

ADDRESS OF

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TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9, 1985



Senate Document No. 1

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
1985**

GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS ON THE STATE OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
JANUARY 9, 1984

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, members of the General Assembly, my fellow Virginians. Last year in my report on the state of our Commonwealth, I spoke to you of calculated hope. Tonight, based on our experience during the past year, and on renewed evidence of the resilience in both our people and our institutions, I look to our future with genuine optimism. We have recovered from a recession, we have reinvested in tomorrow, and I believe Virginia is ready, once again, to make history.

But before we review our accomplishments and ponder our future, I'd like to talk pointedly about our number one problem: prisons. I accept full responsibility for all that has happened. As Governor, I am responsible for the entire executive branch of state government, and that includes the Department of Corrections. I also accept responsibility for making whatever changes are necessary.

CORRECTIONS

When we gathered in this chamber one year ago, none of us could have predicted the crisis we would face in corrections. The escape of six death row inmates from Mecklenburg on May 31st riveted our attention on a function of government that very few notice except in times of crisis.

We're extremely fortunate that the escapees were recaptured without incident, due to some first rate law enforcement work, by state police, sheriffs, FBI agents, corrections officers, and others. And, in spite of our difficulties, Virginia's corrections officers have been instrumental in reducing the escape rate to less than 20 percent of what it was ten years ago.

We're fortunate too that our other crises have been resolved without loss of life. Other states have been less fortunate: innocent people have been killed, inmate violence is pervasive, and in 11 southern states, conditions have deteriorated to the point that the federal courts have stepped in to run the entire state prison system.

Clearly, in Virginia, our corrections problems didn't begin the night those six inmates fled from Mecklenburg, a prison many experts regarded as escape-proof. But the escape did force all of us to begin asking hard, uncomfortable questions about our entire corrections system.

Based on extensive investigations by our state police, independent evaluations by nationally recognized experts, and a thorough analysis from a bi-partisan panel of the State Corrections Board, five facts are now clear.

First, basic procedures simply weren't being followed. In too many instances, inmates weren't counted, doors weren't locked, and prisoners had unsupervised access to tools.

Second, we couldn't recruit and retain enough qualified guards under the existing classification and pay scales.

Third, we weren't using many of our security personnel effectively.

Fourth, even our newest prisons had design flaws and were equipped with outdated hardware.

Fifth, and most important, existing management problems were exacerbated by the trauma of Mecklenburg, and the system became virtually shell-shocked.

Given these problems, let me tell you what we've done, and what we're going to do. Already the Department has:

- installed closed-circuit TV, metal detectors, and other state-of-the-art security devices;
- purchased fluoroscopes to x-ray for contraband;
- ended the decades-old practice of using maximum security prisoners on projects outside the prisons;
- tightened perimeter security and added additional razor wire at our prisons;
- hired a new Inspector General and a Security Analyst, to conduct unannounced visits and test security procedures;
- and purchased additional riot gear, surveillance mirrors, radios, and community escape alarms.

These changes are already in place. We are now completing the installation of an electronic perimeter surveillance system at one institution, and analyzing the placement of such systems at others -- and, we're purchasing body alarm systems for key security personnel.

All of this has been done, and additional equipment is being ordered from previously budgeted funds or with expenditures I authorized from the Economic Contingency Fund.

Overall, our corrections package totals just over \$9.2 million and includes four additional elements: raising salaries for correctional officers; intensifying training for guards; upgrading treatment for mentally ill inmates; and providing planning money for a new maximum security prison to house the increasing percentage of hardened criminals now in our system.

I'm also prepared to support legislation to increase the penalty for any inmate who escapes.

These changes are being carried out by the new head of the Department of Corrections, Allyn Sielaff. He's tough, he's fair, and he's managed prison systems in 3 other states. He's going to have to make many more difficult and controversial decisions in the months ahead. He has my full support; and he's going to need yours, too.

The new Director and I believe in the same basic rules: violence by the inmates will not be tolerated, and brutality by the guards is not acceptable. But we will use force when force is necessary. Our prisons are neither torture chambers nor country clubs.

In this period of frustration, when all of us have had our nerves rubbed raw, we're bound to hear a lot of lock-em-up-and-throw-away-the-key rhetoric. And, admittedly, that has a certain appeal. I can talk as tough as anyone, but the fact remains that when all the costs are totalled--construction, food, and security--we pay about \$20,000 per year, per inmate for corrections--a price tag that often seems to punish the taxpayer more than the inmate.

