



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

HOUSE OF DELEGATES

RICHMOND

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The Honorable Luke E. Torian, Chairman **Comments on House Bill 30** **February 22, 2026**

Good afternoon. Today we meet to adopt a package of amendments to House Bill 30, the biennial budget for the FY 2026-2028 biennium.

Over the past year, federal actions have created real gaps – gaps in healthcare funding, in workforce programs, in education support, and in the safety nets that families rely on. Virginians should not be collateral damage of decisions made in Washington. This budget backfills those holes, not out of politics, but out of prudence.

The budget before us today reflects a simple but serious responsibility: when forces beyond Virginia’s control create uncertainty or instability, this body must step up to protect our people and our economy.

We do this because a stable Commonwealth depends on continuity—on knowing that healthcare coverage won’t disappear overnight, that students can finish their education, and that workers and families are not left scrambling to absorb sudden costs.

But this budget is not just about filling gaps. At its core, this budget is about affordability – and about whether Virginia is doing everything it can to help families not just survive, but build stable, secure lives. It is

about confronting the affordability crisis that touches nearly every household in Virginia.

Healthcare costs continue to rise faster than wages. Childcare remains out of reach for too many working families. Housing prices and rents strain first-time buyers, seniors, and essential workers alike. College tuition and student debt shape life decisions long before a young Virginian ever steps into the workforce.

Affordability is not an abstract concept. It determines whether someone can take a better job, start a family, or remain in the community they call home.

This budget makes targeted, responsible investments to ease those pressures—by strengthening access to affordable healthcare, supporting housing stability, expanding childcare availability, and keeping higher education within reach for the next generation.

Affordability also means protecting workers. This budget reflects our commitment to fair pay, safe workplaces, and basic dignity on the job – because a strong economy depends on strong workers.

And we do all this while honoring our commitment to fiscal discipline. This is a balanced budget. It is built on conservative revenue assumptions, maintains healthy reserves, and prepares us for continued uncertainty ahead.

That balance matters. Because governing is not about choosing between compassion and responsibility – it is about delivering both.

The work of the Appropriations Committee was guided by a clear principle: government should help make life more affordable, more

stable, and more predictable for the people who do everything right and still feel like they're falling behind.

This budget does not solve every challenge. But it moves us in the right direction. It protects Virginians from sudden shocks. It invests in people. And it reflects the values of a Commonwealth that believes opportunity should be real, not theoretical.

I want to thank the members of the committee and staff for the long hours and serious collaboration that brought us here.

I'm proud of the work this committee has done, and I look forward to moving forward with a budget that reflects our discipline and our commitment to all Virginians.

Thank you.