

Voices 2012 Priority Bills

CHILD WELFARE				
Bill	Patron	Voices' Position	Summary	Status
HB 451	Del. Toscano	support	Adoption; appointment of counsel. Provides that a parent who does not consent to the adoption of the parent's child, but whose consent to the adoption is required, shall be appointed counsel if such parent is determined to be indigent. The bill also provides that the court shall inform the birth parents of their right to counsel prior to the adjudicatory hearing of a petition for adoption. This bill is a recommendation of the Boyd-Graves Conference.	House: Passed unanimously Senate: Passed full Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services unanimously
HB 663	Del. Surovell	support	Child-care subsidies; time limits. Provides that fee child care program subsidies and services made available to families that meet financial and other eligibility criteria established by the Board of Social Services shall not be subject to time limits on the receipt of such subsidies and services.	House: Tabled in Health, Welfare and Institutions (14-Y 7-N)
SB 24	Sen. Stuart	oppose	Welfare and other entitlement fraud; penalties. Requires a 180-day mandatory minimum sentence for misdemeanor entitlement fraud, a one-year mandatory minimum sentence for felony entitlement fraud, a repayment of three times the benefits received, and a lifetime bar on receipt of entitlement. The entitlements covered by the bill are housing assistance programs, medical assistance, food stamps, energy assistance, and any other program designated under regulations of the State Board of Social Services, State Board of Health, or Board of Medical Assistance Services.	Senate: Senate Finance committee recommended passing the bill by until 2013.
SB 84	Sen. Favola	support	Foster care; independent living services. Extends the time frame during which a youth over the age of 18 . Under current law, an individual who was receiving independent living services may request reestablishment of services if under age 21 and if less than 60 days has elapsed from when the individual initially terminated independent living services.	Substance of the bill passed Senate unanimously, but unfortunately the bill stalled for 2012 in House Appropriations due to lack of funding.
SB 156	Sen. Favola	support	Adoption assistance. Increases the age at which adoption assistance for children with special needs terminates from 18 years to 21 years.	Senate: Passed By Indefinitely at the Patron's request in order to convert the bill into a DSS study of the issue.
SB 204	Sen. Barker	support	School placement; children in foster care. Clarifies that the agreement as to where a child placed in foster care will attend school does not need to be made before placing the child in foster care.	Signed by Governor: will go into effect on July 1, 2012.
SB 217	Sen. Barker	support	Public schools; residency of children in kinship care. Allows a child receiving kinship care from a close relative to enroll in the school division where the kinship care provider resides. The bill also allows local school divisions to require one legal parent and the kinship care provider to sign affidavits detailing the kinship care arrangement.	Passed both full Senate and House: awaiting Governor's signature.
SB 299	Sen. Howell	support	Kinship foster care placements. Provides that the Commissioner of Social Services may grant a variance from requirements governing approval of foster homes for children if the	Signed by Governor: will go into effect July 1, 2012.

			placement is a kinship foster care placement, the requirement would impose a hardship on the kinship foster care provider, and the variance will not adversely affect the safety and well-being of the child. The bill also provides that a local board of social services or child-placing agency may approve a kinship foster care provider who has been convicted of a felony related to the possession of drugs other than felony offenses related to possession with the intent to distribute drugs, a misdemeanor conviction for arson, or an equivalent offense in another state, provided 10 years have elapsed since the date of the conviction and the local board or child-placing agency makes a specific finding that the placement would not endanger the safety or well-being of the child.	
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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Bill	Patron	Voices' Position	Summary	Status
HB 143	Del. Englin	support	Preschool programs; private funding. Allows a locality currently providing preschool programs to at least 60 percent of its at-risk four-year-olds to accept private funding, which may have restrictions or conditions attached, to meet its local share in order to apply for a state matching grant to serve additional eligible four-year-olds, as well as at-risk three-year-olds.	House: Reported from House Education full committee, referred to House Appropriations, where recommendation was to lay on the table.
HB 144	Del. Englin	support	Virginia Preschool Initiative Local Grant Program. Creates a grant program to be administered by the Virginia Department of Education to improve training for preschool educators; create, outfit, or expand preschool classrooms; implement the Virginia Quality Rating and Improvement System; ensure the availability of preschool education for the children of veterans; and create innovative early childhood programs for rural communities where access to services is difficult. The grant program shall be funded by the unused moneys allocated by the General Assembly towards the Virginia Preschool Initiative, which requires a local match in order for such funds to be utilized.	House: Reported from full House Education committee 21-1, referred to House Appropriations, where recommendation was to lay on the table.
SB 261	Sen. Ebbin	support	Virginia Preschool Initiative Local Grant Program. Creates a grant program to be administered by the Virginia Department of Education to improve training for preschool educators; create, outfit, or expand preschool classrooms; implement the Virginia Quality Rating and Improvement System; ensure the availability of preschool education for the children of veterans; and create innovative early childhood programs for rural communities where access to services is difficult. The grant program shall be funded by the unused moneys allocated by the General Assembly towards the Virginia Preschool Initiative, which requires a local match in order for such funds to be utilized.	Senate: Passed Full Senate 28-12: referred to House Appropriations, where recommendation was to lay on the table.