

CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Legislative Agenda



2027 SESSION

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POLICY PRIORITIES

Affordable Housing

The City of Virginia Beach seeks to address the growing need for affordable housing with the goal to ensure that all residents have access to safe, high quality, and affordable housing and to promote inclusive and diverse communities.

- Because every locality has its unique challenges, the City of Virginia Beach encourages the General Assembly to provide funding, incentives, and policy flexibility to allow localities to tailor solutions that will fit their communities while maintaining the ability to control land use decisions at the local level.
- The City of Virginia Beach supports increased funding for the Virginia Housing Trust Fund to expand and preserve the supply of affordable homes.
- The City of Virginia Beach supports efforts to establish, expand, and fund rental assistance programs and first-time homebuyer assistance programs.

Economic Development

The City of Virginia Beach aims to implement a dynamic and forward-thinking economic development strategy designed to foster sustainable growth, enhance economic diversification, and promote innovation.

- The City of Virginia Beach encourages the General Assembly to support local and regional efforts to attract and retain talent that will support the growing workforce needs of the Hampton Roads region.
- The City of Virginia Beach encourages the General Assembly to support initiatives that provide funding, incentives, and policy flexibility that aligns with the City's economic growth strategy.
- The City of Virginia Beach requests continued support from the General Assembly to increase access to affordable childcare.
- The City of Virginia Beach appreciates the General Assembly's establishment of the Sports Tourism Grant program and encourages the General Assembly to increase its funding.

POLICY PRIORITIES

Education

The City of Virginia Beach continues to support the Virginia Beach School Board's efforts to enhance educational resources, teacher support, and student development to foster a robust educational environment and prepare students for future success.

- The City of Virginia Beach encourages the General Assembly to implement reforms to increase the Commonwealth's share of education funding as was identified in the 2024 JLARC study regarding Virginia's K-12 Funding Formula.
- The City of Virginia Beach encourages the General Assembly to continue efforts to raise teacher pay beyond the national average.

Energy

With growing power demand and rising electric bills, the City of Virginia Beach encourages the Commonwealth to seek common sense solutions that enhance energy sustainability, reliability, and affordability.

- The City of Virginia Beach appreciates efforts by the General Assembly to reduce the cost and administration of renewable energy interconnectivity at municipal facilities through the creation of the Solar Interconnection Grant Program and encourages the General Assembly to continue funding the grant program.
- While the City of Virginia Beach supports the Commonwealth's goals to increase the use of clean energy, it is critical to recognize the potential impact utility scale energy and battery storage projects have on communities and localities. Because of these potential impacts, the City of Virginia Beach encourages the General Assembly to continue to support the authority of localities to regulate the siting and development of energy facilities.

POLICY PRIORITIES

Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Impacts

The City of Virginia Beach seeks to address fiscal challenges and annual budgetary impacts in a responsible manner that effectively meets essential services and community needs.

- When resources are not available at the federal or state level, it falls onto local governments to provide resources for residents most in need, especially as it comes to health care, housing, and food insecurity. The City of Virginia Beach encourages the General Assembly to prioritize filling these funding gaps where possible and to partner with local governments to support those impacted.
- The City of Virginia Beach requests that the General Assembly refrain from capping, removing, or restricting local government revenue sources without replacing it with a sustainable revenue source of equal rate.
- The City of Virginia Beach requests that the General Assembly refrain from creating additional unfunded mandates and provide financial support to fill the gaps created by these unfunded mandates.
- The City of Virginia Beach supports the statewide authority for local governments to establish an excise tax on the sale of vaping products.
- The City of Virginia Beach supports maintaining the local option regarding collective bargaining for public sector employees.

Flooding and Environment

The City of Virginia Beach aims to improve resilience to flooding, enhance stormwater infrastructure, and promote sustainable practices to mitigate the impacts of extreme weather events.

- The City of Virginia Beach requests that the Commonwealth develop a state funding program to support the non-federal match requirements of localities for federal grants that support large-scale flood relief projects.
- The City of Virginia Beach supports continued investment in the Storm Water Local Assistance Fund (SLAF) for improvements and installation of effective storm water management controls.
- The City of Virginia Beach supports increased funding for the Community Flood Preparedness Fund.

