**MEMORANDUM**

To: Members of the Virginia Metropolitan Political Action Committee

From: Brian M. Gordon, Vice President of Government Affairs, Virginia

Bismah Ahmed, Director of Government Affairs, Virginia

Date: April 6, 2021

Subject: Proposed Virginia Metropolitan Political Action Committee Budget for 2020

Please find below staff’s proposed 2021 budget and spending plan for the AOBA Metropolitan Political Action Committee (METPAC Virginia).

The COVID-19 virus and corresponding economic shutdowns wrought havoc on every aspect of our society and day-to-day lives. Almost mercifully, this included a disruption in political fundraising. Perhaps out of deference to the challenges faced by businesses amidst the pandemic and out of concern for social distancing protocols, AOBA received only a very few fundraising requests in 2020, during a time in which we are typically inundated with calls and requests for support. As a result, METPAC’s total contributions came in far below budgeted levels in 2020. Although the pandemic. effectively suspended the PAC’s fundraising plans as well, voluntary dues contributions came in ahead of projections, helping to keep the PAC on track to be a significant player going into the significant 2021 election cycle. As we enter the 2021 election cycle, we have already seen a return to fundraising with candidates soliciting support for both in-person and virtual events. This year’s election ballot will feature contests for Virginia’s three statewide Constitutional offices of Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General, all 100 seats of the House of Delegates, and local Board and Council races in Arlington and Alexandria.

Even prior to COVID-19, Virginia’s political landscape experienced an upheaval as progressive Democratic majorities seized control entering the 2020 session. In spite of efforts by party leadership to moderate, the new majority produced policy outcomes unfriendly to commercial real estate and broader business interests. Staff projects that this is a long-term political shift and the organization’s approach to advocacy and political giving will need to be altered accordingly.

Specifically, METPAC Virginia adopted the following general principles last year to guide political giving in 2021 and beyond:

* METPAC Virginia should continue its longstanding practice of bipartisan giving, but with greater focus on Democratic leadership and making inroads with key individuals within the influential Black Caucus, the Virginia Housing Commission and the House and Senate Democratic Caucuses who can serve as a mouthpiece for business interests.
* In contrast with prior practice, staff recommends consolidating contributions amongst a smaller set of influential individuals. This includes reducing introductory-level contributions to new members, who have yet to demonstrate support for pro-business policies through a record of sustained favorable voting.
* METPAC Virginia should leverage its relationship with the Virginia Apartment and Management Association (VAMA) to extend its statewide footprint and bundle contributions to achieve greater levels of recognition and access. This is intended yield greater awareness of and favorable positions on issues of importance to AOBA members in Northern Virginia.
* Beyond the unusual circumstances of the 2020 fundraising cycle and the ongoing pandemic, contributions should generally be made in conjunction with attendance to a fundraising event, giving staff and members the opportunity for face time and relationship building.

**The Proposed 2021 Virginia METPAC Budget**

METPAC Virginia currently has healthy fund balance of $62,081.32. Staff hopes to build further upon that figure through fundraising initiatives. The proposed budget calls for $25,500 in 2021 to be spread among 43 elcted officials statewide 25 members of the Senate, 16 members of the House of Delegates and two local elected officials). The 2021 budget remains bipartisan, but slants further towards the Democratic side of the aisle, designating three Republicans and 38 Democrats as recipients – a recognition of the changing composition of the General Assembly and the proportion of Democratic elected officials representing Northern Virginia, AOBA’s primary territory. The proposed budget focuses contributions towards those long-standing Democratic legislators who have been friendly to the business community and can serve as a mouthpiece for reason and open-mindedness within their caucus.

