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**VIRGINIA REALTORS® PRAISE PASSAGE OF EVICTION REFORM MEASURES**

*Virginia’s largest housing association aids in the passage of new, balanced eviction legislation*

Richmond, VA – (February 27, 2019) – The Virginia REALTORS® praise the Virginia General Assembly for the passage of several bills that seek to reform the eviction process in Virginia.

In April of 2018, the New York Times reported that five localities in Virginia were among the top in the United States as to the volume of evictions occurring on an annual basis.

Leaders within the Virginia REALTORS® immediately proceeded to research and identify specific items within the current law that might allow predatory landlords to exploit tenants.

“The statistics were alarming, to say the least, and we knew it was our responsibility as the largest housing organization in Virginia to work with members of the General Assembly to begin addressing areas where the law could allow for predatory landlords to take advantage of tenants,” said Beckwith Bolle, 2019 President of the Virginia REALTORS®.

"It was clear from the report that tenants' rights were being violated, so Virginia REALTORS® took immediate action, seeking out the items within the current law that were allowing this to happen,” said Virginia REALTORS® Chief Executive Officer Terrie Suit.

Leaders within the Virginia REALTORS® worked alongside the General Assembly leadership and the Virginia Housing Commission to identify and develop a framework for addressing the scope of the problem and specific initiatives that the General Assembly should consider in the 2019 General Assembly session.

Work began in May, with the appointment of a taskforce of the Virginia Housing Commission, chaired by Senator Mamie Locke (D-Hampton). The taskforce was chaired by Laura Lafayette, the Chief Executive Officer of the Richmond Association of REALTORS®.

Over six months, representatives from the housing industry, local government, and the tenants’ rights community met and deliberated. The process yielded six measures, each winning unanimous support from the Virginia Housing Commission, as well as significant support from the General Assembly.

“Before coming to the Virginia REALTORS® as their CEO, I served in the Virginia House of Delegates and I watched every day the role that REALTORS® play in crafting thoughtful, meaningful policy in Virginia,” said Suit. “This was a tough issue upon which to build consensus. Discussions had to be candid, deliberate but respectful, and I am so grateful to all involved with the Housing Commission and to the General Assembly for tackling this issue head-on and for passing meaningful legislation.”

“We believe these reforms strike the appropriate balance between tenants’ rights and the rights of property owners,” added Suit.

The bills that were recommended by the Virginia Housing Commission and supported by the Virginia REALTORS® include:

* Creating a pilot Eviction Diversion Program in Richmond, Petersburg, Hampton and Danville. **(HB 2655 – Passed the House 99-0, passed the Senate 40-0. SB 1450 – Passed the Senate 40-0, passed the House 99-0.)**
* Reforming the appeal bond process. **(SB 1626 – Passed the Senate 40-0, passed the House 94-5.)**
* Shortening the length of time an order of possession is valid from 1 year to 6 months. **(HB 2007 – Passed the House 98-0, passed the Senate 40-0. SB 1448 – Passed the Senate 40-0, passed the House 99-0.)**
* Allowing landlords to amend an existing unlawful detainer instead of filing multiple ones with the court. **(HB 1922 – Passed the House 99-0, passed the Senate 40-0, and approved by the Governor. SB 1627 – Passed the Senate 40-0, passed the House 99-0, and approved by the Governor.)**
* Extending the time a tenant could exercise his legal right of redemption by paying all late rent and fees up until 2 business days prior to the scheduled eviction date. **(HB 1898 – Passed the House 96-0, passed the Senate 39-0, and approved by the Governor. SB 1445 – Passed the Senate 40-0, passed the House 99-0, and approved by the Governor.)**
* Requiring written leases. (**HB 2054** – **Passed the House 96-0, passed the Senate 39-0, and approved by the Governor. SB 1676 – Passed the Senate 40-0, passed the House 99-0, and approved by the Governor.)**

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**About Virginia REALTORS®**

Virginia REALTORS® (previously known as the Virginia Association of REALTORS®) is the largest professional trade association in Virginia, representing more than 33,000 REALTORS® engaged in the residential and commercial real estate business. Virginia REALTORS® serves as an advocate for homeownership and homeowners and represents the interests of property owners in the Commonwealth of Virginia. For more information, visit [www.virginiarealtors.org](http://www.virginiarealtors.org) or follow Virginia REALTORS® on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/REALTORSVirginia/), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/REALTORS_VA), and [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/31801).

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