



Top Economic Development, Business and Philanthropic Executives to Lead *Back to Work Virginia* Task Force

Strong, equitable child care industry essential for workforce and economic recovery

Richmond, Va. (April 29, 2020) – The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) has assembled a blue-ribbon task force to develop an assertive strategic plan with recommendations for structural shifts and improved policies and practices to stabilize and strengthen Virginia’s child care industry – considered essential personnel per COVID-19 directives – as the Commonwealth gets back to work and rebuilds its economy.

To accomplish that goal, the task force will be chaired by **Stephen Moret**, President and CEO of Virginia Economic Development Partnership; **Jim Dyke**, Senior Advisor at McGuire Woods Consulting; and **Dr. Deborah DiCroce**, President and CEO of Hampton Roads Community Foundation. Members of the task force will include Virginia leaders in government, business and industry, and philanthropy. Their work will be facilitated by VECF and informed by a bench of local, state, and national policy, finance, and reform experts. They will meet via monthly conference calls from May to November.

Members of the *Back to Work Virginia* Task Force include:

- **Sherrie Armstrong**, Community Foundation for a greater Richmond
- **Kartik Athreya**, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond
- **Jack Berry**, Richmond Region Tourism
- **Gil Bland**, Urban League of Hampton Roads
- **Annette Beuchler**, Obici Healthcare Foundation
- **Richard Bynum**, PNC Bank
- **Kevin Curtis**, Dominion Energy
- **Ben Davenport**, First Piedmont Corporation
- **Barry DuVal**, Virginia Chamber of Commerce
- **Bill Ermatinger**, Huntington Ingalls Industries
- **Megan Healy**, Chief Workforce Advisor to the Governor
- **Dean Lynch**, Virginia Association of Counties
- **Ned Masee**, Croatan Advisors
- **Todd Norris**, Ballard Health
- **Gary Thomson**, Thomson Consulting
- **Dietra Trent**, George Mason University

“Child care is a critical workforce facilitator and is essential to a healthy, functioning economy in Virginia,” said Stephen Moret. Recommendations of the task force are expected to highlight strategies to adequately and sustainably fund early care and education, diversify and maximize financing, reconceptualize and strengthen business practices and models, and recognize the cost drivers of quality child care services as both a public and private good.

“The findings and multi-pronged recommendations will be presented this fall to relevant audiences in business, philanthropy, Virginia’s administration and the General Assembly,” said Jim Dyke.

Dr. DiCroce added, “As Virginia plans for economic recovery when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, child care will be vital to ensuring that families can return to work. We must collectively and collaboratively seize the opportunity to create a strengthened and more equitable child care system for Virginia’s bright future.”

As a statewide convener between public and private sectors to create transformative early childhood care and education solutions for Virginia, the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation is committed to facilitating the state’s successful recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

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About the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation: VECF creates results-oriented partnerships to ensure that young children are healthy and prepared for school, life and workforce success. To learn more about VECF and the *Back to Work Virginia* Task Force, visit www.vecf.org.

Media Contact: Sara Hunt, 804-994-1120, SaraHuntPR@gmail.com