



## **VIRGINIA COMMISSION ON YOUTH**

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **Commission Meeting**

May 20, 2026, 10:30 a.m.

General Assembly Building, Senate Committee Room A

#### **Attending:**

Senators: Barbara Favola (Chair), Dave Marsden, David Suetterlein

Delegates: Karrie Delaney (Vice-chair), Joshua Cole, Holly Seibold, Irene Shin, Anne Ferrell  
Tata, Lindsey Dougherty

Citizen Members: Mackenzie Babichenko, Jenni Booker Baker, Kelly Johnson

#### **Staff Attending:**

Amy Atkinson, Will Egen, Matthew Nwaneri

#### **I. Call to Order and Opening Remarks**

*Senator Barbara A. Favola, Chair*

Senator Favola welcomed the Commission members, speakers, and the public. Commission members introduced themselves. Senator Favola highlighted Commission on Youth legislation introduced during the 2026 General Assembly Session. Senator Favola explained the purpose of the meeting was to adopt the 2026 Commission study plans on juvenile justice oversight and Children's Advocacy Centers.

#### **II. Overview of Virginia's Children's Advocacy Centers**

*Rebecca Simmons, Executive Director*

*Children's Advocacy Centers of Virginia*

Senator Favola next introduced Rebecca Simmons, Executive Director of the Children's Advocacy Centers of Virginia (CACVA). The organization provides support, technical assistance, and training to Virginia's Children's Advocacy Centers, while serving as a resource for communities interested in developing a local Children's Advocacy Center. Prior to joining CACVA, Mrs. Simmons led Valley Children's Advocacy Center for ten years.

Mrs. Simmons provided a presentation explaining the services provided by Children's Advocacy Centers and the evidence-based model the centers implement. She explained the role of Children's Advocacy Centers in the investigative process and how staff members coordinate with a multidisciplinary team to protect potential child victims. Mrs. Simmons's presentation is available on the Commission on Youth's website under the meetings tab.

### **III. Introductions and Updates by the Department of Juvenile Justice**

*Robert "Bob" Bermingham Jr., Director  
Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice*

Senator Favola introduced Robert "Bob" Bermingham, Director of the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). Mr. Bermingham was appointed Director of the department in January after nearly 40 years of experience as a youth justice professional, including as Fairfax County's Gang Prevention Coordinator and Director of Court Services.

Mr. Bermingham provided an overview of the department, the population served by DJJ, and committed youth placement options. Mr. Bermingham discussed efforts for timely releases, and he addressed prior Commission concerns about out-of-room time for youth in DJJ facilities and persistent staffing issues. He also provided updates on infrastructure upgrades. Mr. Bermingham's presentation can be accessed on the Commission's webpage under the meetings tab.

### **IV. Adoption of Commission on Youth 2026 Study Plans and Initiatives**

*Amy M. Atkinson, Executive Director*

Senator Favola introduced Amy Atkinson, Executive Director of the Commission, to provide a summary of the Commission on Youth 2026 study plans:

- *Collection of Evidence-Based Practices for Children and Adolescents with Mental Health Treatment Needs*
- Review Funding and Support for Virginia's Children's Advocacy Centers
- Powers and Duties of the Office of the Children's Ombudsman as Related to Juveniles Committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice

Delegate Dougherty moved that the study plans be adopted. The motion was adopted unanimously.

## **V. Review and Approval of Commission on Youth Remote Meeting Policy**

*Will Egen, Senior Policy Analyst*

Senator Favola introduced Will Egen to present a draft remote meeting policy for the Commission's consideration. The Code of Virginia requires all public bodies are required to annually adopt a remote participation policy. This year's policy is identical to the version adopted by the Commission last year.

Senator Suetterlein moved to adopt the policy. The motion was adopted unanimously.

## **VII. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 12:23 p.m.