

26105082D

1 **HOUSE BILL NO. 485**

2 Offered January 14, 2026

3 Prefiled January 12, 2026

4 A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 26 of Title 2.2 an article numbered 16.1,
5 consisting of sections numbered 2.2-2649.1 through 2.2-2649.4, relating to Children's Cabinet
6 established; report.
7

8 Patron—Shin

9 Committee Referral Pending
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11 Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

12 1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 26 of Title 2.2 an article numbered 16.1,
13 consisting of sections numbered 2.2-2649.1 through 2.2-2649.4, as follows:

14 Article 16.1.

15 Children's Cabinet.

16 § 2.2-2649.1. Children's Cabinet; purpose.

17 The Children's Cabinet (the Cabinet) is established as an advisory council, within the meaning of
18 § 2.2-2100, in the executive branch of state government. The purpose of the Cabinet is to advise the Governor
19 on matters pertaining to children in the Commonwealth and ways to improve their health, safety, and well-
20 being.

21 § 2.2-2649.2. Membership; quorum; meetings.

22 A. The Cabinet shall consist of the Chief of Staff for the Governor or his designee, the Secretaries of the
23 Commonwealth, Agriculture and Forestry, Commerce and Trade, Education, Health and Human Resources,
24 and Public Safety and Homeland Security or their designees, and the Children's Ombudsman. All members of
25 the Cabinet shall serve terms coincident with their terms of office.26 B. The Chief of Staff for the Governor or his designee shall serve as chair and may invite other
27 Governor's Secretaries and agency heads to participate as needed and as appropriate to improve and
28 coordinate systems and services for children provided by state and local agencies. The Cabinet shall elect a
29 vice-chair from among its membership. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. The Cabinet
30 shall meet a minimum of four times each year. The meetings of the Cabinet shall be held at the call of the
31 chair or whenever the majority of the members so request.32 C. Members of the Cabinet shall be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the
33 performance of their duties as provided in § 2.2-2825.

34 § 2.2-2649.3. Powers and duties of the Cabinet; report.

35 The Cabinet shall have the following powers and duties:

36 1. Encourage agencies of the Commonwealth to collaborate across governmental and nongovernmental
37 entities to align and develop policies, programs, and resources to improve outcomes for children and their
38 families, particularly those at high risk of negative outcomes, and to develop specific goals, identify and
39 facilitate the implementation of strategies, and measure impacts and outcomes related to the following
40 priorities:41 a. Early childhood development and school readiness, including promoting healthy pregnancies and
42 social supports for new mothers and families during the first years of a child's life and ensuring the
43 availability of affordable, accessible, high-quality early childhood education in all areas of the
44 Commonwealth;45 b. Nutrition and food security, including expanding access to nutritious food and decreasing food
46 insecurity for pregnant women and children and promoting community-based food systems to increase access
47 to healthy, local foods; and

48 c. Student safety for school-age children;

49 2. Encourage agencies of the Commonwealth to prioritize systems of care for the safety and well-being of
50 children and the stability of families, including the needs of children and families arising from trauma, abuse,
51 or neglect, and mental or behavioral health challenges; and52 3. Submit an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly for publication as a report
53 document as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing
54 of legislative documents and reports. The chair of the Cabinet shall submit to the Governor and the General
55 Assembly an annual executive summary of the interim activity and work of the Cabinet no later than the first
56 day of each regular session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall be submitted for
57 publication as a report document as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated
58 Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General

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59 *Assembly's website*

60 **§ 2.2-2649.4. Staffing.**

61 *Staff support shall be provided to the Cabinet by the offices of the Governor, the Secretaries represented*
62 *in the Cabinet, and the Children's Ombudsman. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance*
63 *to the Cabinet, upon request.*