POLICY PRIORITIES

Land Use

The City of Virginia Beach aims to utilize a comprehensive land use and development strategy to guide sustainable growth, optimize land utilization, and enhance the quality of life for its residents.

- The City of Virginia Beach requests that the General Assembly refrain from passing legislation that would reduce or eliminate the authority of the Commonwealth's localities from making their own land use decisions.
- The City of Virginia Beach supports preserving local authority to regulate short term rentals and to enhance enforcement of those regulations, including greater authority to localities to enforce their zoning ordinances as they relate to short term rentals.

Public Safety

The City of Virginia Beach seeks to ensure a safe and healthy community for residents and visitors through proactive measures, enhanced technology, and increased resources.

- The City of Virginia Beach requests that the General Assembly prioritize increased dedicated funding to police, fire, and emergency medical services.
- The City of Virginia Beach requests that, as the General Assembly considers changes to the Aid to Localities funding formula, it ensures that no locality experiences a reduction in funding as a result of any changes to the formula and supports increased funding levels to strengthen state assistance to localities.
- The City of Virginia Beach requests that the General Assembly preserve existing local authority to implement public safety technology, including expanding local authority to install speed enforcement cameras beyond school and construction zones and enable the use of noise abatement devices to better enhance the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

POLICY PRIORITIES

Transportation

The City of Virginia Beach seeks to enhance mobility, reduce congestion, and improve sustainability of transportation infrastructure through modernizing road networks, supporting public transit and multi-modal options, and ensuring safety and accessibility for all users.

- The City of Virginia Beach supports efforts to continue to improve highway and secondary roadway infrastructure throughout Hampton Roads.
- The City of Virginia Beach supports efforts by Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) to protect and enhance transit programs and funding including appropriate essential, consistent funding to meet HRT's capital and operating needs, including innovative transit options such as micro-transit.
- The City of Virginia Beach supports General Assembly efforts to continue investing in trail projects with a request that the Virginia Beach Trail be considered for any future funding opportunities.
- The City of Virginia Beach supports efforts by the General Assembly to protect vulnerable road users, including pedestrians and cyclists.
- The City of Virginia Beach supports efforts to improve safety and user education related to e-bikes including options to ban the use of cell phones while cycling, clarifying the definition of an e-bike and other motorized two-wheeled vehicles, and by supporting the recommendations of the city and state e-bike workgroups.

BUDGET AMENDMENT

Expand Sales Tax Referendum Authority for Resiliency Projects

Background:

In 2026, the General Assembly expanded Virginia law to allow counties and cities to seek voter approval through a referendum for a local sales tax of up to one percent to generate dedicated revenue for school construction and renovation projects.

This proposal would build upon that 2026 authority by expanding the allowable use of the one-percent sales tax to include flood protection and coastal storm risk management infrastructure.

The additional flexibility is particularly important to Virginia Beach because of the City's significant exposure to coastal and storm-related flooding. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Virginia Beach Coastal Storm Risk Management (CSRM) Study is evaluating storm surge flooding and impacts from sea-level change and recommending infrastructure solutions throughout the City.

Allowing referendum-approved sales tax revenues to be used for flood protection would strengthen the City's ability to provide the required local matching funds, advance project design and implementation, and demonstrate the local financial commitment necessary to compete for and leverage federal resources.

The proposal would not require the City to impose the tax. Rather, it would provide Virginia Beach with the option to ask voters to authorize a one-percent sales tax dedicated to two significant long-term capital priorities: school construction and flood protection infrastructure.

This approach would allow the community to determine whether to provide an additional locally controlled revenue source for these investments while creating a potential funding mechanism for the City's long-term coastal resilience strategy.

Request:

Amend existing budget language to authorize Virginia Beach to hold a voter referendum for a one-percent sales tax increase, with proceeds eligible for both school construction and flood protection and coastal storm risk management infrastructure.

CODE AMENDMENTS

Deferred Retirement Option Plan for Public Safety Employees

Background:

This proposal would modernize the Commonwealth's Hazardous Duty Supplement to better support the retention of experienced firefighters and law enforcement officers. The existing supplement was designed as a bridge to Social Security for public safety employees who retire before reaching Social Security eligibility. However, because employees permanently forfeit the supplement for each year they continue working beyond eligibility, the current structure can create a significant financial incentive to retire as soon as possible — at a time when Virginia agencies are facing persistent public safety workforce shortages.

