

2010 Legislative Agenda Survey Results



Survey Participant Overview

May 26, 2010 through June 30, 2010

182 respondents

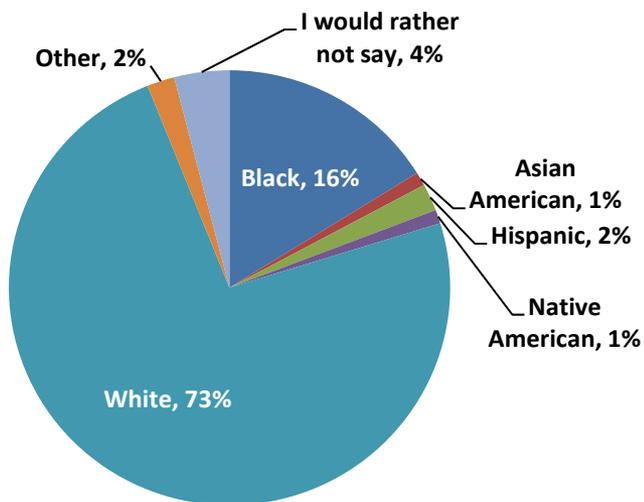
Race / Ethnicity

Virginia:

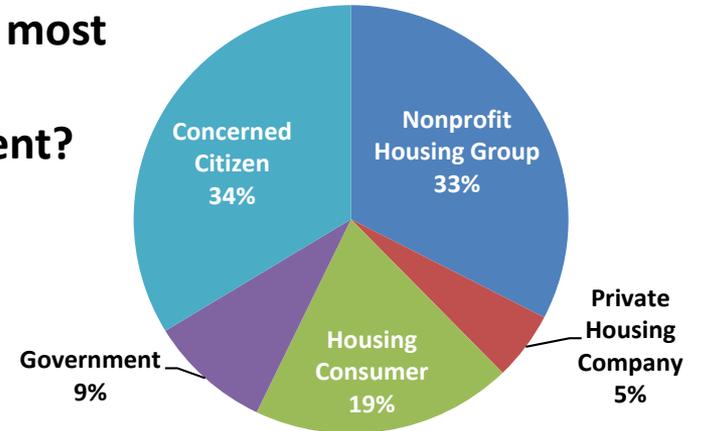
Percent White – 73%

Percent Black – 20%

Percent Hispanic – 7%



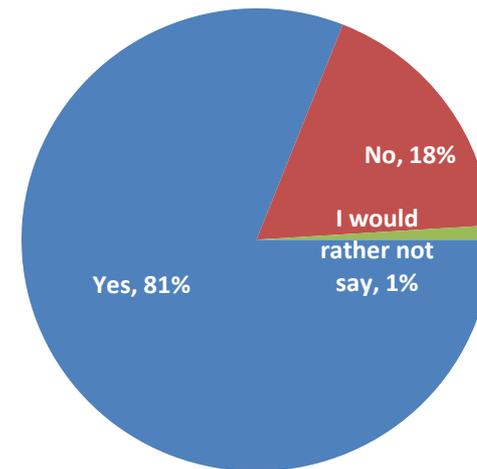
Which of the following housing sectors do you most often represent?



Do you currently own a home?

Virginia:

Homeownership Rate = 69%



Survey Results: Fair Housing

In my community, some families or individuals may encounter discrimination when trying to find safe and decent housing.

- I chose to buy and live in a very mixed neighborhood.

- As a real estate professional I have seen it first hand time and time again. It is distressing and discouraging.

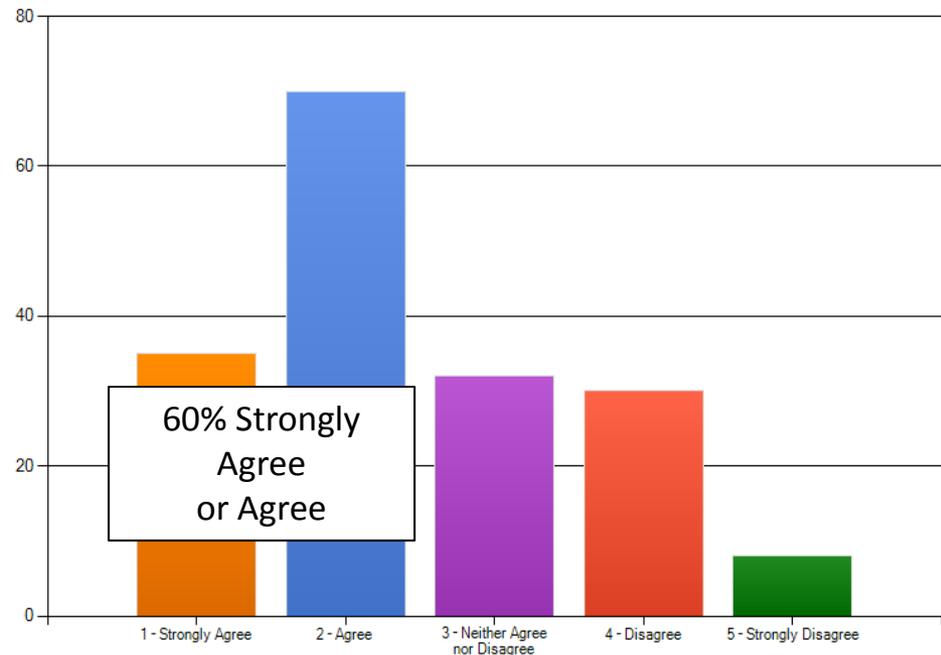
- I live in the Hampton Roads area. I am aware of a tremendous amount of discrimination with respect to access, pricing and upkeep.