In keeping with the guiding principles outlined above, the 2021 budget calls for contributions of up to $2,000 for key individuals who wield significant influence over AOBA’s legislative agenda. Five members of the General Assembly have been slotted at the $2,000 level, recognizing their seniority, Committee assignments relevant to legislation of interest to AOBA and leadership demonstrated in support of AOBA’s agenda. This elite group includes House General Laws Committee Chairman David Bulova (D-Fairfax), Housing Subcommittee Chairman Marcus Simon (D-Falls Church), Senate General Laws Committee Chairman George Barker (D-Alexandria), and key Senate swing voters/influencers Senators John Bell (D-Ashburn) and Monty Mason (D-Williamsburg). These five individuals represent the most important votes on AOBA’s state legislative agenda.

Two Delegates and one Senator warrant contributions of $1,000, in recognition of their consistent support for AOBA initiatives and positions and because they hold prominent positions of power overseeing legislation and policy affecting our industries. Others have been tagged to receive this level of support in appreciation of specific assistance or actions in furtherance of our industries’ legislative agenda during the 2020 special session and 2021 regular legislative session. These include Speaker of the House of Delegates Eileen Filler-Corn (D-Burke), House Democratic Caucus Business Community Liaison Delegate David Reid (D-Ashburn) and Senate Majority Leader Dick Saslaw (D-Alexandria).

The balance of the contributions proposed for 2019 under the constrained spending plan are slated at $500, $250 or $100, with the majority going to legislators who offered measurable assistance in advancing AOBA’s agenda during the 2020 session. A complete list is provided below:

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| Delegate Betsy Carr (D-Richmond) | $250 |
| Delegate Todd Gilbert (R-Shennandoah)  | $500 |
| Delegate Dan Helmer (D-Clifton)  | $100 |
| Delegate Steve Heretick (D-Portsmouth)  | $100 |
| Delegate Charniele Herring (D-Alexandria)  | $500 |
| Delegate Patrick Hope (D-Arlington) | $250 |
| Delegate Clint Jenkins (D-Suffolk) | $250 |
| Delegate Mark Keam (D-Vienna)  | $250 |
| Delegate Kaye Kory (D-Falls Church)  | $500 |
| Delegate Paul Krizek (D-Mount Vernon) | $250 |
| Delegate Alfonso Lopez (D-Arlington)  | $500 |
| Delegate Candi Mundon King (D-Stafford) | $100 |
| Delegate Kathleen Murphy (D-McLean) | $250 |
| Delegate Danica Roem (D-Manassas) | $250 |
| Delegate Mark Sickles (D-Alexandria)  | $500 |
| Delegate Suhas Subramanyam (D-Ashburn) | $100 |
| Delegate Rip Sullivan (D-Arlington)  | $250 |
| Delegate Luke Torian (D-Montclair) | $500 |
| Delegate Kathy Tran (D-Springfield) | $500 |
| Delegate Vivian Watts (D-Annandale)  | $250 |
| Senator Jennifer Boysko (D-Herndon) | $500 |
| Senator Adam Ebbin (D-Alexandria)  | $500 |
| Senator Barbara Favola (D-Arlington) | $250 |
| Senator Janet Howell (D-Reston) | $250 |
| Senator Mamie Locke (D-Hampton)  | $500 |
| Senator Dave Marsden (D-Burke)  | $250 |
| Senator Jeremy McPike (D-Dale City) | $500 |
| Senator Chap Petersen (D-Fairfax) | $500 |
| Senator Richard Stuart (R-Montross) | $250 |
| Senator Scott Surovell (D-Mount Vernon) | $500 |
| Senator Jill Vogel (R-Warrenton) | $500 |

With a crowded field of over 30 candidates for Virginia’s three statewide Constitutional offices, staff recommends deferring action on statewide races until after the June primary elections. Staff will return to the PAC with recommendations on statewide political action at such time.

On the local level, 2021 will see elections for the City of Alexandria Mayor and City Council as well as one seat on the Arlington County Board. Staff recommends a contribution of $1,000 towards the reelection campaign of sitting Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson and a $500 contribution to the reelection campaign of County Board Member Takis Karantonis.

Please feel free to contact either of us (bgordon@aoba-metro.org or  bahmed@aoba-metro.org) if you have any questions about the above information.