The proposal would allow eligible employees who remain on the job after becoming eligible for the Hazardous Duty Supplement to have the value of that benefit credited annually to an individual investment account administered by the Virginia Retirement System (VRS). The funds would remain invested while the employee continues working and could be accessed upon retirement through a lump-sum payment, additional monthly retirement income, or continued investment under VRS rules. This would preserve the original purpose and value of the supplement while eliminating the financial penalty for employees who choose to continue serving.

This approach would provide Virginia with a retention tool without creating an entirely new retirement benefit. In effect, the proposal would give employees the option of early retirement or preserving the value of continued public safety service.

Request:

Amend the Code of Virginia to create supplemental retirement accounts within the Virginia Retirement System which apply to qualifying firefighters and law enforcement.

CODE AMENDMENTS

Tourism Development Financing Program

Background:

The Tourism Development Financing Program (TDFP) is a state authorized program that uses sales taxes, both the state and local portions, along with a developer imposed “access fee” to support the development of tourism projects that enhance the local economy. The existing TDFP program has three tiers with minimum qualifications and tiered levels of support utilizing the state and local sales tax as the funding mechanism, ranging from 1% to 2% of the state and local sales tax depending on the tier.

This proposal creates a fourth financing tier that would support the redevelopment of a tourism facility by allowing the continued use of state and local sales tax revenues, while also authorizing the use of up to 20% of state income tax revenues generated by jobs created by the new tourism facility.

The current tourism inventory in Virginia Beach requires significant revitalization through redevelopment. Redevelopment often requires additional public participation to provide tourism offerings that bring enhanced product to market.

Request:

That the Code of Virginia be amended by adding a new section numbered §58.1-3851.4 and titled “Entitlement to Tax Revenues from a Tourism Revitalization Project”

A. For purposes of this section:

"Economic development authority" means a local industrial development authority or a local or regional political subdivision, the public purpose of which is to assist in economic development.

"Gap financing" means debt financing to compensate for a shortfall in project funding between the expected development costs of a tourism revitalization project and the debt and equity capital provided by the developer of the project and any refinancing of a gap financing. "Gap financing" includes a developer's primary debt financing, as well as any refinancing thereof, if the entitlements to tax revenues provided under this section are pledged as collateral for such primary debt financing.

"Tourism revitalization project" means a tourism project that meets the requirements set forth in subdivision B 1 and that redevelops an existing tourism facility. Recognizing the unique challenges faced by redevelopment projects, a Tourism revitalization project may qualify as a Tourism Project of Regional Significance, pursuant to Va. Code 58.1-3851.2, or a Major Tourism Project, pursuant to Va. Code 58.1-3851.3, if such project has half of the capital investment and job creation, as applicable, set forth in such statutory definition. Such Tourism revitalization project may include

the acquisition cost of the existing tourism facility into the required capital investment. Such Tourism revitalization project shall, as determined by the Virginia Tourism Authority, support increased hotel occupancy, increase in the number of out-of-state visitors to the Commonwealth, and support such other factors of significant fiscal and economic impact. Any property, real, personal, or mixed, that is necessary or complementary, such as arenas, sporting facilities, hotels, and other tourism venues, developed in connection with any such tourism revitalization project, including facilities for food preparation and serving, parking facilities, and administrative offices, is encompassed within this definition, as is theme-related retail activity that occurs on site and directly supports the tourism mission of the project. "Tourism revitalization project" does not include, for purposes of this section, (i) general retail outlets, ancillary retail structures not directly related to the tourism purpose of the project, or other retail establishments commonly referred to as shopping centers or malls or (ii) residential condominiums, townhomes, or other residential units.

