

Commonwealth Council on Aging

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES

Monday, June 26, 2025

10:00 – 1:00 PM

LOCATION:

Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services

8004 Franklin Farms Drive

Henrico, VA 23229

Members Present: Andrea Buck, MD, JD, Carla Hesseltine (Ex-Officio), Josh Myers, Ellen Nau, and Roland Winston

Members Absent: Jo-Ann Chase

Guests: Dana Parsons, Martina James (Zoom), Tara Turner (Zoom)

Staff: Charlotte Arbogast, Kiersten Ware, Sara Stowe, and Catherine Harrison (Zoom)

Welcome and Introductions

Erica Wood, Legislative Chair

Chair Andrea Buck opened the meeting at 10:05 a.m. Members were asked to introduce themselves. Staff confirmed that a quorum was present.

Review Proposed Agenda

Andrea Buck, Chair

Proposed Action: Approve Proposed Agenda

Chair Andrea Buck asked if there were any changes or objections to the proposed agenda. Sara Stowe shared that selection and confirmation of the legislative chair for the upcoming year needs to be added to the agenda. The legislative chair selection is for a one-year term per the bylaws. Sara suggested that the agenda item be added following the 2026 Legislative Priorities discussion. Roland Winston made a motion to approve the agenda with the amendment. This was seconded by Josh Myers. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Review April 8, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Sara Stowe, Council Staff

Proposed Action: Adopt Minutes

Sara Stowe presented the April 8, 2025 meeting minutes and asked if there were any edits or changes for the meeting minutes. Roland Winston made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Josh Myers seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment Period

Sara Stowe, Staff

No public comments were received.

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Working Lunch: Discussion on 2026 Policy Recommendations

Proposed Action: Adopt Recommendations to Present to the Council

All Members

A listing of the 54 items were sent to members for consideration in advance of the meeting. Items 55 and 56 were added in an additional handout from the Public Guardianship and Conservator Board. Item 57 was received from VirginiaNavigator the day before the meeting and a separate handout was given to members during the meeting.

Andrea Buck started by sharing her expectations and intentions for selecting legislative items to include a discussion around how many legislative items should be chosen and a mix between legislative and budget items. She shared some broad categories of legislative items for consideration:

1. Promoting independence of older Americans in the home
2. Affordable senior housing
3. Supporting food security, transportation and support for older Americans in the home
4. Ensuring safety for older Americans living at home
5. Caring for caregivers
6. Leveraging public/private partnerships
7. Affordable healthcare and medications

Andrea Buck shared that she will not be providing input on Medicaid-related legislative due to a conflict of interest in working for a Medicaid managed care organization. She planned to abstain from any polling or votes related to Medicaid legislation.

Josh Myers suggested a smaller list of legislative priorities offering that the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Commission (ADRDC) chose 5 priorities this year versus the CCOA's 8-10 priorities. Roland Winston offered that if the goal of this year's legislative priorities is to help elevate priorities submitted by other organizations, it would be beneficial to keep at the 8-10 priorities. Andrea Buck agreed.

Roland Winston suggested the committee members begin by cutting down the list based on an initial round of preferences. Members would go through each item and express their preference for each item and keep only those in which members identify as a preference. When going through the list, Dana Parsons offered that LeadingAge Virginia had not yet identified their legislative priorities for 2026, but did offer support for the importance of funding for the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs).

Andrea Buck expressed concern about not having enough information on a number of the legislative items submitted. Members were asked to consider the items as submitted and if needed, additional information and follow-up can be solicited from the submitters if the item is chosen.