Our budget puts money where it counts: in people and protection. But there are no guarantees.

I'd like to be able to promise you that these changes will solve all of our problems. They won't.

I'd like to be able to promise you that there will be no more escapes. Obviously, I can't.

I'd like to be able to promise you that we have all the answers in corrections. We don't.

Our problems are complex, and all of us share an obligation to work constructively to solve them. Let me tell you, after all the time and energy we've expended on Corrections, no one likes to have to inform me that "we've got another problem." But the people expect us to take the heat and elected us to make the hard decisions. I can't promise you a future without setbacks, but I can promise you our best effort, and I am confident that we are on the right course.

BUDGET

Now let's turn to the budget. We've discussed how to pay for society's failures; our budget also invests in Virginia's successes.

The amendments that I will submit to you tomorrow will fund unprecedented quality in education, promote vigorous economic

growth, protect our fragile environment, and extend a helping hand to those who truly need it.

And once again we don't raise taxes. Virginia is a low tax state and we're proud of it. Preserving our future tax capacity provides essential protection against the federal government's failure to put its financial house in order. A federal deficit exceeding \$200 billion annually is unacceptable to you, it's unacceptable to me, and it's unacceptable to the people of Virginia.

We have always built our budget on the bedrock of fiscal responsibility, and this year is no exception. We've generated a healthy surplus, we've accumulated additional revenues, and we've squeezed over \$100 million more from current state spending. This gives us over \$238 million to be redirected to our top priorities in 1985.

EDUCATION

As you know, my highest priority remains the education of our young people. But better education requires good teachers. And keeping good teachers requires higher salaries.

We still have a long way to go, but we can take great pride in the fact that no state has made greater progress in raising teacher salaries, during the last three years than we have. The U.S. Secretary of Education reported recently that Virginia's national ranking had jumped from 42nd to 31st in teacher salaries in the first two years -- and we've jumped again substantially since then.

But make no mistake about it, we've only just begun. The investment I'm about to announce, coupled with the \$41 million in additional revenues to localities from state sales taxes, should allow localities to fully fund their share of all teacher salary increases. Together I have every confidence that we'll reach or exceed our goal--the national median salary for teachers during this biennium.

Tonight I'm proposing a still greater investment in public education. We will pump into the Standards of Quality another \$53 million, which amounts to just over \$100 for every public school student in this state -- an unprecedented increase.

And next year we're going to do even more. Assuming our current revenue projections hold, we will start with the \$50 million moral commitment of our revenue reserve as a major down payment on full funding of the Standards of Quality. I intend next year to submit a budget that -- for the first time ever -- pays 100 percent of the state's obligation to our public schools.

Last year, we established five magnet schools which will bring together the most promising students in math, science, and

the arts. That idea has worked so well, that one school already has twice as many applicants as it can accommodate. I'm recommending that we commit an additional \$1 million to continue this success story.

We're concerned, too, about our most vulnerable students. 17,000 students drop out of high school each year, and lengthen the unemployment lines, swell our welfare rolls, and crowd our prisons. The budget includes a pilot program in the Roanoke Valley to help keep our students in school. Another program already proving its worth is our Jobs for Virginia's Graduates program. It's currently placing 90 percent of its students in gainful employment. In addition, I am also proposing the creation of a second Governor's Educational Innovation Center, like the one in Varina, but in an inner-city elementary school.

In higher education, as you know, the number of college-age students continues to shrink, and this trend will continue well into the 1990's. This decline allows us to make new commitments to quality, because we don't have to pay for students who don't enroll.

Our budget also includes more than \$9 million for upgraded instructional equipment, improvements at our historically black institutions, and -- perhaps the most timely -- special centers for advanced work in physics, public affairs, international trade, and liberal arts.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In education we've continued our momentum; in economic development, Virginia's on a roll.

- ° more of us are working than ever before;
- ° more new businesses were begun last year than at any time in the past decade;
- ° Virginia fostered more small businesses than 49 other states; and
- ° the state increased its purchases from minority firms by 400 percent and Virginia's agricultural exports hit an all-time high.

In fact, 1984 was a banner year, in many areas.