- Especially very low income and people with disabilities who have criminal histories.

- Group housing of any sort and certainly housing subsidized for the disadvantaged in any way.

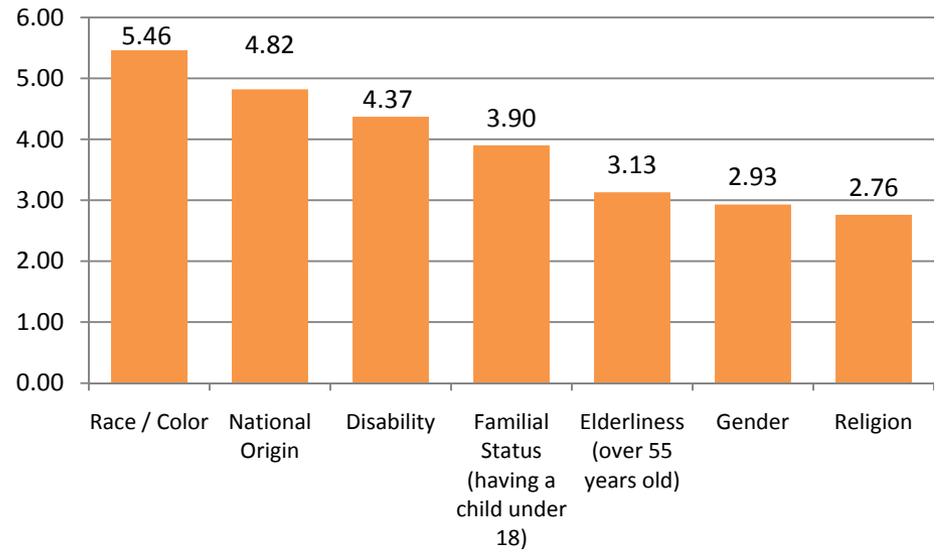
- The NIMBY factor can only be corrected by a focus on shaming those responsible.

- I live in a racially mixed community with little to no problems.



Survey Results: Fair Housing

Housing discrimination can happen in many contexts - rental, sales, insurance, lending, etc. On which personal characteristic do you think housing discrimination most often occurs? Please rank the characteristics by frequency of discrimination below.



- Discrimination based on source of income is a problem.
- I believe that discrimination occurs most often in areas of race and disability. The two areas fight for first place.
- Disability, by far.
- Same sex partnerships probably are discriminated against now more than other categories.
- Combining disability, single parent, minority, multiplies the discrimination.
- Sexual preference can be an issue.

