



October 16, 2014

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## Governor Announces State Employee Job Cuts

Despite the strong urging of the VGEA to protect State employee jobs, [Governor Terry McAuliffe announced](#) yesterday detailed cost-cutting plans, which include 565 State employee job cuts, as part of an effort to bridge the additional \$882 million budget shortfall projected for the current biennium. The General Assembly had previously taken actions to close \$1.5 billion of the total \$2.4 billion shortfall.

Most of the job cuts (90 percent) are in the [Department of Corrections](#), where closures include the Powhatan Correctional Center (264), the Cold Springs Work Center in Augusta County (45) and the White Post Diversion Center in Clarke County (34). Also, a new women's prison in Culpeper County, where 163 employees had already been hired, will not open as planned. An additional 200 vacant positions in the Department will be abolished.

Other affected agencies include the Department of Taxation, with five jobs eliminated; the Department of Forestry, with four; the Board of Elections, with three; the

Reminder:

*Tonight!*

### Tidewater Regional Meeting

**Thursday,  
October 16, 6 p.m.**

**Kelly's Tavern**  
ACROSS FROM  
Greenbrier Mall,  
Chesapeake

**RSVP: email [info@vgea.org](mailto:info@vgea.org)**

*A complimentary meal will be  
served, so RSVPs are  
necessary. Thank you!*

**Save the dates:****VGEA**

## Legislative Day:

**Monday  
February 16  
2015**

## VGEA Annual Meeting:

**Saturday  
September 12**

For more details call the  
VGEA Office toll-free:  
877-302-7146  
*necessary. Than*



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### **Membership questions?**

#### **Please contact:**

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Compensation Board and Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, each with two; the Department of General Services, the Department of Health, the New College Institute; and the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, each with one. The Department of State Police will leave 41 trooper positions unfilled. The Governor also said the state will cut back use of outside consultants, contractors and attorneys.

The Governor had previously indicated to the VGEA that he had hoped to minimize State employee job losses as agencies went through the budget cutting process. In yesterday's press conference he noted that these actions affect less than one half of one percent of the state employee workforce, adding that "Making these budget reductions has been the most difficult experience of my term so far."

Other state officials said they hope the DOC will be able to place affected employees in other jobs, but DOC Director Harold W. Clarke told employees in [a letter](#) yesterday that the scope of spending cuts will make that difficult to accomplish. Speaker of the House William J. Howell (R-Stafford) called it "unwelcome news that so many of Virginia's hardworking State employees will be affected." VGEA Communications Director Johnna Cossaboon told the [Richmond Times-Dispatch](#) that "it's definitely something that we didn't want to see. When you see that big of a shortfall, it's not a big surprise, but it is a disappointment."

State employees affected by these actions may be placed in other positions within their agencies, take similar positions in other agencies or face layoff. Those facing layoff will receive severance benefits under the VGEA championed [Workforce Transition Act of 1995 \(WTA\)](#). The Act provides severance payments based on years of service ranging from four weeks of salary up to 36 weeks of salary. These amounts are reduced by the value of any unemployment compensation that might also be received during the time that WTA payments are being received. The WTA also ensures that employee health insurance and life insurance is continued for 12 months after the date of layoff with the state continuing to pay its share of the employee's health

insurance premium.

Also under [the WTA](#), eligible employees may elect to convert their severance payment to additional years of Virginia Retirement System (VRS) or Virginia Law Officers Retirement System (VALORS) retirement service credit, thereby enabling them to retire rather than being laid off. This provision in the WTA allowed thousands of state employees to retire rather face layoff during the Great Recession.

The VGEA will monitor these actions to ensure that every affected employee is treated fairly and receives all of the benefits to which he or she is entitled under state personnel regulations and the WTA. VGEA members may contact the office for assistance by email at [info@vgea.org](mailto:info@vgea.org) or call toll-free 877-302-7146.

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