

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, July 12, 2017 7:21:21 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, July 12, 2017 7:34:30 PM
Time Spent: 00:13:08
IP Address: 96.89.6.173

Page 2: Contact Information

Q1

Please provide your contact information below.

Name	Christopher Peace
District	97
Address	PO Box 819
City/Town	Mechanicsville
State/Province	VA
ZIP/Postal Code	23111
Email Address	info@chrispeace.com
Phone Number	8047303737

Page 3: Question 1: Early Learning

Q2

Virginia is known to have a 'non-system' of early learning where programs operate under different departments and sets of rules. What would you do to better link programs and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Virginia's early learning programs?

Having worked with Voices as a leading advocate on this issue, I am proud to have initiated the Republican caucus' turnaround on this important issue. While our caucus opposed Gov. Kaine's universal pre-school proposal bi-partisan efforts have been made recently to expand access and guarantee quality standards. As Chair of the Commission on Youth I helped convene a workgroup to assess methods for improving quality in Virginia's early childhood education programs in 2014. From this workgroup we made this recommendation: Request the Board of Education partner with the Virginia Department of Social Services and the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) to convene an interagency, cross-sector workgroup to be facilitated by the VECF. The workgroup shall develop a competency-based professional development framework to inform the requirements and guidelines for pre-service education, in-service education, and training for early learning practitioners in all of Virginia's early learning settings.

Page 4: Question 2: Foster Care

Q3

Most children entering foster care are returned to their families. In most cases, these families do not receive additional support and services from the child welfare system, which can lead to poor health and education outcomes for children. How do you think the Commonwealth can better support children once they are returned to their families?

I have been a leading advocate on the issues of foster care in the General Assembly having patron numerous bills including establishing goals to reduce the number of children in foster care, kinship care reforms and recently the budget amendment to promote Fostering Futures for children aging out of care without permanency. As Chair of the VCOY, I led an examination of the barriers to foster and kinship care placements in Virginia. In 2012, COY studied the restoration of parental rights for parents whose rights to their child/children were previously terminated. This idea later became law. COY also looked at the definition of kinship caregivers in 2012 and made recommendations to improve the diversion process including the development of assessment tools. In 2014, COY did a study on re-homing. These recommendations also became law.

Page 5: Question 3: School to Prison Pipeline

Q4

The US Department of Education data analyzed by the Center for Public Integrity shows that Virginia schools, in a single year, referred students to law enforcement agencies at three times the national rate. Numerous studies show that these school discipline policies increase the chances of these students becoming involved with the adult criminal justice system. If elected, how would you address these issues?

I have supported then Del. McClellan's efforts on this issue as I have worked with her on many related issues affecting both our districts. As a member of the VCOY, we did a study of Truancy and School Dropout Prevention in Virginia in 2008. HB 1794 passed as a result. This bill amended the Code of Virginia to prohibit the use of suspension in all instances of tardiness or attendance. In the second year of this study in 2009, SB 196 passed into law in 2010. This bill amended Section 22.1-258 of the Code of Virginia to give more flexibility to local school divisions by consistently stating that "the school principal, his designee or the attendance officer" is responsible for notifying the parent; making direct contact with the parent; and developing a student's attendance plan.

Page 6: Question 4: Health Insurance

Q5

Virginia's Children's Health Insurance Program (known as FAMIS in Virginia) and Medicaid provide low-income children with health insurance that their families would otherwise be unable to afford. If the federal government cuts payments to the states for Medicaid and/or FAMIS, how would you support the health needs of low-income children?

As a ranking member of the House Appropriations Committee, Sub-committee on Health and Human Services, I have supported many efforts in this vane especially noting the Health Wagon, Virginia Health Care Foundation, Free Clinics and Community Health Centers. Congress must lead here. Regarding re-authorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), If Congress fails to reauthorize CHIP by October 2017, Virginia's allocation of federal CHIP funding will run out in January 2018. Virginia lawmakers would have to appropriate \$52.9 million in additional unanticipated funds in FY2018, a fiscal year that would already be in progress, to comply with federal law and continue the program.

Page 7: Question 5: Opioid Epidemic

Q6

Substance abuse by parents affects both the parents and their children. Brain research shows that positive attachment between a parent and child in the first few years of life is critical to the child's healthy brain development. Substance abuse can significantly impact those early bonds between parents and children. If elected, what policy solutions would you promote to address the needs of the whole family?