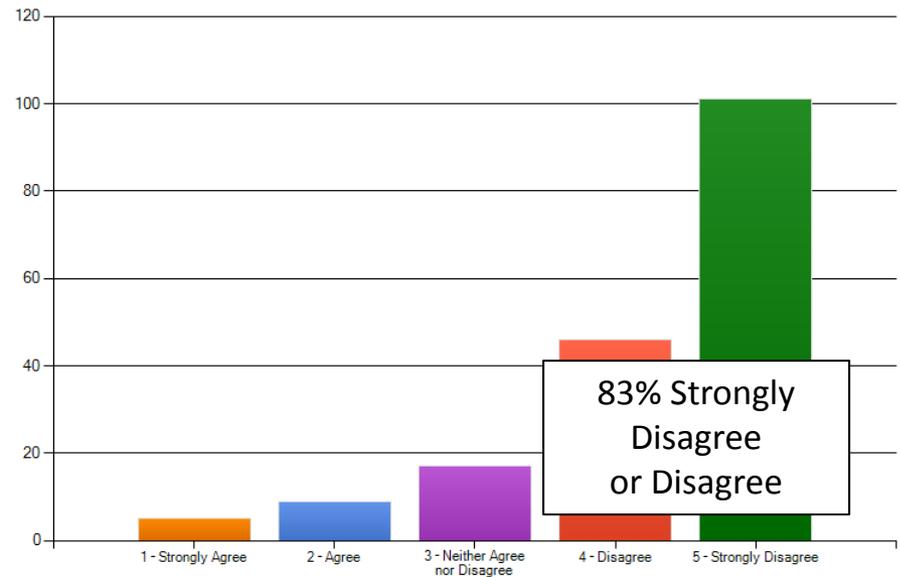
Virginia; Complaints Filed 2000 to 2008

1	Race	668
2	Disability	500
3	Familial Status	233
4	Gender	154
5	National Origin	136
6	Religion	44
7	Elderliness	43

Survey Results: Fair Housing

Landlords and property managers should be allowed to turn away potentially qualified tenants based on how that renter would be paying for an apartment, such as with a housing voucher subsidy or social security income.

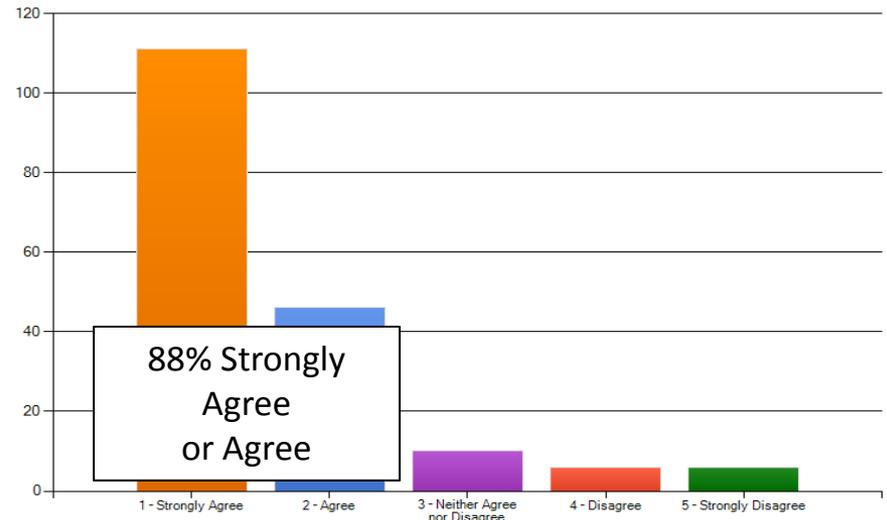
- As long as the funds used to pay for housing are legal funds, the housing provider should not be allowed to discriminate.
- Landlords who have had bad experiences should have the right not to accept voucher.
- As long as the source of income is legal and fairly reliable it should not be an issue.
- The sense is that Section 8 will trash a place, often a misconception.
- Money is money.
- Having a landlord that didn't want to work with the person in their situation puts me on the fence with this one.



Survey Results: Fair Housing

I believe smaller scale landlords, like those who own or rent three or less properties, should have to obey fair housing laws.

- These owners are most at fault of discrimination.
- Why should they not have to obey the fair housing laws?
- No one should be exempt from the law.
- Undue hardship for property owners would be inconvenient, possibly impossible for those who are at the level of just barely making it anyway.
- Don't see difference between 3 and 300.
- Although I think they should obey fair housing laws, the burden of being sure they had the information seems overwhelming.



Survey Results: Affordable Housing

All new housing developments should be required to include some affordable housing units.

- The question is what is affordable? Can the widow whose only income is \$600 a month afford anything??