- ° Our National Guard jumped from 35th to 2nd in Department of Defense rankings;
- ° Virginia's athletes won more medals in the Summer Olympics than most foreign countries;

° For the first time ever, the role of women in Virginia's history was formally recognized; and

° And we sent two teams to post-season bowl games, and on the very last day of the year, the Virginia Cavaliers won the Peach Bowl!

Nowhere is our renewed vigor more evident than at our ports in Hampton Roads. In 1984 alone:

° 60,000 new containers - worth \$72 million - came through the ports, and a single contract, just negotiated, will bring 25,000 more.

° Nissan Corporation moved its Mid-Atlantic port-of-entry to Hampton Roads, bringing in 50,000 new cars each year. And there are numerous other examples.

But we can do still more. With a \$9.5 million purchase of new cranes and increased container capacity, we'll generate \$59 million in new business in just one year.

Dulles Airport is also about to take off. At this international gateway, the Center for Innovative Technology is already paying significant dividends. A nationally known businessman is at the helm, a worldwide design competition is underway, and more than \$1 million in grants have been secured for our state universities. To promote further growth, I'm proposing that we advance \$4 million to prepare final plans for a midfield terminal, that promises to bring more flights, jobs, and business to Dulles.

Enhancement of our ports -- one air, and one sea -- links us more closely to the world marketplace where 1/3rd of Virginia's business will be in the year 2000.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Yet as we ponder a world united by commerce, we cannot forget a world united by compassion. No one who has seen the stark accounts from Africa can fail to be moved by the misery etched in the haunted eyes of Ethiopia's starving children.

But human suffering exists at home as well. Federal cutbacks have compelled states with limited revenues to stretch a new safety net. Since one measure of any society's worth is how well its people take care of their own, I am recommending an additional expenditure of more than \$10 million for human services:

- ° to increase Medicaid, including pre-natal care;
- ° to increase Aid for Dependent Children;

- ° to reduce violence in the home;
- ° to care for the elderly;
- ° to relieve the most needy; and
- ° to help the missing, abducted, or abused children.

We're also measured by our ability to care for the mentally ill. And I'm pleased to be able to tell you that we've had a clear turnaround in our management direction at the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, promising better service for our least fortunate.

We have one other item of unfinished business, and tonight we make good on a commitment to our state employees. Because government is only as good as the people who work for it, and because current surveys indicate a 7.6 percent pay gap between our employees and those in the private sector, I am proposing a two-part pay package to close that gap.

First, all employees will get an across-the-board six percent salary increase. Second, the merit raises will be reinstated, to convert to a full pay-for-performance program in 1986. Virginia will pay its employees more, but it also will expect more.

In addition to increased pay, I'm proposing some much needed changes in the grievance procedure to improve accountability and productivity.

Finally, we need to provide a real incentive for employees to help save the taxpayers' money. Many state employees have already been instrumental in helping us eliminate more than 7,000 regulations, terminate unnecessary programs, and trim state spending. I'm convinced, however, that we can find even greater savings, and that our employees can do it. With that in mind, I'm proposing an incentive program to make cash awards up to \$5,000 or extra vacation time for employees whose suggestions identify and document savings for the state.

OTHER ISSUES

You have a number of other important issues on your agenda. And I want you to know where I stand on them.

On uranium mining

For two years, I have asked you to extend the moratorium on uranium mining because we didn't have enough technical facts to proceed responsibly. Although we recognize that we're dealing with a very hazardous material, I believe all reasonable and prudent safeguards to protect our environment have now been addressed. While numerous factors will ultimately determine its

economic feasibility, mining remains a legitimate business, and I'm now prepared to sign environmentally safe legislation to permit it.

On the drinking age

During the past three years, we've attacked the menace of drunk driving in many ways, including a compromise to raise the drinking age for beer to 19. While I still don't like to withhold from so many a privilege abused by only a few, I continue to support raising the drinking age to 21 because the statistics on highway death remain compelling. Like most of you, I object strenuously to the federal government's coercive intrusion into a matter that clearly ought to be left to the states. I object even more that the federal government doesn't require its own military bases to follow suit. But the fact remains that federal law now compels us to raise the drinking age to 21, across the board, or Virginia will lose important interstate highway funds. Accordingly, I ask you to put this issue behind us and pass legislation this year which will provide for a phased increase over a two year period.

