

**Subject:** VGEA eNews - General Assembly Activity 2014

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# VGEA eNEWS

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENTAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

February 5, 2014

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## VGEA Legislative Day



Presidents' Day:  
**Monday, February 17**  
from 8:30 a.m.  
to approximately 2 p.m.

## State Senator Lynwood Lewis Sworn In Senate Power Shift: Democrats Take Control

With a recount confirming his win, now **Senator Lynwood Lewis** (pictured below, D- Accomack) was sworn in last week to fill the seat of former Senator Ralph Northam, creating a 20-20 partisan tie in the Senate. With Lewis seated, Senate Democrats proceeded to use the Republican playbook from two years ago, this time with Democratic Lt. Governor Northam breaking all ties, to retake control of the Senate.

This change resulted in the removal of



This event gets members together to meet with legislators and spend the day learning about the General Assembly and the State Capitol. Don't miss this opportunity to experience Virginia's legislature.

Park free at the public Bank of America lot on the 10th block of Cary Street, meet at the VGEA Office (1011 E. Main St., Richmond) for coffee at 8:30 a.m. We will then walk about two blocks to the General Assembly Building and Capitol and meet at the office for a complimentary lunch, finishing by 2 p.m.

*RSVP by contacting the VGEA by email at [info@vgea.org](mailto:info@vgea.org) or call 877-302-7146 toll-free.*

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## Bills of VGEA Interest

### *VGEA Members Should Watch This Legislation*

Each issue of the VGEA eNews will include a bill list so you can monitor those bills or budget amendments that are of special interest to state employees and retirees. We will follow them from filing through enactment or defeat and you can check the bills by [clicking here](#). You can also check them anytime by visiting Virginia's Legislative Information System at <http://leg1.state.va.us>

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Republicans from numerous committees and their replacement with Democrats, thereby giving the Democrats a majority on most Senate Committees. The chairmanship of most committees also changed hands with the exception of the Finance Committee, where co-chairs were installed.



Democrats also instituted a rule that effectively gives the chairman of the Senate Rules Committee the right to kill any Senate bill that he considers to be substantially altered from its original purpose with amendments from the House. The changes prompted a 5-hour debate on the Senate floor and left many Republicans with a bitter taste.

In a January 28 *Washington Post* article, Senator Richard H. Stuart (R-Stafford) said, "Take us off the committees - that's fine. You took me off of two. But don't injure the voters of Virginia, and that's what you're doing with this amendment."

Democrats have told Republicans, though, that this measure would be used rarely and has been used on rare occasions before. However, given the philosophical divide between the two chambers, use of the new rule this session seems likely.

## It's VGEA Scholarship Time! 2014 Applications Available Now

Once again the Virginia Governmental Employees Association will award **four \$2500 scholarships** for the fall 2014 semester! [Click here](#) for the new application. Complete and return it soon as the **deadline is February 28** and **only the first 100 applications are eligible**. The application is posted on our homepage at [www.vgea.org](http://www.vgea.org) as well and will continue to be posted there for easy access.

### **Members' Grandchildren are Now Eligible!**

The rules have been expanded this year to include VGEA members' grandchildren this year, due to popular request. That means that now in order to be a scholarship recipient, you must either be **a VGEA member, a member's spouse, child, or grandchild**. Full rules and application details are listed on the application, so please simply read that for more details. If you still have questions, send them to [info@vgea.org](mailto:info@vgea.org). Thanks and best of luck to all applicants!

## Legislation Spotlight: [HB 711](#)

**HB 711 Human Resource Management, Department of; Universal Leave System for Classified Employees**

*Delegate Jeffrey L. Campbell, Chief Patron (R-Saltville)*

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[Click here](#) to read the **Summary as introduced.**

The Patron amended the original bill, with input from the VGEA legislative team and DHRM representatives ([Click here](#) to read the full amended version) and the VGEA then supported it with caveats. The Subcommittee passed the Substitute, sending it on to the full House Appropriations Committee.

The bill essentially directs DHRM to develop a Universal Leave Program and bring it back next year for review. It would not go into effect until January 10, 2016. We noted that other statutory changes may be needed to implement it and that it needed employee input. The original bill would have set up a Universal Leave Program for all *new* employees and then allow current employees the *option* of joining the new program or staying in the old one. VGEA liked that, but DHRM did not want to maintain two leave systems.

VGEA testified to the Subcommittee that if DHRM recommends anything that has an **adverse impact on current employees, we would oppose it next year.** The leave system is so complicated that it's hard to oppose honest attempts to fix it.

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