

**Mayors and Chairs of the Counties of Arlington, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax,
Fauquier, Frederick, Loudoun, Prince William, Spotsylvania, Stafford
and Warren, and the Cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church,
Fredericksburg, Manassas, Manassas Park and Winchester**

January 10, 2014

Governor-Elect Terry McAuliffe
Old City Hall, Suite 305
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Re: Restoration of Cost of Competing Adjustment for K-12 Support Staff Positions

Dear Governor-Elect McAuliffe:

As the Mayors and Chairs of Northern Virginia and surrounding localities, we are writing to you about an issue of great importance to our region – funding for the Cost of Competing Adjustment (COCA) for school support positions in the 2015-2016 biennium budget. We respectfully urge you to support full restoration of COCA for K-12 support positions, which according to Department of Education estimates would be \$36,060,650 in FY 15 and \$36,847,202 in FY 16.

The Cost of Competing Adjustment has historically been a factor used in the state K-12 funding formula, recognizing the higher salaries required in certain areas of the Commonwealth with a higher cost of living to attract and retain highly qualified teachers and support staff. COCA was first proposed as a specific factor in Virginia's education funding formula in a 1988 JLARC report to address the salary school divisions must pay in order to compete in a regional labor market, and was reaffirmed as essential to maintain competitiveness in a 2012 JLARC report. The COCA factor simply reflects the reality of running school systems in our region – hiring and retaining employees is simply more expensive in the Northern Virginia area than in other parts of the state.

In fact, the Commonwealth utilizes a broader pay scale for state employees working in Northern Virginia, which includes a potential pay supplement of up to 20-30%, reflecting the increased cost of hiring and retaining high quality employees in our region. According to the ACCRA Cost of Living Index (widely used by the federal government, economists, researchers and corporations to measure relative cost of living), the cost of living in Northern Virginia is 35-66% *higher* than other regions of the Commonwealth.

The FY 15-16 state budget proposed by Governor McDonnell (H.B. 30/S.B. 30) totally eliminates COCA for support positions. We are grateful for the bipartisan efforts of our region's legislative delegation, which has fought successfully in recent legislative sessions to *partially* restore previously proposed cuts, but only \$9.4 million of \$32 million was restored in FY 14. The proposed elimination of COCA is all the more troubling following the 2009 imposition of a

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cap on K-12 support positions, which cut approximately 40 percent of the funding for support positions statewide. Reductions in COCA are shortsighted as the entire Commonwealth benefits from our region maintaining its economic competitiveness. There is no good policy justification for the state backing down from its commitment to ensure that our localities remain competitive for these vital support positions, which include assistant superintendents, instructional professional staff, technical, clerical, attendance, health and technology staff, and operations and maintenance staff. It would be impossible to operate a school system without such staff.

It is essential to note that the localities that receive COCA funding have (based on Fall 2013 enrollment figures) approximately 477,358, or 39%, of the state's K-12 school children. These 18 school divisions are also experiencing significant enrollment growth. The jurisdictions being harmed by the elimination of COCA stand to lose nearly \$73 million over the biennium, while they are also projected to gain over 18,000 school children over that time. Eliminating or reducing a factor that compensates for the higher costs of operating school divisions in our part of the state, at a time when our enrollment continues to grow rapidly, simply does not make sense.

For these reasons, we strongly support full restoration of COCA funding for K-12 support positions in the 2015-2016 biennium budget, and look forward to working with you to strengthen the local-state partnership in ensuring that our public education system is the first class system our citizens deserve.

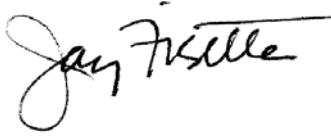
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

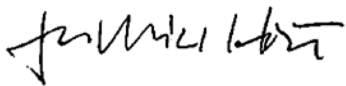
The Mayors and Chairs from Northern Virginia and surrounding localities

[Signature pages to follow]

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jay Fisette". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "J" and a trailing flourish.

Jay Fisette, Arlington County

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Hobert". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "M" and a trailing flourish.

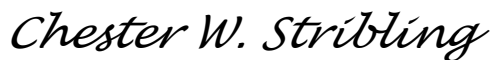
Michael Hobert, Clarke County

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven L. Walker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "S" and a trailing flourish.

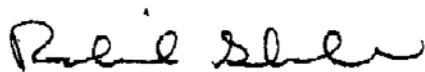
Steven L. Walker, Culpeper County

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Bulova". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "S" and a trailing flourish.

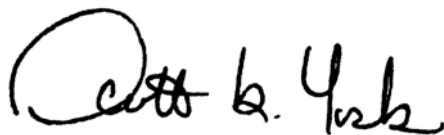
Sharon Bulova, Fairfax County

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chester W. Stribling". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "C" and a trailing flourish.

Chester W. Stribling, Fauquier County

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Shickle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "R" and a trailing flourish.

Richard Shickle, Frederick County

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott K. York". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "S" and a trailing flourish.

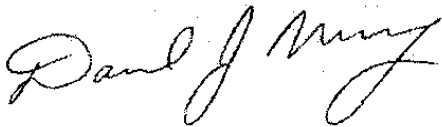
Scott K. York, Loudoun County

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Corey A. Stewart". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'C' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Corey A. Stewart, Prince William County

A handwritten signature in black ink that appears to be "Jack Cavalier". The signature is very stylized, with a large, looped 'J' and a long horizontal stroke.

Jack Cavalier, Stafford County

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel J. Murray, Jr.". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'D' and a long horizontal stroke.

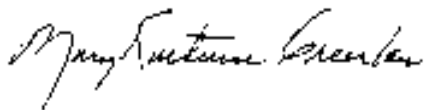
Daniel J. Murray, Jr., Warren County

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Euille". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'W' and a long horizontal stroke.

William Euille, City of Alexandria

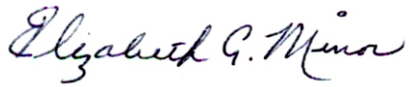
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. David Tarter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'D' and a long horizontal stroke.

P. David Tarter, City of Falls Church

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Katherine Greenlaw". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'M' and a long horizontal stroke.

Mary Katherine Greenlaw, City of Fredericksburg

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A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Minor". The script is cursive and fluid.

Elizabeth A. Minor, City of Winchester

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Scott Silverthorne". The script is cursive and bold.

Scott Silverthorne, City of Fairfax

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Jones". The script is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Frank Jones, City of Manassas Park

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harry J. Parrish, II". The script is cursive and includes the Roman numeral "II".

Harry J. Parrish, II, City of Manassas

HB 30/SB 30 as introduced proposes to eliminate COCA for support position. Full restoration of COCA to pre- FY '13-14 levels would require the following:

	FY2015	FY2016
Arlington	\$1,036,392	\$1,078,218
Clarke	54,534	53,719
Culpeper	290,943	297,186
Fairfax	12,608,974	12,762,787
Fauquier	259,332	263,760
Frederick	429,225	429,442
Loudoun	7,000,328	7,270,560
Prince William	11,500,908	11,707,364
Spotsylvania	810,641	834,037
Stafford	948,238	967,440
Warren	178,873	179,600
Alexandria	624,615	648,967
Falls Church	118,071	124,370
Fredericksburg	72,626	74,287
Winchester	127,606	128,385
Fairfax City	142,975	144,082
Manassas City	1,025,131	1,034,678
Manassas Park	550,000	563,890
Total	\$36,057,920	\$36,843,845