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To: Local Unit Presidents
From: Virginia PTA Legislation Committee
Subject: Proposed Legislation Program for 2016
Date: August 1, 2016

The attached is the Virginia PTA Proposed Legislation Program (PLP) for 2017.

This is the crucial time for development of our advocacy program for 2017. As President of your unit, it is of the utmost importance that you assist in the following:

- 1 - **circulate the attached letter on paper, on your website or in any other member communication**
- 2 - point members to the Legislation/Education committee for more information (legislation@vapta.org)
- 3 - **conduct a vote on these items so that EVERY member has an opportunity to be heard**
- 4 - return the results of the vote to your DISTRICT or COUNCIL BY OCTOBER 28th.

If approved by our members, the issues below will become part of our 2017 Legislative Priorities. It is so important that the Virginia PTA effectively represent its members. We can only do this by educating members on important issues facing our students, teachers and schools and holding a fair and accurate vote.

Some of these issues may raise questions or concerns. Please encourage your members to contact the Legislation committee or their District Directors to have these questions answered. We are here to help.

Historically, the return on our PLP vote has been low - and we would like to change that. To assist you in your vote gathering, we have included a "Tips for Getting Out the Vote" flyer as well as a ballot. You do NOT need to use this ballot. You may choose to conduct an online poll (as long as the count is accurate) or design your own ballot.

Getting your members educated and involved in the important advocacy process goes to strengthen the PTA as an organization and is just another benefit of membership.

Once the votes are tallied and returned, by you, to your District or Council (by October 28th), we will announce the results. And again, if approved, these items will become part of our Legislation Program. You can learn more about your 2017 Legislative Priorities and full program at PTA Day at the General Assembly.

Please join us at the General Assembly on January 30, 2017 when we advocate for our organization. PTA Day is our "Lobby Day" and offers you an opportunity to meet with your state Senators and Delegates and be heard on important issues facing your school and PTA. Additional information about PTA Day 2017 is enclosed in this mailing.

If you have any questions or would like more information or to get more involved, please do not hesitate to contact the Legislation/Education committee at legislation@vapta.org!



2017
Proposed Legislation Program
LETTER FOR MEMBERS

Dear PTA Member -

The following are THREE items recommended to you for consideration. In the early fall, you will be asked to VOTE on these items as part of the 2017 Proposed Legislation Program (PLP). If you have any questions about these items, the rationale or history, please do not hesitate to contact the committee at legislation@vapta.org.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION ITEMS (LAI's) are requests for the introduction, passage, or defeat of specific legislation by the General Assembly and/or regulations by the Board of Education or other appropriate agencies.

POLICY/POSITION STATEMENTS (PS): Statements of Virginia PTA on general issues and may be used as the basis for addressing issues before the General Assembly, Virginia Board of Education or other appropriate agencies.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION ITEM #1:

Virginia PTA seeks legislation that would allow local governments to adopt ordinances to prohibit or regulate firearms retailers within designated Gun Free School zones.

Rationale:

Currently, localities have limited ability to adopt zoning ordinances that would prohibit certain retailers (including firearms retailers) within designated school zones. This action item would empower local PTA's to advocate for legislation that would return zoning ordinance authority to localities.

POSITION STATEMENT #1:

Virginia PTA supports the establishment of guidelines for alternatives to short-term and long-term suspensions.

Rationale:

Short and long-term suspensions remove students from classrooms and further hinder their academic progress. This position seeks to support establishment of guidelines and alternatives to suspension. These alternatives would empower schools to create programs that allow for discipline without hindering academic progress.

POSITION STATEMENT #2:

Virginia PTA supports sensible juvenile justice reforms.

Rationale:

Virginia's juvenile justice system is out of line with national best practices. Juveniles in poverty suffer higher rates of commitment than other groups. This position would encourage PTA's to advocate for sensible sentencing reforms that might reduce juvenile justice spending and recidivism while encouraging rehabilitation and continuity in education.
