

ADDRESS OF

**CHARLES S. ROBB
GOVERNOR**

**THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 1986**



Senate Document No. 1

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
1986**

Governor Charles S. Robb, Farewell Address to Commonwealth,
January 8, 1986

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, members of the General Assembly, distinguished guests and friends, my fellow Virginians. I come before you tonight to present my final report on the condition of our Commonwealth. Two years ago, on a similar occasion, I said that the hand of history extends to us what to others it has not -- the chance to emerge from the limitations of our own time. Three days hence, when we inaugurate the next Governor, Lt. Governor, and Attorney General, that is exactly what we will do. As Jerry Baliles, Doug Wilder, and Mary Sue Terry accept their charge, barriers three centuries old will be struck down by the power of a simple oath. At that moment, we will cross a line from which there will be no return; Virginia will regain her rightful heritage and the responsibility for national leadership.

Not by virtue of politics, or color, or gender are we proud, but because this state, which conceived a nation, authored its constitution, and defined its principles of freedom, once again demands the very best. Virginians again have an expectation for excellence.

There is a new spirit across the Commonwealth. You can feel it everywhere. I am very much indebted to those of you in this Chamber, because working together we have helped make our schools first in the South, and we've moved further and faster than any state in the nation. We've put a billion dollars of new money into public education -- and no state can match our progress in raising teacher salaries. We've toughened the standards in our schools, and our students have responded. For the first time ever, their test results, in every category, surpass the national average.

Virginia is the only state with two of its flagship universities listed in the top ten "public ivies" in the nation, and several other state institutions are receiving national acclaim. Our Center for Innovative Technology has begun building the bridge between scientific research and Virginia industry, solving the mysteries of our most deadly diseases and inventing the next generation of industrial robots.

But the spirit of excellence reaches far beyond education. You can see it in the steady improvement in our environment -- our rivers and streams, our air, our scenic beauty, and perhaps our greatest natural resource, the Chesapeake Bay. You can also see it in the economic vigor across our state. The Port of Hampton Roads is now the fastest growing in the United States. More people are at work in the Commonwealth than at any time in our history, and they enjoy the highest per capita income in the entire Southeast. Our cities have undergone a renaissance; once empty streets and abandoned buildings resound with people and possibilities. And Virginia is now a frontier for the international exploration of the atom; scientists working on the

nuclear accelerator in Newport News have, in recent months, taken a quantum leap forward in defining the very essence of matter.

With the addition of two magnificent collections and a new wing, the Virginia Museum is now a world-class institution, and the Arts and Virginia are once again synonymous. Virginia farms now produce wine served in the finest restaurants, transforming a cottage industry to the point that Virginia is now the third largest wine producer in the nation. And finally, I take particular pride in the accomplishments of our National Guard. Four years ago, it ranked 50th in the country. Two years ago, it had already jumped to Number Two -- and for the last two years, our Guard has ranked Number One in the entire nation.

You hear it everywhere. People feel good about Virginia, and so do I.

My final act as Governor will be to deliver a budget which makes an historic commitment to quality in education, promotes vigorous economic growth, enhances our environment, and helps those Virginians who truly need it.

Four years ago, I said that education is the bedrock of all that we do. And I still believe it. There is simply nothing more important than the education of our children. As a parent and as Governor, I take personal pride in the progress our schools have made. We have effectively met the goal we established four years ago: moving from the bottom ten to the national median in teacher salaries -- the first step toward true excellence in education. And it's beginning to show results in the classroom. Our 4th, 8th and 11th graders scored above the national average in every category on the tests given annually to students in these grades across the country. For the first time ever, our high school students scored above the national average on their SAT's. And, in a regional assessment of leading education states in the South, Virginia was the only one to score significantly above the national average.

But the best is yet to come. To prepare for our next major advance, state government has completed an exhaustive study of the complex issues surrounding the full funding of the Standards of Quality. And while I accept the new methodology, I believe that even more money than the new study would require is necessary to maintain our steady momentum toward true educational excellence in our public schools. Accordingly, when compared with recent estimates, our budget allocates \$376 million specifically to the Standards of Quality, and \$670 million above the current biennium.

