



VGEA establishes 2019 legislative priorities

Student loan issues, salary corrections for certain workers, and health insurance credits for retirees will top this legislative year's agenda for the Virginia Government Employees Association.

The Virginia General Assembly will convene on Jan. 9 next year. The session is scheduled to be a short one: 30 days, unless it is extended by a two-thirds vote of both houses.

Look for more information about the VGEA's 2019 priorities in upcoming issues of eNews, but for now let your voice be heard on these issues by contacting VGEA legislative team members Rick Fowler at rfowler@vgea.org or Lynwood Butner at lbutner@kv-legal.com.

Student loan incentives



Like any other business, the Commonwealth is competing for talent among young adults. And, as we know, one of the top issues for Millennial's is student loan debt.

Your legislative team is working with Virginia's senators and delegates to find ways to help alleviate that crushing financial burden. On the table for discussion are programs to provide incentives from low-interest loans to remission.

Your legislative team will continue supporting and advocating for student loan assistance programs.

Salary corrections for existing employees

In 2017, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission

directed its staff to study the total compensation package provided to Virginia state employees, including cash compensation and benefits.

The study found that salaries lag behind other employers on average of 91 percent, which places the wages at the bottom of what is considered a competitive range. Also, the competitiveness of state compensation varies widely across job roles. For about 25 percent of analyzed job roles, compensation is not competitive.

Specifically, jobs for administrative and office specialists, program administration managers and three health and safety inspector positions were identified lacking competitive compensation. The study found that it is difficult to recruit and retain personnel for these jobs. Our team will work to help bring those employees' salary and benefits on par with those in the private sector.

Increase the health insurance credit for qualified retirees



The health insurance credit provides a reimbursement to assist with the cost of health insurance premiums for qualified retirees of the Virginia Retirement System.

The credit is set by the General Assembly for each year of service and is added to monthly retirement benefits. The VGEA will work with legislators to enhance that benefit.

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