B. 1. If a locality has established a tourism zone pursuant to § 58.1-3851, has adopted an ordinance establishing a tourism plan as determined by guidelines set forth by the Virginia Tourism Authority, and has adopted an ordinance authorizing a tourism revitalization project to meet a deficiency identified in the adopted tourism plan approved by the Virginia Tourism Authority, and if the tourism revitalization project has been certified by the State Comptroller as qualifying for the entitlement to tax revenues authorized by this section and the applicable tier of Tourism Development Financing Program, including Va. Code 58.1-3851.1, 58.1-3851.2, and Va. Code 58.1-3851.3, the tourism revitalization project shall be entitled to an amount equal to the revenues generated by the relevant amount of state sales and use tax on transactions taking place on the premises of the authorized tourism revitalization project. The entitlement shall be contingent on the locality's enacting an ordinance designating certain local revenues to the project pursuant to subsection C and shall be subject to the conditions set forth in subsection D. The purpose of such entitlement shall be to assist the developer with obtaining gap financing and making payments of principal and interest thereon.

2. On a quarterly basis, the Tax Commissioner shall certify the amount of the entitled sales and use tax revenues to the Comptroller, who shall remit such revenues to the county or city in which the authorized tourism revitalization project is located. The county or city shall remit the revenues to the economic development authority or such other entity as the economic development authority shall designate. No payments herein shall be made until an agreement exists between the developer of the authorized tourism revitalization project and the economic development authority. The entitlement shall continue until the gap financing is paid in full or for the length of time specified in the agreement between the developer and the economic development authority, but in no event shall the entitlement extend beyond 20 years from the date of the accrual of the initial entitlement. Entitled sales and use tax revenues shall be applied solely to payments of principal and interest on the qualified gap financing.

3. The state sales and use tax entitlement established in subdivision 1 shall not include any (i) sales and use tax revenues dedicated pursuant to § 58.1-638 or 58.1-638.1 or (ii) revenues

generated pursuant to Chapter 766 of the Acts of Assembly of 2013, the additional state sales and use tax in certain counties and cities assessed pursuant to subsection B of § 58.1-603.1 and subsection B of § 58.1-604.01; or the additional state sales and use tax in certain counties and cities of historic significance imposed under § 58.1-603.2.

C. If a locality has adopted the ordinances required by subdivision B 1 to entitle an authorized tourism revitalization project to an amount equal to tax revenues authorized by this section and the applicable tier of Tourism Development Financing Program, including Va. Code 58.1-3851.1, 58.1-3851.2, and Va. Code 58.1-3851.3, on transactions taking place on the premises of the authorized tourism revitalization project, or subsequently acquired premises for the tourism revitalization project, the local governing body of the county or city in which the authorized tourism revitalization project is located shall also direct by ordinance that an amount of local revenues, from any authorized source of revenues available to the locality, equal to tax revenues authorized by this section and the applicable tier of Tourism Development Financing Program, including Va. Code 58.1-3851.1, 58.1-3851.2, and Va. Code 58.1-3851.3, by transactions taking place on the premises of the authorized tourism revitalization project, or subsequently acquired premises for the authorized tourism revitalization project, shall be applied to the payment of principal and interest on the qualified gap financing. Such revenues shall be remitted in the same manner, for the same time period, and under the same conditions as the remittances paid in accordance with subsection B, mutatis mutandis.

D. Prior to any entitlement to tax revenues for a tourism revitalization project pursuant to subsections B and C, the owner of such project shall have a minimum of 70 percent of funding for the project in place through debt or equity, enter into a performance agreement with the economic development authority or political subdivision, and enter into an agreement to pay an access fee. The access fee shall be equivalent to the state sales and use tax revenue generated by and returned to the project pursuant to subdivision B 1 and shall be collected by the locality and remitted to the economic development authority or such other entity as the economic development authority shall designate on a quarterly basis. The access fee and the state and local contributions pursuant to this section shall be used solely to make payments of principal and interest on the qualified gap financing.

E. In addition to the sales tax portion provided pursuant to subdivision B 1, for an approved tourism revitalization project the Commonwealth may authorize an additional revenue stream for payments of principal and interest on the qualified gap financing in an amount equal to 20% of the income tax generated by the owner and/or operator of the tourism revitalization project. Such payments are to be made in the same manner and for the same duration as quarterly payments authorized in subdivision B 2 in the first quarter after the owner and/or operator files its state income taxes.

F. In the event that the total amount of state and local contributions pursuant to this section and the access fee exceeds any annual debt service on the qualified gap financing, such excess shall be paid to the principal of the loan until the qualified gap financing is paid in full.