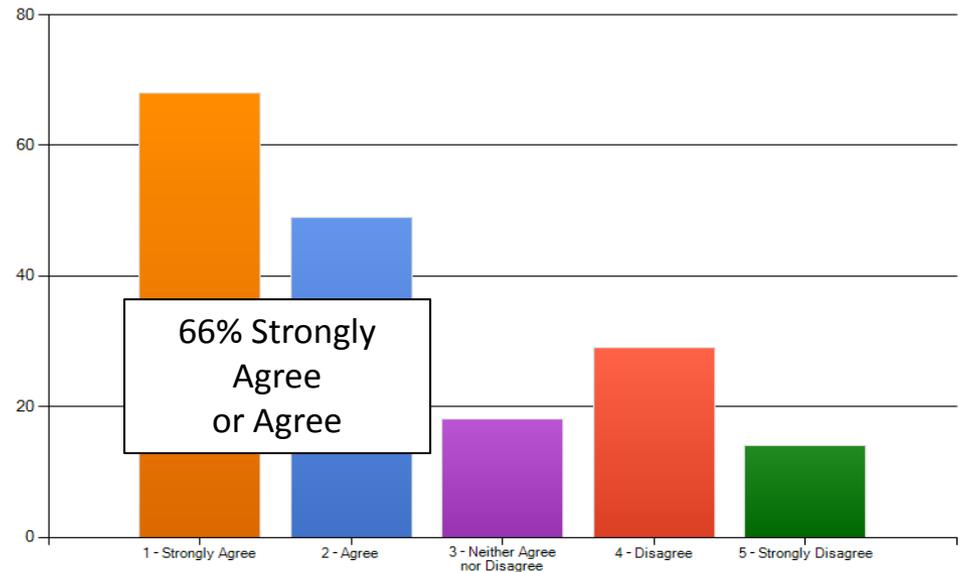
- Shouldn't be required, but incentivized would be good.

- ACCESSIBLE & affordable.

- I think mixed income housing would go a long way to helping to end discrimination.

- However, this should not be a significant cost burden to developer.

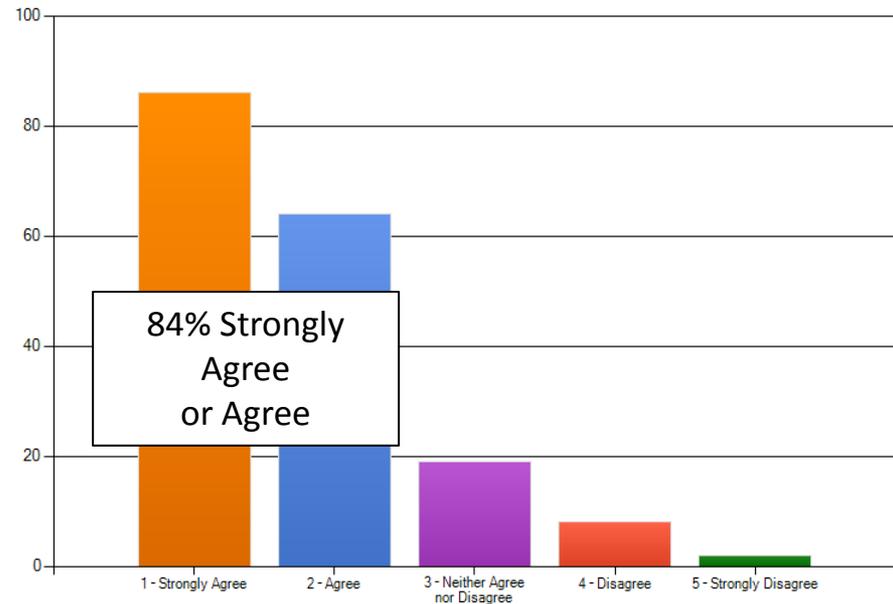
- Not sure that this one-size-fits all approach is the best way to achieve a very important goal.



Survey Results: Affordable Housing

Housing trust funds can be used to help create affordable housing opportunities. Please respond to the following statement: I think building and maintaining an affordable housing stock is an appropriate use of my tax dollars.

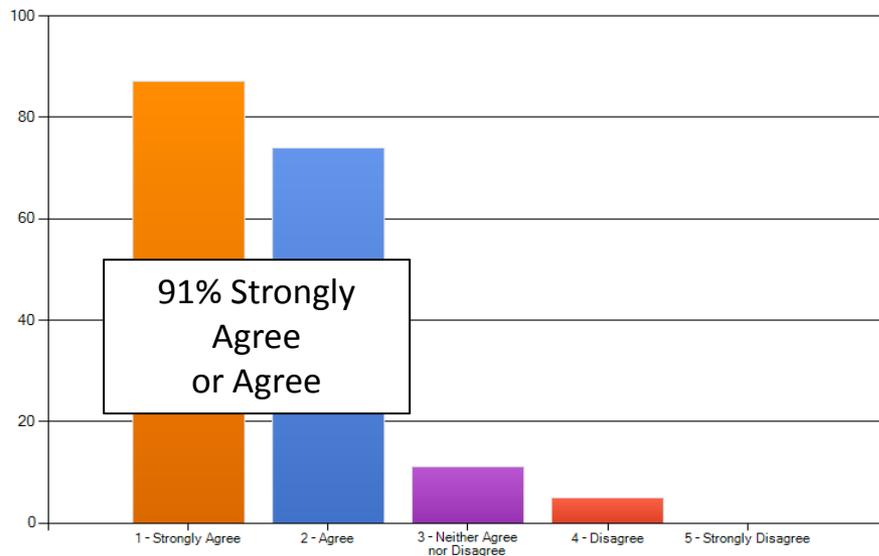
- We really need this in Virginia!!
- A necessary evil...
- Should not be just for new housing, but for improvement of older houses to keep neighborhoods from declining.
- I prefer requiring a percentage of development to include affordable housing. Government interventions are usually far more costly and less productive than getting private industry involved.
- Money should be used to help people be able to be self sufficient and successful when possible. That is where the focus should be.



