerg. medical serv. vehicle transportation.	Continued	Stanley
SB102	School boards; high school courses or dual enrollment programs for certain certifications.	Continued	Stanley
SB111	Trespassing on Emergency vehicles; prohibition, penalty.	In Committee	Craig
SB132	Agritourism purposes; Bd. of HCD to review regulations for temporary tents.	In House	Craig
SB140	Fire Programs, Department of; development of mental health awareness training.	In House	McPike
SB156	Emergency medical services personnel; requirements for personnel without commercial drivers license.	Failed	McDougle
SB197	Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund; loan and grant program, deferment of interest accrual.	In Subcommittee	Williams Graves
SB233	Fire Programs Fund; distribution of fund.	In Subcommittee	Head
SB523	Line of Duty Act; payments to beneficiaries.	In Subcommittee	Deeds
SB635	State of preparedness; feasibility & impact of program to prioritize prevention/mitigation, etc.	In Committee	McDougle
SB775	Insurance; increases fees for vehicles, etc.	Continued	Hackworth