G. Neither the Commonwealth nor any political subdivision of the Commonwealth shall incur any debt under this section. Nothing in this section shall be construed as authorizing the pledging of the faith and credit of the Commonwealth, or any of its revenues, or the faith and credit of any other political subdivision of the Commonwealth, or any of its revenues, for the payment of any debt or debt financing, or meeting any contractual obligation incurred by the owner or developer of any authorized tourism revitalization project.

H. A tourism revitalization project that is entitled to and receives revenues pursuant to this section shall not be eligible to receive revenues pursuant to § 58.1-608.3, 58.1-3851.1, or 58.1-3851.2.

CODE AMENDMENTS

Community Safety Zones

Background:

The way people gather has changed, and local governments need the tools to keep pace. Social media platforms can bring hundreds or thousands of people together in a matter of hours, often with little notice and without a clearly identified organizer or established plan for public safety. When these gatherings occur, the resulting demands on law enforcement, emergency services, transportation, businesses, and residents can be substantial. Events in Virginia Beach during 2026 demonstrated the consequences when these gatherings escalate into violence.

These events are not an indictment of legitimate community events, car shows, or other organized gatherings. Rather, they demonstrate the need for local governments to have the appropriate tools to respond.

Several jurisdictions, including Maryland, Florida, and the District of Columbia, have enacted legislation that allows localities to establish special event zones with the authority to impose temporary curfews under defined circumstances, establish occupancy and access restrictions, increase penalties for certain traffic and public safety violations, and recover extraordinary public-service costs associated with large gatherings.

Request:

The City of Virginia Beach requests that the General Assembly provide the authority for a locality to create community safety zones when large-scale unpermitted events present a potential risk to public health, safety, or welfare.

CODE AMENDMENTS

Possession of Firearms While Intoxicated

Background:

Responsible gun ownership and community safety are core priorities in discussions around firearm regulations.

Under current Virginia law, code § 18.2-308.012 makes it a Class 1 misdemeanor for concealed handgun permit holders to carry a concealed handgun while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in a public place. Because of how the law is strictly worded around “concealed carry”, it does not create a blanket prohibition against carrying a firearm while intoxicated.

Request:

Amend Virginia law to prohibit any person from carrying or possessing a firearm in a public place while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, rather than limiting the prohibition to individuals carrying a concealed handgun.

CODE AMENDMENTS

Increase the Representation of Law Enforcement on the Forensic Science Board

Background:

Amend Virginia Code § 9.1-1109 to expand law enforcement representation on the Forensic Science Board, including forensic science practitioners from state, local, and university law enforcement agencies with diverse agency sizes, capabilities, and accreditation statuses. Broader representation would ensure the Board considers the operational needs of agencies seeking to develop or maintain forensic capabilities, while supporting appropriate accreditation and quality assurance standards and helping address growing forensic evidence backlogs at the Department of Forensic Science.

Request:

Amend Virginia Code § 9.1-1109 (12) to expand law enforcement representation on the Forensic Science Board from one representative to three representatives based on population.

CODE AMENDMENT

Extend the Court-Ordered Timeframe for Temporary Adult Protective Services

Background:

This proposal would amend Virginia Code §63.2-1609 to extend the duration of emergency temporary guardianship and conservatorship orders used by Adult Protective Services (APS) from the current 15-day period, with one possible five-day extension, to a single 90-day period. APS units across Virginia are experiencing increasing numbers of complex and emergency cases involving adult abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation. In Virginia Beach alone, APS received 1,759 valid reports during FY 2025-2026, including approximately 160 requiring an emergency response.

The current timeframe is often insufficient to protect vulnerable adults and address their immediate needs. Temporary guardians and conservators may need to secure bank accounts, access Social Security or Medicaid benefits, obtain medical records, arrange emergency medical care or housing, and gather information necessary to determine the appropriate long-term protective arrangement. These processes frequently cannot be completed within the current statutory timeframe, leaving victims vulnerable and forcing APS to seek extensions through already overburdened courts.

Extending the temporary order to 90 days would provide APS and appointed guardians and conservators the necessary time to stabilize the victim, protect their assets, and gather information needed to determine appropriate long-term services or guardianship. The change would also reduce the need for repeated emergency court proceedings and give community partners, including financial institutions and medical providers, adequate time to respond to requests. Because the statute already permits a court to terminate or modify an order before the 90-day period expires, the proposal would maintain appropriate judicial oversight and due process protections while providing APS with a more effective tool to protect vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation.