Survey Results: Affordable Housing

If Virginia doesn't establish a statewide Housing Trust Fund to build and maintain affordable housing, localities should be allowed to do so on an individual basis.

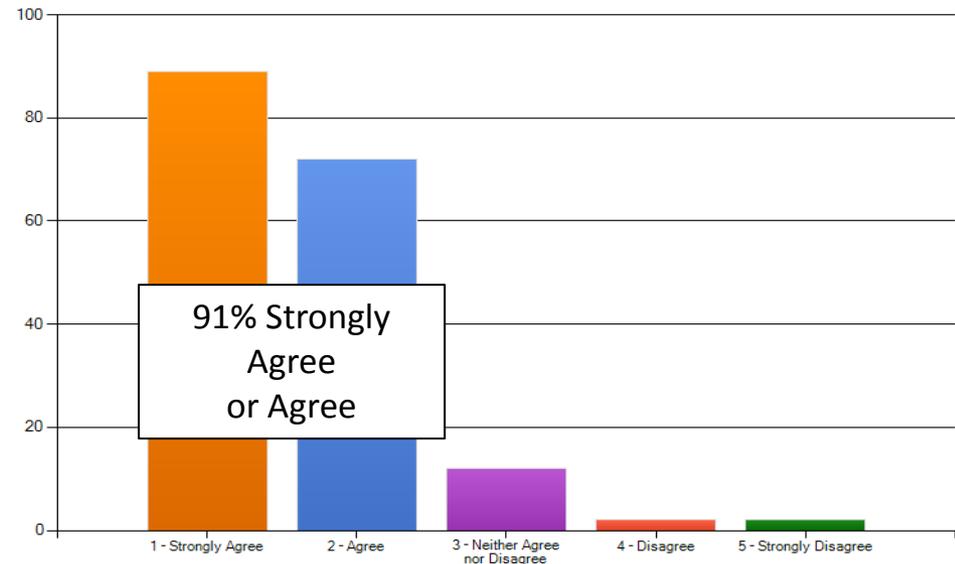
- Many do already, e.g. Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax.
- This is primarily a state interest and responsibility, but localities should not be precluded from doing so as well.
- Some localities already do this - would introducing a law draw attention to the fact that some localities already do this and then prove to be harmful if the law fails?
- Should be mandatory for every county.
- Yes, but we should allow localities to determine the full terms of their local trust funds themselves, rather than dictated by Richmond on how they may be funded or administered.



Survey Results: Affordable Housing

I believe it is important for affordable housing to be located adjacent to public transportation.

- Public transportation needs expansion to suburban areas to promote mixed communities.
- Transportation policies should address this issue more forcefully - VDOT wake up!
- Affordable housing should not be concentrated any one place, but mixed throughout the region. Because transit is scarce in some regions, this may include places with and without access to transit.
- Actually, public transportation should be near all of us.
- Ideally, but not always possible.... projects should not be rejected for that reason only.
- This is also true "in reverse" - that is, new public transportation infrastructure (like new bus lines, shelters, etc) can be implemented to support existing communities with affordable housing.



Survey Results: Affordable Housing

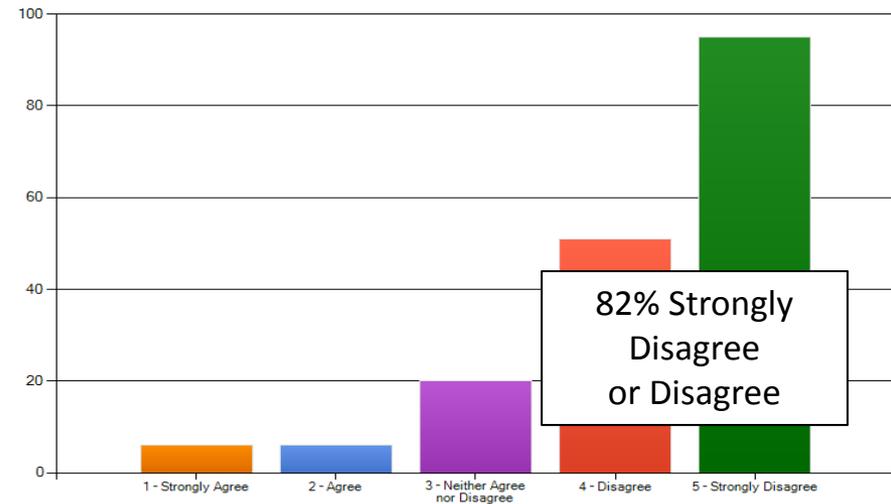
Local governments should be able to turn down proposed developments just because they plan to contain housing affordable to people who earn 80% or below the area median income.