Members reviewed the 57 item with brief discussion and after the initial round of preferences, the committee identified with the following legislative items to consider initially:

| # | Item # | Topic |
|---|--------|---|
| 1 | 1 | Increase Funding for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Through Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) |

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|----|-------|--|
| 2 | 2 | State funds for Virginia Lifespan Respite Voucher Program |
| 3 | 3 | Conduct a Study on the Feasibility of a Multisector Plan on Aging |
| 4 | 5 | Support Nursing Home Inspection and Enforcement Process |
| 5 | 6 | Increase Nursing Home Personal Needs Allowance and/or Create a State-Based Tax Deduction or Credit for Donations of Personal Needs Items to For-Profit Nursing Homes |
| 6 | 7 | Strengthen Nursing Home Transparency, Data, and Oversight |
| 7 | 9 | Provide State General Funds for the Ongoing Operations of the Virginia Memory Project |
| 8 | 11 | Reduce or prevent evictions by increasing the notice grace period in non-payment evictions from 5 to 14 days, and by enacting other tenant safeguards. |
| 9 | 14 | Preserve Medicaid expansion – remove provision for automatic termination of the program if federal matching percentage is reduced. |
| 10 | 18 | Extend the Sunset for the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Commission |
| 11 | 21 | Tax Incentives for Unpaid Family Caregivers |
| 12 | 22 | Increase funding for Adult Services and Adult Protective Services |
| 13 | 23 | Expand the CCC Plus Waiver Program to allow for the pooling of funds |
| 14 | 25 | Create a CAPABLE program in Virginia that provides an interprofessional team to work to increase accessibility in the homes of older adults |
| 15 | 31 | Establish a Prescription Drug Affordability Board |
| 16 | 38 | Increase funding for VDH's Office of Licensure and Certification to strengthen regulatory oversight of nursing homes and effective enforcement. |
| 17 | 16/41 | Increase funding of the statewide Long-Term care Ombudsman Program |
| 18 | 43 | Require assisted living facilities that advertise as providing "memory care" to be certified as such by meeting specific standards for numbers of staff on duty and specialized staff training that focuses on person-centered care for persons with health conditions affecting memory and other neuro-cognitive functions. |
| 19 | 44 | Establish a state-wide free Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) recruitment, training, and certification workforce program for nursing homes, assisted living facilities, home care and veteran care centers that offers opportunity for peer support and mentorship for graduates during the first year of employment. |
| 20 | 49 | Expand presumptive eligibility under Medicaid to better support individuals seeking to transition from facility-based care to home and community-based services. |
| 21 | 51 | Reduce or prevent evictions by increasing the notice grace period in non-payment evictions from 5 to 14 days, and by enacting other tenant safeguards. |
| 22 | 56 | Increase funding for guardianship slots |
| 23 | 57 | Funding for statewide resource database |

Roland Winston suggested that the committee members go through the short list of 23 legislative items and informally poll on which items have the most committee member interest and support.

Members were informally polled to narrow down the items from 23 to 12 items based on which items had the most support. The informal poll identified support for the following eight items:

| # | Item # | Topic |
|---|--------|---|
| 1 | 1 | Increase Funding for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Through Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) |
| 2 | 5 | Strengthen Nursing Home Inspection and Enforcement Process |

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| | | |
|----|----|---|
| 3 | 6 | Increase Nursing Home Personal Needs Allowance and/or Create a State-Based Tax Deduction or Credit for Donation of Personal Needs Items to For-Profit Nursing Homes |
| 4 | 7 | Strengthen Nursing Home Transparency, Data, and Oversight |
| 5 | 9 | Provide State General Fund for the Ongoing Operation of the Virginia Memory Project |
| 6 | 11 | Reduce or prevent evictions by increasing the notice grace period in non-payment evictions from 5 to 14 days, and by enacting other tenant safeguards |
| 7 | 18 | Extend the Sunset for the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Commission |
| 8 | 22 | Increase funding for Adult Services and Adult Protective Services |
| 9 | 31 | Establish a Prescription Drug Affordability Board |
| 10 | 41 | Increase funding of the statewide Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program |
| 11 | 43 | Require assisted living facilities that advertise "memory care" to be certified as such by meeting specific standards for number so staff on duty and specialized staff training that focuses on person-centered care for persons with health conditions affecting memory and other neuro-cognitive functions |
| 12 | 56 | Increase funding for guardianship slots |
| 13 | 57 | Funding for statewide resource database |

There was some further discussion on Item #43 and the background and rationale. After discussion, members opted to table Item #43 due to the uncertainty around its origin and intent.