Request:

Amend Virginia Code § 63.2-1609 (B)(3) as follows:

3. Adult protective services may be provided through an appropriate court order only for a period of **15 90 calendar** days. ~~The original order may be renewed once for a five-day period upon a showing to the court that continuation of the original order is necessary to remove the emergency.~~

REQUESTED BUT DEFERRED

Due to the constraints of the upcoming 46-day short session and the need to prioritize the City's highest-impact legislative proposals, several items requested by departments were not carried forward for City Council consideration at this time. While these proposals address legitimate operational and policy needs, the limited timeframe of the short session necessitated a focus on items with the most immediate implications for City services, funding, and regulatory authority.

The following department-requested items will therefore be included in a separate section for future consideration: **increasing penalties for prostitution near massage establishments, strengthening condominium review authority, and expanding nondisclosure provisions for subpoenas and related court orders.** These items may be revisited in subsequent sessions when sufficient bandwidth and strategic opportunity allow.

CODE AMENDMENT 1: Increase the Penalty for Prostitution Near a Massage Parlor

Background:

Illicit massage businesses, commonly referred to as IMBs, are known venues for sex trafficking and human trafficking. Currently, convictions for prostitution and solicitation of prostitution are Class 1 misdemeanors, unless a minor is involved.

Numerous independent organizations, Virginia State Police, Homeland Security Investigations, and local police have extensive documented cases to show that IMBs are a venue for commercial sex trafficking, that demand for prostitution services fuels the continued operation of said businesses, and that enhanced penalties are necessary to deter participation in the crimes.

Often, victims are afraid of reporting themselves as victims or are manipulated into non-cooperation by controlling parties, thus making prosecution difficult without a cooperating victim.

Due to its demonstrated connection to commercial sex trafficking, human trafficking, and organized criminal enterprises, the prostitution code should be amended to provide for enhanced penalties when the crime is committed within 100 yards of a massage parlor.

Request:

Amend §§18.2-346 & 18.2-346.01 to include that any person who solicits prostitution at, or engages in prostitution within, or in connection with a massage establishment shall be guilty of a Class 6 felony.

CODE AMENDMENT 2: Condominium Review Authority

Background:

This proposal would allow localities to ensure accessory dwelling units and other accessory structures remain under common ownership with the primary residence, preventing the ability to circumvent zoning requirements. Currently, the Code of Virginia governing condominium instruments does not allow for proper oversight and approval.

This legislation would provide local governments with a mechanism to enforce the single-ownership requirements established under Virginia's recently adopted ADU legislation.

Request:

Amend Virginia Code § 55.1-1905 (A) to provide localities with clear authority to review condominium instruments for zoning compliance before they are recorded.

A. No zoning or other land use ordinance shall prohibit condominiums solely on the basis of the form of ownership, nor shall any condominium be treated differently by any zoning or other land use ordinance that would permit a physically identical project or development under a different form of ownership. Except as provided in subsection E, no local government may require further review or approval to record condominium instruments ~~when a property has previously complied~~ **complies** with subdivision, site plan, zoning, or other applicable land use regulations.

CODE AMENDMENT 3: Expand the Circumstances When a Court Can Temporarily Prohibit Disclosure of Subpoenas, Search Warrants, and Disclosure Orders

Background:

This proposal would amend Virginia Code § 19.2-70.3(L) to expand the circumstances under which a court can temporarily prohibit disclosure of subpoenas, search warrants, and disclosure orders. It would create two independent grounds for a 90-day nondisclosure order: minor-victim status alone, and a demonstrated risk of harm to an investigation—such as danger to safety, flight, destruction of evidence, witness intimidation, or jeopardizing the investigation—regardless of the victim’s age. The change would strengthen protections for minor victims while giving law enforcement an additional investigative tool in cases involving adults, including gang, narcotics, human trafficking, and organized crime investigations.

Request:

Amend Virginia Code section § 19.2-70.3(L) to expand the circumstances under which a court can temporarily prohibit disclosure of subpoenas, search warrants, and disclosure orders.



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