- Lower income doesn't make people bad candidates for rental or purchases - this is an educational issue needing to be addressed on all levels.

- Absolutely not!

- In a free democracy, if the local government represents the will of the people they represent, that is what they should do. If neighboring houses would lose value because of it, they should have a voice. Statistically crime is higher in the lower income communities. Look at the police logs.

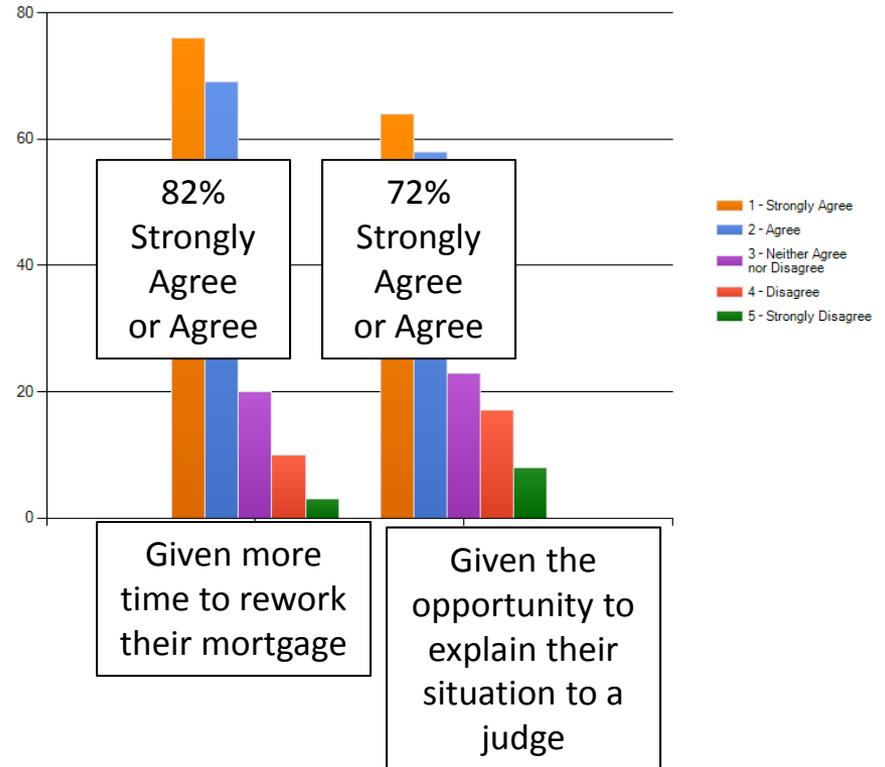
- Getting a foot in the door is good for everyone. Everyone needs a home. Can we allow our local governments to discriminate against poverty?



Survey Results: Fair Lending

When encountering a foreclosure, I feel that a homeowner should be...

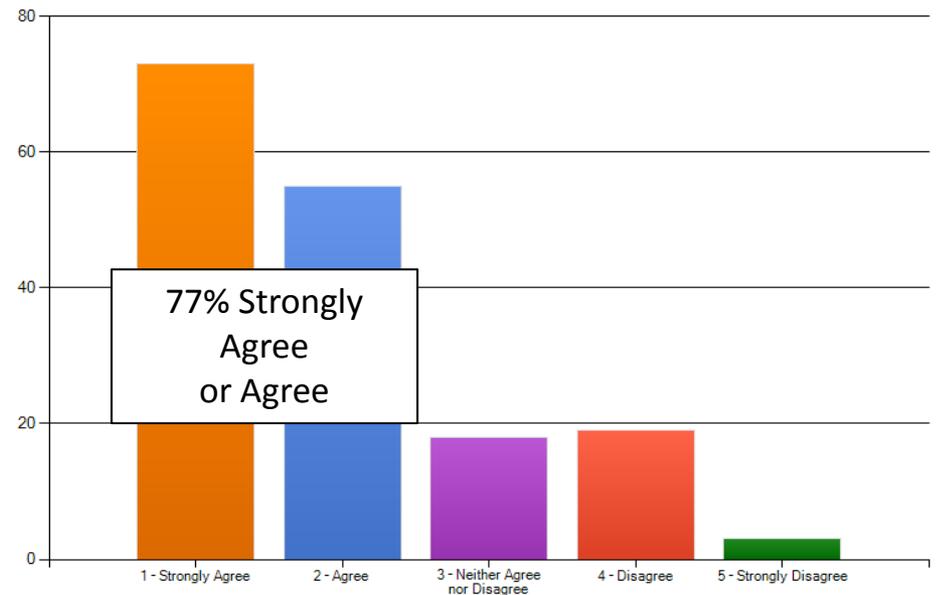
- This idea will hold mortgage companies accountable to increased efforts to assist struggling homeowners.
- Foreclosures do not benefit anyone.
- Third party review should be required.
- I feel like this question is out of my league.
- People have invested so much in their homes I'm sure it's devastating to lose it. Help is needed.
- Non-judicial foreclosures should not occur.
- Is there any way to be proactive - guide the homeowner before he is up against a close deadline?