Members discussed the list of the remaining 11 items. Through discussion and review of the polling, they identified the top 5 items with the most support, which were:

| # | Item # | Topic |
|---|--------|---|
| 1 | 1 | Increase Funding for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Through Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) |
| 2 | 7 | Strengthen Nursing Home Transparency, Data, and Oversight |
| 3 | 31 | Establish a Prescription Drug Affordability Board |
| 4 | 41 | Increase funding of the statewide Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program |
| 5 | 56 | Increase funding for guardianship slots |

Members returned to the discussion about wanting to keep within the 8-10 legislative items and discussed which items were legislative and which items were budget items. In order to narrow down the legislative priorities to 8-10 items, Roland Winston suggested that the members provide their top 3 items from the remaining 6 items (from the 11). The following items received the most support in addition to the initial top 5 from the previous informal poll, which either 3 or 4 committee members supporting the item:

| # | Item # | Topic |
|---|--------|---|
| 6 | 5 | Strengthen Nursing Home Inspection and Enforcement Process |
| 7 | 9 | Provide State General Fund for the Ongoing Operation of the Virginia Memory Project |
| 8 | 18 | Extend the Sunset for the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Commission |
| 9 | 57 | Funding for statewide resource database |

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Josh Myers made a motion to adopt the 9 identified items (listed below). Ellen Nau seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

| # | Item # | Topic |
|---|--------|---|
| 1 | 1 | Increase Funding for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Through Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) |
| 2 | 7 | Strengthen Nursing Home Transparency, Data, and Oversight |
| 3 | 31 | Establish a Prescription Drug Affordability Board |
| 4 | 41 | Increase funding of the statewide Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program |
| 5 | 56 | Increase funding for guardianship slots |
| 6 | 5 | Strengthen Nursing Home Inspection and Enforcement Process |
| 7 | 9 | Provide State General Fund for the Ongoing Operation of the Virginia Memory Project |
| 8 | 18 | Extend the Sunset for the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Commission |
| 9 | 57 | Funding for statewide resource database |

Select/Confirm Legislative Committee Chair

Proposed Action: Approve Committee Chair

All Members

Andrea Buck shared that she will not seek nomination to continue as legislative chair due to conflicts of interest with Medicaid legislation. She expressed her sincere gratitude to the committee and shared that she enjoyed her time as chair.

Sara Stowe shared the excerpt from the bylaws regarding the legislative committee and the duties of the legislative chair and opened the floor for nominations.

Ellen Nau nominated Josh Myers to serve as Chair. Andrea Buck seconded the nomination, which Josh Myers also accepted. There were no other nominations. Upon a vote, Josh Myers was elected Chair unanimously.

Public Comment Period

Sara Stowe, Staff

Andrea Buck asked if anyone had signed up for public comment. Sara Stowe shared that Martina James from Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging (V4A) is signed up. Andrea shared the public comment instructions.

Martina James with V4A signed up for public comment sharing that she wanted to clarify a few items. Martina James shared that V4A has their board meeting scheduled for July 29th and while they do not have their priorities identified yet, they expect to advocate for \$4.35 million in increased AAA funding. Martina James expressed gratitude that CCOA has included the increased AAA funding in this year's legislative priorities. Martina clarified that the AAAs will advocate as one network and not as singular AAAs with multiple requests.

Andrea Buck thanked Martina James for her comment.

Meeting Adjournment Committee Chair

Chair Andrea Buck reminded members that the next full Council meeting will be held on July 15, 2025. Andrea suggested discussing the timing of the annual Legislative Committee meeting going forward at the July Council meeting. Sara Stowe shared that the agenda is fairly tight, and it may be better to discuss it at the September meeting when the 2026 meeting dates will be proposed.

