

Letter Instructions:

Please email the following legislators on the full **House Education Committee** & the **Senate Education & Health Committees** the below form letter requesting their support for two important class size bills: [HB1380](#) & [HB168](#).

1. Please paste the emails below in your To box
2. Put the rest of the message below in the email body
3. Add your name and address in the closing
4. Subject: : [HB1380](#) & [HB168](#)

RE: HB1380, HB168

Dear [Insert VA Legislator name],

I write to request that you patron **two important class size bills** in the 2018 General Assembly which will have **direct, positive impact in student classrooms**:

(1) [HB 1380](#), introduced by Delegate Roxann Robinson, will reduce Virginia's state law cap on 4th-6th grade classes from 35 to 29 students, to ensure that no Virginia student or teacher in those grades is in an overly crowded elementary classroom.

Virginia's 35-student cap for 4th through 6th grade classes is among the [highest in the nation](#), and is much higher than average elementary school class sizes. For example, according to page 29 of the [Washington Area Board of Education](#) 2018 Guide, elementary class sizes averaged about 16 students in Alexandria City, 21 students in Arlington County and Manassas Park City, 22 students in Manassas City and Prince William County, and 23 students in Fairfax County, City of Falls Church and Loudoun County. And at the state level, the average class size for grades 4-6 is approximately [25 students](#), despite the VA cap which is now 40% greater than the average.

Unfortunately, although AVERAGE class sizes generally are very reasonable, many Virginia school districts have some **4th through 6th grade classes with 30 to 35 students**. [Class Size Counts](#) has documented citizen testimonials which demonstrate continued problems with overcrowded classrooms, which lead to limited student-teacher interaction and teacher burnout.

(2) [HB 168](#), introduced by Delegate Kathleen Murphy, proposes **science lab safety caps of 24 students**, consistent with safety recommendations by the [National Science Teachers Association](#) (NSTA), the American Chemistry Society (ACS) and others. Please patron this bill to help ensure that all secondary school science labs are safe.

VA must offer high-quality public schools to attract and retain businesses, teachers, and residents.

Reasonable and **safe** class sizes are one of the easiest metrics that businesses, teachers and parents use to gauge the quality of a school. [Research](#) suggests we are losing that edge:

- Nearly **half of all new teachers quit within five years**, overwhelmed by job requirements, including large class sizes – which contributes to our VA teacher shortages;

-**Teachers cite large, unsafe class sizes as one of the top factors** influencing their decisions to leave the classroom.

Both bills are renewal bills that received overwhelming bipartisan support from its Education Committee members last year, as well support by the VA PTA, the VEA, various Chambers of Commerce and teacher unions.

I urge you to patron these important class size bills in the 2018 General Assembly - because no teacher or child deserves to be in an unsafe, overcrowded classroom.

Sincerely,

[name, address, phone]