But dollars alone don't begin to tell the story. Full funding of the Standards of Quality means we can require that teachers be offered even better salaries. We can offer students smaller classes. We can buy superior textbooks, and more advanced computers. We can expand our programs for the gifted

and talented, and offer foreign language classes at the elementary level. We can also reinvigorate our teachers with programs of professional development which will inspire them to remain in the critical profession of teaching.

Why this enormous commitment? Because Virginia simply must be able to compete in the global marketplace of the twenty-first century. Twice before, America has fallen behind in education. The first time, the Soviets launched Sputnik. The second time, the Japanese perfected the semiconductor. Each time, our colleges and universities have responded.

Our response in the coming biennium is a package that includes faculty salary increases, state-of-the-art equipment and computers, and new construction, totalling \$221 million. The salary increases, if continued next year, will make Virginia's professors the best paid in the Mid-Atlantic region. And we'll do something more. We'll give our public colleges and universities much greater managerial autonomy in order to permit them to better control their own destinies.

As we recharge our schools and universities, we must also retool our economy. As America looks more and more to worldwide markets, Virginia is positioned, literally, at the very gateway. Last year was far and away our best year ever for the ports. The seven new international shipping lines that began calling at Hampton Roads helped us increase our tonnage by more than all of the rest of the ports on the East Coast combined. And we begin 1986 with yet an additional breakthrough: next week still another worldwide container line will begin calling at Newport News, strengthening even further Virginia's ties to major capitals and commercial centers in Europe, the Middle East, the Far East and South America.

Our success hasn't been limited to ocean carriers either. Last year, three major airlines established hubs at Dulles, and a fourth will be added this spring, making Dulles the fastest growing airport in America.

Our economic success has also manifested itself in other ways as well. More corporations and associations established headquarters and offices in Virginia last year than at any time in our history. We have become an acknowledged leader in encouraging entrepreneurs and supporting small business development, and two of our minority firms now rank in the top ten in the nation. We've also entered the next generation of energy independence. By perfecting a commercial mixture of coal and water, two Virginia corporations have created a fuel for the future.

Why are we so proud of these accomplishments? Because they mean jobs for Virginians. Our budget puts more money into the ports, to give us a chance to become the dominant load center for the East Coast. It also builds on our crowning economic

development success of 1985 -- the Canon copier plant -- by expanding our ties to the Far East with a new trade office in Hong Kong.

Of course, the challenge is not only to create new jobs, but to train workers who can fill them, and, to meet this critical need, we're proposing to expand the industrial training programs in our Community Colleges. Our budget also protects workers by increasing our mine safety program, which last year produced the best record in our history, at the same time we mined more coal than ever before.

The final part of our package will continue to sell Virginia's story, using advertising to let the nation know that Virginia really Is Doing Some of America's Most Exciting Work.

Of course, the lifeline of all commerce is transportation, and I applaud our Governor-elect for the emphasis he's placing on this issue. We met the challenge in highway transportation four years ago, and it's time to do it again. The efforts already underway on this matter are right on target, and I look for even more dramatic action in the future.

The budget underwrites a growing commitment to another important challenge which will be a vital part of our legacy -- the effort to save the Chesapeake Bay. The early results are substantial: we've cleaned up more than 2,000 acres of oyster beds, to begin enlarging the bounty of this world-renowned delicacy. To go further, we propose to spend \$40 million more to prevent sludge, silt and toxins from fouling the Bay. This includes \$20 million as seed money, which, when combined with federal funds will keep us on the larger and even more critical course of enabling Virginia's localities to meet the \$2 billion we're going to need to deal effectively with local waste water treatment in the years ahead.

And the waters of the Bay are not the only gift of nature we seek to preserve and purify. We also recommend funding research to pinpoint the sources of pollution that have fouled the air, and raised the acidity of our rivers and lakes to ten times their normal levels.

But the most serious threats to our society are not all environmental. Our responsibility is to protect society from those who violate our laws. One year ago I identified Corrections as our Number One problem. I'm now pleased to report to you that we've turned the corner. Not only did we have the lowest escape rate in our history last year, but prisons, while always a challenge in every state, are now the strongest they've ever been in Virginia. We will spend \$36 million for renovation and prison construction on existing sites, to provide the additional cells necessary to incarcerate the growing number of hardened criminals in our system. We will also put more state troopers on the road, and help track down more criminals on the

run with an automated fingerprint system, the same one that helped to capture the Night Stalker and end the terror in Southern California. And finally for Richmond, this budget puts us squarely on course to close and dismantle the inefficient and outdated State Penitentiary by 1990.

