



## **Digital Reporting (and AAERT) has scored a significant victory in Virginia**

Bills were introduced in Virginia (Senate bill SB334 and House bill HB 1472) which proposed to establish an independent Board of Court Reporter Regulation which would regulate all court reporters [and indirectly transcribers, as well] working in Virginia. The Senate Bill was sponsored by Sen. Richard Stuart (R-District 28) and was before the Committee on the Judiciary. The House bill was sponsored by Delegate Jason Miyares (R-District 82) and was in the Courts of Justice Committee/Civil Subcommittee.

These bills were drafted and supported by the Virginia Court Reporters Association (VCRA) which represents stenographers in Virginia. They had introduced a very similar bill in the Virginia Senate last year that AAERT was able to defeat, but they came back again this year in both the Senate and the House of Delegates. The NCRA has used this same type of legislation for years as a mechanism to control access to the market. They establish a court reporting board which is primarily made up of stenographers which gives them control over the court reporting in the state.

AAERT, in conjunction with several local court reporting companies, lobbied ahead of and during the legislative session in opposition to these bills. On January 27, 2020 this group, along with the Speech to Text Institute (STTI), were down in Richmond to testify and lobby against both bills. We won solid victories in both the Senate and the House of Delegates and the bills were defeated.

AAERT was persuasive with our arguments that this type of legislation is unnecessary, costly (to both court reporters and the taxpayers) and anti-competitive. This last factor is even more significant given the extreme stenotype shortage being experienced in jurisdictions across the country.

AAERT would like to thank everyone who pitched in to oppose these bills and protect our industry. NCRA (and VCRA, etc.) will be back with similar attempts to try to control a market that they can no longer adequately service. We are counting on your support to also win these future battles and continue to advance the digital court reporting and transcribing profession.