Survey Results: Other Housing Issues

I believe that every locality should require rental property to pass a building code inspection before the owner can enter into a legally enforceable lease with a new tenant.

- They should also be made to follow certain maintenance guidelines – it's unfair that a tenant should have to wait months to get service.
- This is a HUGE issue especially with entities like Genesis Properties (yes they should be called out).
- Code inspections should occur every 2-3 yrs with high risk rentals, those that border on basic habitability; longer term for better quality.
- yes, yes, yes!!
- But this would be costly....
- Would this work against affordable housing?
- I rented in Richmond for 18 years. There are a lot of unsafe buildings and lousy landlords.



Survey Results: Other Housing Issues

Governor McDonnell has announced a Housing Policy Workgroup that will develop a housing policy framework to guide decisions made in the executive branch. Which of the following four principles are most important to include and consider? Please rank them below.

Ensure that a range of housing options can be provided to meet the housing needs of a dynamic and changing population (includes emphasis on fair housing).

4.23

Promote sustainable and vibrant communities (includes mixed use development, green building, rehab of substandard housing, and public-private cooperation).

4.11

Increase capacity to address the needs of homeless Virginians.

3.78

Recognize the role of the housing industry as a critical economic development engine within the Commonwealth.

3.70

Rating Average

Most Important

Least Important

- Promoting is words; we need action to back up the words.

- Accessibility for the growing older population and returning military who need a home they may get into.

- Historic preservation and the preservation of community identity; housing quality; REOs and vacant/foreclosed property; deconcentration of poverty.

- Encourage affordable supportive housing provided by the non-profit sector.

- Something related to the home mortgage crisis and ensuring that persons who buy a house can afford it so that we can avoid so many foreclosures that impact entire communities.

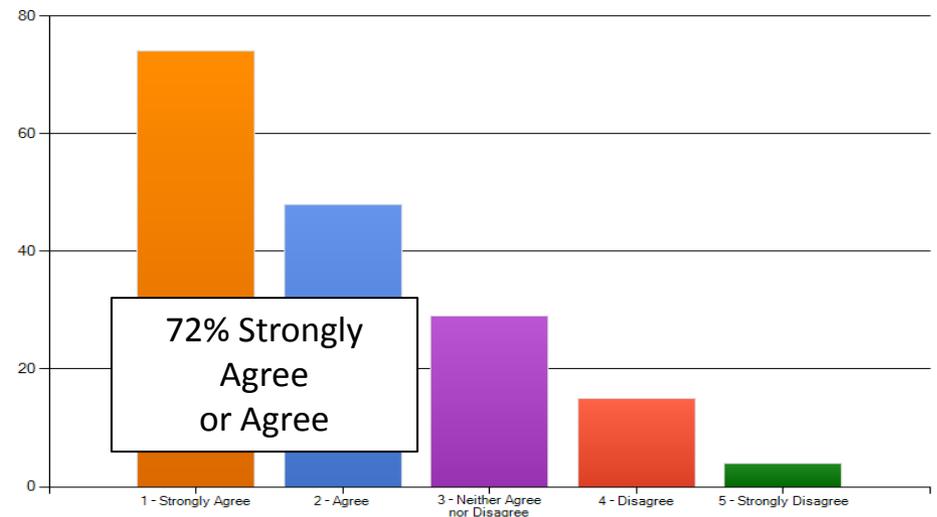
- Universal Design (UD) for full adaptable/accessible housing.

- More grants for teachers, fireworkers, EMTs, police officers to afford homes.