Prior to adjourning, Roland Winston offered his gratitude to Andrea Buck for her work while Legislative Committee Chair. Carla Hesseltine thanked Andrea for her hard work and innovation to the Legislative Committee. Chair Andrea Buck thanked everyone for their kind words and adjourned the meeting at 12:43 p.m.

Meeting Handouts:

1. Proposed Meeting Agenda
2. Draft Minutes from April 8, 2025
3. 2026 Legislative Committee Considerations
4. 2026 Legislative Committee Considerations List Only
5. 2026 Legislative Priorities Tracking List
6. FY26 President's Budget Analysis (June 3, 2025)
7. Dementia Care Coordination vs Navigation
8. Public Guardian Board Handout
9. VirginiaNavigator Legislative Submission

Potential Items Sent to the Members Prior to the Meeting:

ITEMS LEFT FROM THE COUNCIL'S 2025 LEGISLATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Increase Funding for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Through Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)
2. State funds for Virginia Lifespan Respite Voucher Program
3. Conduct a study on the Feasibility of a Multisector Plan on Aging
4. Replicating the RAFT Program in Other Areas of the Commonwealth
5. Support Nursing Home Inspection and Enforcement Process
6. Increase the Personal Needs Allowance and/or Create a State-Based Tax Deduction of Credit for Donations of Personal Needs Items to For-Profit Nursing Homes
7. Strengthen Nursing Home Transparency, Data, and Oversight
8. Expand Dementia Care Management to Underserved Areas of Virginia
9. Provide State General Funds for the Ongoing Operation of the Virginia Memory Project

DRAFT ITEMS FROM THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA AGING NETWORK (NVAN)

10. Enable local governments to require new assisted living residences to set aside units for low-income residents
11. Reduce or prevent evictions by increasing the notice grace period in non-payment evictions from 5 to 14 days, and by enacting other tenant safeguards.
12. Request a study of affordable housing continuum of housing needs to include independent, assisted living and nursing levels of care.
13. Increase funding for core Area Agency on Aging services to support the increasing population of older adults and caregivers.

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14. Preserve Medicaid expansion – remove provision for automatic termination of the program if federal matching percentage is reduced.
15. Establish a state-wide free Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) recruitment, training, and certification workforce program for nursing homes, assisted living facilities, home care and veteran care centers.
16. Fully fund the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program to bring up to state and national standards.

ITEMS FROM THE ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DISORDERS COMMISSION (ADRDC)

17. Deliver a Statewide Program of Dementia Care Specialists at Area Agencies on Aging
18. Extend the Sunset for the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Commission
19. Funding to Support Comprehensive Dementia Training for First Responders
20. State Funds for Virginia Lifespan Respite Voucher Program
21. Tax Incentives for Unpaid Family Caregivers

DRAFT ITEMS FROM VIRGINIA LEAGUE OF SOCIAL SERVICES EXECUTIVES (VLSSE)

22. Increase funding for Adult Services and Adult Protective Services

ITEMS FROM MASTERS OF PUBLIC POLICY STUDENT WORKING WITH DARS, RILEY DOWD:

23. Expand the CCC Plus Waiver Program to allow for the pooling of funds
24. Expand the Assistive Technology Demonstration and Loan Program
25. Create a CAPABLE program in Virginia that provides an interprofessional team to work to increase accessibility in the homes of older adults

DRAFT ITEMS FROM SENIOR SERVICES OF SOUTHEASTERN VIRGINIA (SSSEVA):

26. Support the creation of tax credits for homeowners who build accessory dwelling units (ADUs) for older adults—offering a safe, community-based alternative to institutional care.
27. Urge local jurisdictions to expand access to accessory dwelling units (ADUs) by reducing restrictive zoning and permitting barriers for homeowners who can offer housing to older adults.
28. Allocate dedicated funding for Area Agencies on Aging to transform abandoned schools and other vacant structures into vibrant, tax-generating senior housing
29. Increase government funding for Area Agencies on Aging to deliver lifesaving aid and prevent a growing humanitarian crisis among older adults facing food insecurity.
30. Invest in technology that empowers older adults. Allocate dedicated funding for hands-on training to ensure they can confidently navigate the digital world.

