



| 2021 VCBG Legislative Crossover Report

Dear Members:

The 2021 Session of the General Assembly convened on January 13th and will adjourn on February 27th. This year is a 46-day General Assembly “short” session. “Crossover” marks the halfway point of the session; this deadline dictates that each chamber must complete work on its own bills, except for the budget, and consider only those bills “crossing over” from the other chamber.

This [2021 VCBG Legislative Crossover Report](#) provides an overview of 13 priority and defensive priority bills. All bills that the VCBG is monitoring and managing are available for review on our website.

VCBG 2021 legislative priorities are:

- Protect Tasting Rooms – No Limits to On-Premise/Off-Premise Sales or Hours of Operation
- Oppose “Play-to-Play”
- Support & Protect Brewery Expansions
- Maintain Rural Character of VA Farm Breweries
- Protect Brewery-to-Brewery Transfers
- Protect Contract Brewing
- Reform ABC Licenses and Processes
- Create Outdoor Refreshment Areas to Increase Craft Beer Sales
- Oppose Excise Tax Increases
- Maintain Regulatory Balance
- Reform Rebuild Virginia Grant Program
- Reform Tied-House Regulations – Allow for Select Employee Sharing Among Tiers
- Grow Independent Craft Beer Industry

The VCBG Leadership Council and Government Affairs Committee were prepared for all bills introduced this session. Our work throughout the year paid dividends. Members also successfully advocated for priority bills during the “VCBG Virtual Day on the Hill.”

The remainder of this session will be focused on priority bills, educating newly elected Delegates about the fundamentals of the craft beer industry, and working with the ABC on operational issues. Your voice matters – contact your Senators and Delegates today.

Cheers!

Brett A. Vassey

President & CEO

2021 VCBG LEGISLATIVE CROSSOVER REPORT OVERVIEW

We have now passed crossover and are looking toward the end of the Virginia General Assembly “short” session (46 days) on February 27. This [2021 VCBG Legislative Crossover Report](#) focuses on 13 priority bills, defensive priority bills, and monitored bills that are still in play. The VCBG has monitored and managed 21 bills and budget items of the 1,549 total bills introduced this session.

The House of Delegates broke 402 years of tradition and has convened via virtual hearings and meetings only. The Senate still meets in person but under strict safety conditions at the Virginia Science Museum with no public access. The Virginia General Assembly’s office building is also closed to the public. However, Senator Bill DeSteph (R-Virginia Beach) filed a lawsuit challenging the decision to close the General Assembly’s office building and the court ordered that four conference rooms in an office building adjacent to the Virginia Science Museum be made available for appointments with constituents. Regardless, House and Senate Committee and Subcommittee meetings are notably truncated (usually limiting testimony to 2 minutes) and in some cases allowing no public testimony. This has doubled the amount of work it takes to access legislators.

A bright spot in the 2021 General Assembly session is that Delegates were limited to seven (7) bills each and Senators were limited to twelve (12) each. This has finally curbed the proliferation of legislation that reached a record-high of 3,911 bills in the 2020 Regular Session and 488 in the 2020 Special Session. The Governor has already called a 2021 Special Session to extend the constitutional 30 days session to 46 days, but the executive order does not have a concluding date. It is our hope that the General Assembly concludes its work on February 27, but it is also possible that the leadership may extend the session as well.

This year 83% of the VCBG’s priority bills have passed and 100% of the VCBG’s defensive priority bills have failed or been amended. We still have work to do on the following bills:

- ABC License & Fee Reform Deferral
- ABC License – Local Control & Criminal Blight
- Outdoor Refreshment Areas
- Rebuild Virginia Reform – Machinery & Tools and Personal Property Tax Expenses
- Tourism Improvement Districts
- VDACS Food and Drink MFG Permit

We must give credit for these early successes to our priority bill patrons and leaders: Senators Bill DeSteph and Siobhan Dunnavant; and Delegates Hala Ayala, Jeff Bourne, Wendy Gooditis, Jay Jones, and William Wampler. We also must recognize the support of VA Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Bettina Ring and Deputy Secretary Brad Copenhaver. Finally, the significant contributions of our peer organizations cannot be overstated to include the Virginia Food Industry Association, Virginia Wineries Association, and Virginia Restaurant Lodging and Travel Association.

We will continue to advocate for our priority bills and educate legislators that Virginia is the #1 independent craft beer state in the Southeast (measured by breweries per 100,000 21+ age individuals) because of the hard work of our members, a strong economy (even under COVID-19 restrictions), an amazing craft beer culture, and a favorable regulatory environment. **Your voice matters and it is more important than ever to engage legislators to support Virginia’s independent craft beer industry, so call your Senator and Delegate today.**