It is our responsibility as a people not only to protect ourselves from those who would harm us, but also to provide for those who are genuinely unable to care for themselves. Our budget builds a 200-bed mental health facility in Marion, ending a six-year impasse, and its \$13 million cost will be fully recovered in just six years because of the reduced operating expenses.

Our budget also reaches out to those who might never have a chance. Although we're making progress, the unfortunate fact remains that an infant born today, in some sections of our state, has a poorer chance of survival than one born in Singapore. This budget continues and expands programs and services that offer the hope of making real progress in the field of infant mortality.

Yet while our budget reaches out to those with special needs, it also keeps faith with those who work for state government, by giving them a pay increase, which will maintain our comparability with the private sector. As we have trimmed the work force by over 2,200 employees, mostly through natural attrition, our remaining employees have picked up the slack, and made Virginia government even more efficient -- and they deserve our thanks.

There's one other important thing about this budget: it is balanced. And therein lies a message for America: budgets are balanced by making the tough choices. You and I have had to make the tough choices every year, and it's time the President and the Congress started making them too -- not in the 1990's. \$200 billion federal deficits are a national disgrace. If defense spending has to be reduced, then reduce it. If entitlements have to be curbed, then curb them. If revenues have to be raised, then raise them. The bottom line is that America will never fulfill its destiny until it puts its financial house in order -- and the time to act is long overdue.

Lynda and I, and our daughters, have genuinely enjoyed and been forever enriched by the experience we've shared, and, as we prepare to depart, we want to express our gratitude to so many people to whom we're indebted in ways that we can never adequately convey. I'm especially grateful to those closest to me -- the Cabinet secretaries, so many dedicated agency heads, and my personal staff on the third floor. So much of what we have been able to accomplish is the product of their vision and commitment, their long hours and their hard work.

And these very talented men and women are but a part of a much larger community of public servants -- our dedicated and

loyal state employees, and our public-spirited citizens who serve voluntarily on boards and commissions -- who often labor without public accolades, but whose honesty and integrity are a particular source of pride to me and an example for the nation.

And to you, the members of the oldest legislative body in the New World, I want to express my abiding affection and respect -- and a deep satisfaction that we have together, in what we have done, strengthened the house that Jefferson built. It is with immense pride in the knowledge of what I owe you, that tonight I say to you, my friends and colleagues in this Assembly, Speaker Philpott, Lt. Gov. Davis, President Pro Tem Willey, the Majority and Minority leaders, and to the members of both houses, on both sides of the aisle, a heartfelt "thank you."

In societies whose governments are freely elected and truly representative, the two things that reveal the most about the character, the style, and the nature of those governing, are the way in which they assume power, and the manner by which they relinquish it. Nothing about my term of service gives me greater personal pride than the caliber of the man who will succeed me. In Jerry Baliles, we will be led by a governor who possesses the vision, the resolve, and the creative energy, not only to draw upon the best in himself, but to bring out the best in Virginia.

I will leave as I arrived, absolutely certain that, as Governor, my most important task has been to help summon Virginia once again to its magnificent provenance -- to challenge the Commonwealth and its people to aspire again to be that which they once were.

To be a Virginian is to live a privilege as rare as any a free society can create, and to know the price that Virginians have paid for that freedom at Yorktown and Manassas, at Normandy and Iwo Jima, at Pork Chop Hill and Khe San. It is to grow daily in the awareness of a civil and natural order of singular prestige and beauty.

And to be a Virginian is to know the broadest range of powerful images that are uniquely ours: the linear elegance of geese over the Bay at first light; the fragile miracle of budding dogwood in March in the Shenandoah Valley; the hypnotic power of a children's choir, voices raised in song in a simple country church in the Southside; the Blue Ridge in autumn -- to see from the air how the hand of the Creator lingered to caress the land in a beauty of form unlike any other, anywhere.

And to be Governor of Virginia is to labor in the knowledge that the charge you bear was defined for all time by Henry, and Jefferson, and Madison, and Darden; that the traditions it carries are the most ancient on the continent, and among the oldest of the Republic.