ITEMS FROM AARP VIRGINIA

31. Establish a Prescription Drug Affordability Board
32. Explore cost-saving policies such as bulk purchasing pools for prescription medication
33. Create a paid family and medical leave program to support family caregivers
34. Establish a presumptive eligibility program
35. Nursing Home Reforms to ensure facilities are adequately staffed and provide high-quality care to Virginia's most vulnerable residents.

ITEMS FROM THE STATE LONG TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN (OSLTCO)

36. Increase transparency in nursing home ownership, management, and financing
37. Create a dedicated website that enables the public to have access to clear, comprehensive, and understandable information regarding nursing home ownership, financing, and performance/ quality history

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38. Increase funding for VDH's Office of Licensure and Certification to strengthen regulatory oversight of nursing homes and effective enforcement.
39. Establish a standard to limit the number of nursing facilities/ residents for which one physician can serve as the Medical Director Replicating the RAFT dementia training for facilities and caregivers in other areas of the Commonwealth
40. Establish a requirement and mechanism for inserting competent clinical and administrative expertise into a nursing home that has a persistent history of regulatory non-compliance and poor-quality care
41. Increase funding of the statewide Long-Term care Ombudsman Program
42. Increase Virginia's Auxiliary Grant program to enable participating facilities adequate resource to provide safe, quality care.
43. Require assisted living facilities that advertise as providing "memory care" to be certified as such by meeting specific standards for numbers of staff on duty and specialized staff training that focuses on person-centered care for persons with health conditions affecting memory and other neuro-cognitive functions.
44. Establish a state-wide free Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) recruitment, training, and certification workforce program for nursing homes, assisted living facilities, home care and veteran care centers that offers opportunity for peer support and mentorship for graduates during the first year of employment.
45. Provide funding to replicate the Regional Older Adult Mental Health Support Team ("RAFT") model
46. Increase the resident personal needs allowance under Medicaid for nursing home residents to \$70 a month.
47. Increase funding for core Area Agency on Aging services to support the increasing population of older adults and caregivers.
48. Preserve Medicaid expansion – remove provision for automatic termination of the program if federal matching percentage is reduced.
49. Expand presumptive eligibility under Medicaid to better support individuals seeking to transition from facility-based care to home and community-based services.
50. Enable certain local jurisdictions to negotiate affordable unit set-asides in newly licensed assisted living facilities when there is an application for a special exception, or a proposed change in the special use permit. (HB 2054 in 2025)
51. Reduce or prevent evictions by increasing the notice grace period in non-payment evictions from 5 to 14 days, and by enacting other tenant safeguards.
52. Request a study of affordable housing that examines the availability, affordability, and accessibility of housing relative to the continuum of population needs, including independent, assisted living, nursing home level, and specialized housing for persons dealing with mental health challenges.

DRAFT ITEMS FROM THE VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION FOR HOME CARE AND HOSPICE (VAHC)

53. Improving reimbursement for Medicaid Personal Care

ITEM FROM THE FEDERATION FOR VIRGINIA FOOD BANKS (FVFB)

54. Increase the SNAP minimum benefit amount from \$23 to \$50 per month

ITEM FROM THE PUBLIC GUARDIAN AND CONSERVATOR ADVISORY BOARD

55. Providing funding support for case management/database system for the public guardianship program

56. Increase funding for guardianship slots

ITEM FROM THE VIRGINIANAVIGATOR

57. Increase funding for the statewide resources database

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NO ITEMS WERE FORMALLY SUBMITTED FROM:

- LeadingAge Virginia
- Virginia Poverty Law Center
- disAbility Law Center of Virginia
- Alzheimer's Association (although Josh Myers provided support for items during the meeting)
- Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging (V4A)

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