We have made tremendous strides to catch up our policy to meet this crisis head on during the course of the past 12 months and during the VDH issued state of emergency. We cant arrest our way out of this problem and we must fight this epidemic through prevention, recovery and accountability. As chair of the VCOY I led an effort to recommended a pilot program for the temporary placements of children for children and families in crisis. This program would be modeled after Safe Families, and is intended to help mothers and fathers out in times of crisis such as loss of a job or drug addiction. COY will hear a report on this pilot program in 2017.

Page 8: Question 6: Cross-Systems

Q7

A child can interact with many systems (schools, health and mental health, courts, etc.) as they grow up. A Virginia Children's Cabinet has been established to facilitate cross-agency collaborations at the highest levels of state government. If elected, how would you facilitate this type of cross-agency collaboration for children?

Cross collaboration can be seen in Virginia's participation in the Three Branch Institute. As a preeminent leader on VCOY I have participated and heard presentations on this subject in 2013 and 2014. Virginia was one of seven states selected to participate in the program. Representatives from all three branches of government worked together and developed a plan to improve the social and emotional well-being of children in foster care.

Accomplishments from three branch include: Using data to improve educational, health, and behavioral health outcomes for foster care youth; Improving appropriate and effective use of psychotropic medications for children in foster care; Enrolling foster care children in a managed care plan; Incorporation of well-being activities into Virginia's foster care guidance automated systems, and federal Five-Year Plan; Analysis of medications prescribed to foster children in Medicaid; and Improved data sharing between child-serving agencies on foster care youth.

Page 9: Question 7: Mental Health

Q8

In 2016, Virginia ranked 49th in the nation for the rate of youth with major depression who did not receive any mental health treatment. There are many barriers to quality mental health treatment for children, including: type of insurance, place of residence, lack of access and stigma. What do you view as the most significant barrier to effective mental health care for children and adolescents in Virginia, and how would you propose addressing this barrier?

I served on the sub-committee following the VT massacre so I have frequently worked on mental health issues. A recurring study is SJR 358 (2003) which directs the Commission on Youth to update biennially its publication, the Collection of Evidence-based Treatment Modalities for Children and Adolescents with Mental Health Treatment Needs. The purpose of the Collection is to identify effective treatment modalities and practices for children, including juvenile offenders, with mental health treatment needs. Moreover, utilization of evidence-based practices in the field of children's mental health may offer the Commonwealth cost savings. This collection has evolved over the years and is accessed frequently on our website. I am proud to have been a part of this effort.

Also, in 2013, as Chair of VCOY we did a study, Assessment of Mental Health Needs of Juvenile Offenders. COY recommended to amend §16.1-278.8 of the Code of Virginia to ensure judges have a completed social history prior to disposition for juveniles who may be committed to DJJ. SB 128 / HB 183 passed as a result.

VCOY also made a recommendation to direct DJJ to create a model social history and guidelines for CSUs to use in assisting the courts in making informed dispositional decisions.

Page 10: Question 8: Education

Q9

The achievement gap between lower income students and their higher income peers and between white students and students of color has been a persistent problem in Virginia that has recently worsened. How would you address the achievement gap in Pre-K to 12 education?

In 2008, as a result of a COY study of Alternative Education Program Options, HB 1945 (Peace) passed. This bill was to provide that to provide that regional alternative education options may also be utilized for students at-risk of a long-term suspension as authorized by the school superintendent. Due process protections regarding notice, hearings, and appeals required for students who are suspended or expelled required when a regional alternative education placement would also be recommended for students deemed at-risk of receiving a long-term suspension.

In 2009, COY supported and the General Assembly passed a resolution (HJ 101 - Peace) to support the update of Virginia's Workplace Readiness Skills (WRS) and test revision. Request that the status of the update to the WRS, and its accompanying assessment instrument, be shared by the Department of Education with Virginia's network of Career and Technical Education (CTE) administrators and school counselors during all upcoming conferences and training. Also, encourage local school divisions to communicate regularly with and invite the participation of the local employer community about workplace readiness initiatives and results from student testing on this and other credentialing tests.