



February 8, 2021

Dear VMA Members:

We have now passed crossover and are looking toward the end of the Virginia General Assembly “short” session (46 days) on February 27. This [2021 VMA Legislative Crossover Report](#) focuses on 112 priority bills, defensive priority bills, and monitored bills that are still in play. The VMA has monitored and managed 155 bills and budget items of the 1,549 total bills introduced this session.

The House of Delegates broke 402 years of tradition and has convened via virtual hearings and meetings only. The Senate still meets in person but under strict safety conditions at the Virginia Science Museum with no public access. The Virginia General Assembly’s office building is also closed to the public. However, Senator Bill DeSteph (R-Virginia Beach) filed a lawsuit challenging the decision to close the General Assembly’s office building and the court ordered that four conference rooms in an office building adjacent to the Virginia Science Museum be made available for appointments with constituents. Regardless, House and Senate Committee and Subcommittee meetings are notably truncated (usually limiting testimony to 2 minutes) and in some cases allowing no public testimony. Our democratic values of transparency, accessibility, equity, and deliberation have been diminished.

A bright spot in the 2021 General Assembly session is that Delegates were limited to seven (7) bills each and Senators were limited to twelve (12) each. This has finally curbed the proliferation of legislation that reached a record-high of 3,911 bills in the 2020 Regular Session and 488 in the 2020 Special Session. The Governor has already called a 2021 Special Session to extend the constitutional 30 days session to 46 days, but the executive order does not have a concluding date. It is our hope that the General Assembly concludes its work on February 27, but it is also possible that the leadership may extend the session as well. The 2020 Special Session ran from August 18 – November 9, 2020. This is also an election year, all statewide offices and the House of Delegates is up for election, so it is possible that a prolonged special session could be possible.

The new Democratic House and Senate majorities continue to expand upon a political agenda focused on environmental justice; diversity and inclusion; new air, water and waste environmental regulations; renewable energy; bans on hydrocarbon-based fuels, energy, infrastructure, and electric generation; fee and tax increases; expanding cause

of action liabilities against employers; mandatory paid family leave; organized labor expansion; gambling; marijuana legalization; chemical and plastic product bans; banning internal combustion engines for transportation; establishing a public tax scheme to fund rebates for \$55,000 electric vehicles and allow electric utilities to charge all customers for electric vehicle recharging facility infrastructure; and ending the death penalty.

Breaking through this wall of legislation with our priorities has been exceedingly difficult due to the inaccessibility of legislators. Regardless, 70% of the VMA's priority bills have passed and 42% of the VMA's defensive priority bills have failed. We must give credit for these early successes to our priority bill patrons and leaders: Senators Bill DeSteph, Emmett Hanger, Todd Pillion, Dick Saslaw; and Delegates Lashrecse Aird, John Avoli, David Bulova, Kathy Byron, Ken Plum, Luke Torian, Lee Ware; and Speaker Eileen Filler-Corn. We also must recognize the significant contributions of our peer organizations such as the [Coalition for a Strong Virginia Economy](#) (still the largest trade association coalition in Virginia with 34 leading trade associations), the [Coalition for Consumer Choices](#), and the American Chemistry Council.

We will continue to use our new advocacy tools, such as the [VA MFG Economic Impact Portal](#), the [VA MFG Competitiveness Plan](#) and the [VA MFG Competitiveness Index](#), to educate the new leaders of the Virginia General Assembly. We must also ensure that every manufacturer and their employees understand the [Virginia Legislative Competitiveness Scorecard](#) and are motivated to political action.

As *Industry's Advocate*™ since 1922, the VMA has had to shift its political advocacy to a primarily defensive posture, but we will not abandon the vision of making Virginia one of the most competitive states in the U.S. to manufacture world-class products. It is more important than ever to engage employees and supply-chain partners to join us in fighting for the Commonwealth's competitiveness.

Your voice matters, so join us today in letting the Virginia General Assembly know that Manufacturing Makes Virginia!

Sincerely,

Brett A. Vassey

President & CEO



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The advanced technology industries that make up the manufacturing sector are essential to the United States of America and Virginia economies. Due to the global nature of manufacturing, industry is susceptible to the increasing costs of worker training, taxation, energy, and regulation. Virginia's historically pro-business climate is waning, and manufacturers must reinforce the importance of international competitiveness.

The VMA continues to advocate for common sense legislation which supports Virginia's competitive standing. The U.S. and individual states must be vigilant in continually comparing regulations to those of competing partners because of the mobility of the industry. VMA priorities include:

- **Protect Virginia's Right-to-Work**
- **Keep Energy Affordable, Reliable, Diverse, and Secure**
- **Protect Natural Gas (NG) and NG Infrastructure for Industrial Use**
- **Stop Carbon Leakage**
- **Buy American Manufactured PPE and Clean Energy Products**
- **Maintain Regulatory and Environmental Justice Balance**
- **Eliminate the Tax on PPE Products for Business**
- **Close the Industry Skills and Career Planning Gaps**
- **Stop Mandatory Paid Employee Leave & Employer Cause of Action Regulations**
- **Stop Product Bans**

The 2021 Session of the General Assembly convened on January 13th and adjourns February 27th. This year is a 46-day General Assembly session. "**Crossover**" marks the halfway point of the session; this deadline dictates that each chamber must complete work on its own bills, except for the budget, and begin to consider only those bills "crossing over" from the other chamber. That milestone was reached on Friday, February 5th.

The *VMA Legislative Crossover Report* only provides details on those "Priority and Defensive Priority" bills that are still active. However, members should still review all the "Priority and Defensive Priority" bills by going www.vamanufacturers.com to review the "Bill Watch List." It is a political snapshot of the future as Virginia's legislature continues to change. Some of our bedrock public policy principles, such as maintaining regulatory balance and restraining tax authority, are clearly being challenged.

The Virginia Manufacturers Association (VMA) continues to advance its proactive [Virginia MFG Competitiveness Plan](#) in the General Assembly. In total this legislative session, **the VMA monitored and managed 155 bills. Of that total, the VMA has identified 112 as “Priority & Defensive Priority Bills” that still require our attention.** “Priority” bills are those introduced on our behalf, as part of a coalition to which the VMA belongs and/or directly addresses key priorities. “Defensive priority” bills are those bills that require amendment or opposition to preserve the VMA’s legislative competitiveness agenda.

As with any organization, teamwork is critical. The VMA Board of Directors, VMA Committees, VMA Government Affairs Council and key allies make up our team and contribute to our overall success. The VMA is particularly thankful for the Delegates and Senators that are patrons of our legislative proposals as well as several peer organizations, such as the National Federation of Independent Business, Virginia Retail Federation, the American Chemistry Council, the [Coalition for a Strong Virginia Economy](#), the [Coalition for Consumer Choices](#), that have been instrumental in helping to shape our legislative agenda.

For assistance on how to make the most of grass roots advocacy or for more details about VMA’s legislative resources, please contact Kimberly Noonan, VMA Member Services Director, at 804-528-4482 or by email at knoonan@vamanufacturers.com.