Survey Results: Other Housing Issues

New homes, including single-family and multi-family properties, should be built with basic accessibility features so people with mobility impairments can live there or visit easily.

- I was under the impression that this policy already exists.
- This makes sense only if it can be done in a cost-effective manner.
- Needs to be incentive based, not necessarily mandatory.
- Visitability is NECESSARY for our families.
- universal design! great idea!
- Single family should be treated differently than multi-family.
- Once it becomes law, designs will be much more accommodating.



Survey Results:
**State Priorities and
Performance**

Using a scale of A as excellent, C as average, and F as failing, please grade the following groups on their level of work to improve the availability of fair and affordable housing across Virginia.

Local Elected Officials	D
State Elected Officials	D
Local Non-Profit and Community Organizations	C+

- State staff works hard to offer assistance, but is limited by state dollars and lack of a housing policy.
- In fairness to the politicians, it is impossible to legislate the bigotry out of people. Success in fair housing will be a product of education and evolution.
- We're working on it!
- This list should also include private sector developers - C.
- Some of our county officials don't recognize an issue with affordable housing & how impact fees/ proffers can deter affordable housing construction.
- Some local orgs better than others. As hard as it is, collaboration is key.

Survey Results:
**State Priorities and
Performance**

Rank the following groups in terms of their impact on housing issues and policy in Virginia, with 1 having the least impact and 5 having the most impact.

Group (Score)

Non-Profit Sector (3.65)

Local Government (3.55)

Federal Government (3.5)

State Government (3.44)

Private Industry (3.42)



Most Impact

Least Impact

- If local gov't does not believe in the need for and support the efforts to achieve diverse and affordable housing, efforts of the other participants will be impossible to materialize.

- State could rank higher with some direction and action; private industry, especially now, is wary of any demands.

- All are of critical importance.

- Impact may be negative.

- Private industry has had big NEGATIVE impact in VA keeping progressive strategies at bay in state and local gov't; non-profits can not fight private industry stonewalling tactics without government backing.

- They may have an impact, but the impact is not necessarily positive.

Other Comments

- Continuing to work with low to median income families, in order to afford property that other wise would be too expensive for these families to live in. It's important for low to median income families to own property. I feel it gives them a sense of pride to own instead of rent.
- More mixed income community opportunities need to be built in Virginia.
- HOME is doing a fantastic job! I have followed their growth and efforts since 1986 with Regina Chaney.... After personal experiences and recent economic changes it has become apparent that more loss mitigation education efforts are warranted as well as joint efforts with lending institutions, CDC's, and affordable housing venture pursuits.
- HOME should be focusing on the treatment of Hispanic and other immigrant populations in light of the burgeoning immigrant population in Richmond and the rest of the state.
- Safe and decent housing is a building block of family success. Home should be a place where children can study and learn and where elderly can feel safe and where families and individuals can rejuvenate and feel comfortable. Housing advocates need to market affordable fair housing in such a way as to showcase the impact of families and on the local economy.
- I think HOME's primary focus should remain on fair housing, but not to the exclusion of the other issues mentioned. Affordable housing is an important issue that should to be addressed with the cooperation of other like-minded groups.
- Once again I think seeking out people in local area's is what you need to make good changes.

Other Comments

- My concerns have always been for the rural areas of Virginia. It seems that all the focus goes to the larger populated areas when addressing homelessness criteria, affordable decent housing, laws to protect the renters (landlords that rent housing that should be condemned and at over-exaggerated rent), areas that incomes are "seasonal" and no other options are available for these households. When you address the "vision" & "mission" of the program/project you need to include all areas not just selected/preferred areas.
- More public/private partnerships need to be developed in order to capitalize on foreclosed lots or revitalization areas in order to create affordable housing pockets.
- I think HOME's agenda last year was commendable and the lack of any real support in the General Assembly for most of the real changes needed---we have a lot of work ahead of us to do with our State and local officials.
- Fair Housing is nearly non existent in rural communities. Tenants have no options and are forced to accept high rent and poor housing conditions. Rural communities have very few, if any, alternatives when their home is in poor condition and their landlord refuses to do repairs.
- Discrimination against the disabled is an ongoing issue that needs to be focused on now. Access issues are important as well as finding available & affordable housing. With credit access drying up and becoming harder to get, I suspect the disabled will suffer even more since SSI and SSA disability are usually their only sources of income.
- Adequate housing for elderly would seem an important issue given the baby-boom blip coming up. Elderly housing IN THE CITY is key so people can walk safely to and from shops, parks, transportation.
- Help non-profit developers stay alive in this economy compounded by new state administration.