On the rights of the disabled

Carryover legislation to protect the rights of three-quarters of a million disabled Virginians has been fully studied. Legitimate concerns have been aired -- and addressed. House Bill 817 is a good one, and I ask you to pass it this session.

On coal slurry

This question, too, has been before you in the past, and you know my position on it. Pass an environmentally safe bill, and I'll sign it. Then let the free enterprise system determine its ultimate fate.

On interstate banking

As far as I'm concerned, the marketplace of the future includes reciprocal regional banking. After talking with business and government leaders across the South, I'm convinced that now is the time for Virginia to make the move and I urge you to pass it.

On voter registration

More people voted last year than ever before. We've made real progress in removing impediments to voter registration, and I applaud those registrars who went the extra mile, but we can do still more. The Task Force on Voter Registration made many recommendations, and I support action this Session to allow government employees to serve as volunteer registrars, to make it

easier for voters to remain on the rolls, and to authorize more satellite registration sites.

On highway funding formulas

When it comes to dividing up money for highways, I realize there are no statesmen. But our current distribution formula is outdated and inequitable, and it's time to change it. When a compromise is reached, I'll sign it.

On the Chesapeake Bay

Last year, we invested over \$13 million to begin the awesome task of rescuing the Chesapeake Bay, and cooperative efforts by Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and the federal government are finally starting to pay off. To continue this momentum, I'm proposing that you appropriate an additional \$3.5 million this year to upgrade sewage treatment facilities, and to initiate the expensive but critical program to remove the phosphorous that is literally choking the Bay. In addition, I'm directing the State Water Control Board to prepare major legislation for 1986 so they can better manage both the quality and quantity of Virginia's water resources throughout the state.

VIRGINIA'S FUTURE

Our challenge tonight is to turn toward tomorrow -- to mark clearly our own path into the 21st Century. We owe the Virginia that will be in the year 2000 a government that serves its people, schools that capture the imagination of our young, businesses that foster innovation, and an environment that nurtures life.

Such a compelling picture of prosperity will become our legacy only if we address now the hard issues tomorrow will bring.

Working tirelessly for over two years, our Commission on Virginia's Future, which included more than 30 of Virginia's most respected citizens, and led by Dean William Spong, has recently etched for us the outlines of the great movement of Virginia toward the next century. The Commission found that by the year 2000:

- There will be a million more of us;
- Most of us will live in an urban crescent from Northern Virginia to Virginia Beach;
- More of us will leave the factories and the farms;
- Twice as many of us will be 65 or older;

° Significantly more of us will be black, Asian, and Hispanic; and

° Women will head more of the households and hold more of the jobs.

It is not easy to predict or to plan for these changes. Our preparation must be dictated not only by the facts and figures, but also by our vision for Virginia. Virginia's new citizens will make differing and greater demands on our institutions and these new demands amount to mandates for action. We cannot do everything at once but our job is to begin--wisely and yet aggressively.

The report offers fifty specific recommendations. Some are represented in legislation you will consider this Session; some form the basis of the 1986-88 budget that is already being prepared; and still others require careful consideration over the course of the next decade.

As parents, Lynda and I can envision the future that we want our daughters to inherit. Those same aspirations are shared by men and women across our Commonwealth. Our task -- yours and mine -- is to realize this vision of Virginia within our lifetimes.

CONCLUSION

One year ago, in this chamber, I observed that the opportunity handed to us by history is unique in this century: the chance to emerge from the limitations of our own time. The events of the intervening year have only strengthened that conviction: we have weathered our crises; we continue to make progress; and we gain in stature.

In the logic of our own history lies our most powerful mandate. For three years, we have labored to honor the summons to greatness that is Virginia's legacy. We have sought to gauge wisely what we have endeavored to do, by taking from the past that which enlarges the present, and by applying from the present that which will enrich the future.

The process is unceasing, the commitment to it unremitting, among those who believe, as we do, that in the conjunction of human creativity and free government each generation transcends its own experience and approaches greatness.

Those who will eventually look back to judge us must know that we have faced the hard issues; and that we have recognized the opportunities given to us. So that in such judgments, a century hence we are not found lacking, we must now resolve to act with a sense of urgency to leave the Commonwealth better, richer, stronger, and more secure than we found it. Let us move

on together, finish our work, and honor by example the great legacy of this Assembly.

Thank you and good night.