

Public Safety Briefing

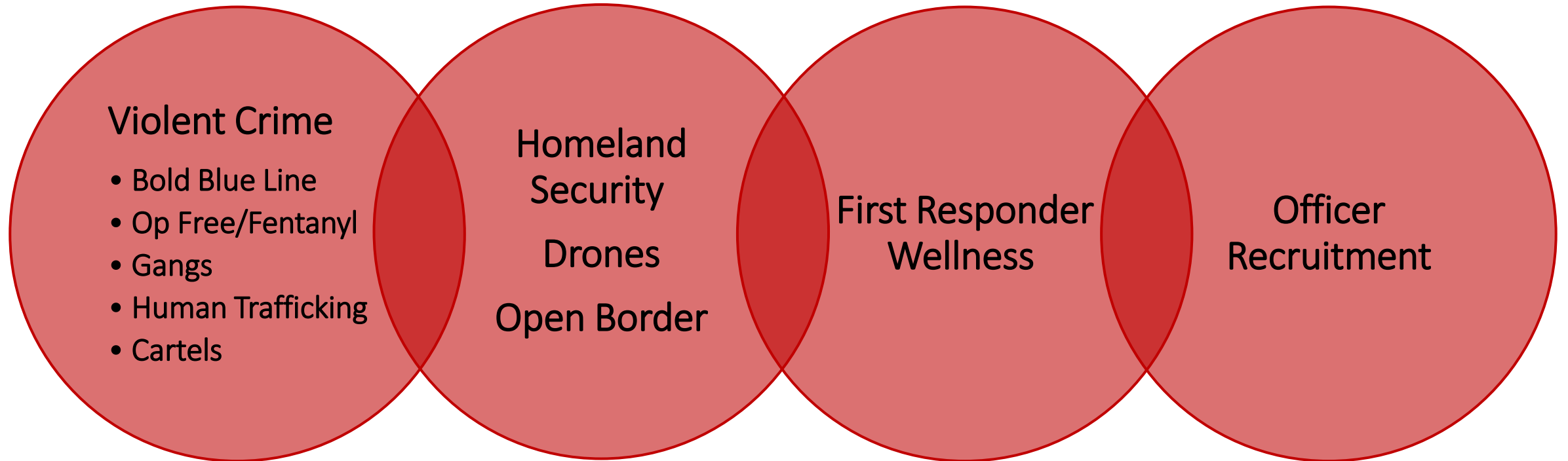


**Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee
Public Safety & Claims Subcommittee**

January 15, 2025

**The Honorable Terrance C. "Terry" Cole
Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security**

Public Safety and Homeland Security Priorities



Public Safety Issues

Addressing Violent Crime

Officer / First Responder Wellness

Strengthening Homeland Security

Officer Recruitment

Governor's Introduced Budget

| Public Safety Budget Priorities (\$ in millions) | FY 25 | FY 26 |
|--|-------|-------|
| Increase funding for inmate medical costs at DOC | - | 4.1 |
| Expand dental services for inmates at DOC | - | 0.9 |
| Fund mobile classroom trailers for career and technical education programs at DOC | 2.1 | - |
| Provide funding for proposed 2025 Session legislation that may impact need for prison beds at DOC | - | 1.0 |
| Increase community corrections' use of electronic monitoring tools at DOC | - | 0.9 |
| Provide funding for public safety communications infrastructure grants at DCJS | 2.5 | - |
| Fund Temporary Detention Order (TDO) and Emergency Custody Order (ECO) transportation at DCJS | - | 3.5 |
| Increase funding for the School Resource Officer Incentive Grants Fund at DCJS | 6.8 | - |
| Provide protective equipment for local firefighters at DFP | - | 5.0 |
| Provide funding to address increased costs of admissions, placements, and contracted services at DJJ | - | 3.1 |
| Provide nongeneral fund support for Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN) upgrades at VSP | - | 2.2 |
| Procure additional LiveScan machines at VSP | 2.4 | - |
| Provide salary increase for sworn positions at VSP | - | 3.3 |

Budget Priorities

- Additional \$6.8 million in the FY25 for additional SRO support at DCJS.
- \$35.2 million for ECO / TDO pilot program expansion statewide in HHR.
 - An additional \$3.5 million for law enforcement transportation reimbursement.
- \$2.5 million for public safety communication infrastructure grants.
- \$5 million for firefighter breathing apparatus grants at VDFP.
- \$688,000 for additional staff at the state fire marshal's office
- \$2.1 million for re-entry career and technical education mobile classrooms at DOC.

Public Safety Wellness – The Virginia Response

- Executive Order 38
 - The Office of First Responder Wellness was established by the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security within the Department of Criminal Justice Services.
 - Initiative aims to ensure that first responders receive the necessary care and resources to manage the stresses and challenges of their roles
- Office of First Responder Wellness expanded reimbursement assistance to the Virginia Law Enforcement Assistance Program, which provides training and peer counseling to both law enforcement and fire services after critical incidents.
- DCJS received two Justice Assistance Grants totaling over \$1.0 million.
- Held 45 in-person and virtual training courses that presented to over 550 first responders.
- Annual First Responder Wellness Conference took place in September 2024 in Norfolk, VA.

Officer Recruitment – Public Safety Response

- VSP, DJJ and DOC have taken an aggressive approach to filling vacant positions.
- **VSP** - Partnered with EPIC Recruiting to develop a digital billboard to be displayed throughout the Commonwealth, using data driven approaches to recruitment; using an aggressive digital marketing campaign, and have created a new recruitment video. In Week 1 of the recruitment process for the 144th Basic class, applicant #'s are up by 50% and a third of the applicants have a bachelors degree or above.
- **DJJ** - \$10,000 bonus will be awarded to Talent Acquisition Team (up to \$50k) if 90 Juvenile Correctional Specialist (JCS) positions are extended offers by April 10th; high performs will receive \$5k bonus; modifying employee referral program to allow for lump sum bonus of \$1500 payment to any employee who refers a candidate who is hired into a JCS position; contracting with 3rd party recruiting firm.
- **DOC** – implemented career progression; weekly hiring events; offering retention bonuses; partnering with community colleges; hosted lunch & learns; using social media campaigns; creating specialized recruitment videos; and using targeted mailers.

Violent Crime:

Operation Bold Blue Line (OBBL)

- Due to innovative law enforcement partnerships under OBBL, Virginia has seen a 38% decrease in murders and a 15% decrease in violent crimes in OBBL cities.
- There has been double digit decrease in every violent crime category in OBBL cities overall. Additionally, violent crime across the Commonwealth has gone down by 11%.
- Virginia State Police, local law enforcement and our federal partners are improving safety in our communities, interdicting illegal drug and gang activity, and reinforcing community engagement.
 - We will build on the successes of OBBL and Operation Free, strengthening our partnerships to further reduce violent crime.
- We will bring our private partners in to aid in fighting violent crime as well.

Operation FREE

- Governor Youngkin signed Executive Order 26 in May 2023 to defeat the fentanyl crisis in the Commonwealth.
- Operation FREE is a partnership focused on fentanyl awareness/education, reduction of supply/demand, and the enforcement of Virginia laws related to fentanyl manufacturing, possession, and distribution.
- Operation FREE 1 was a 30-day surge conducted from April 1-30 with 144 jurisdictions, as well as federal partners, for a coordinated effort to combat fentanyl.
- Operation FREE 2 was a 45-day surge from Sept 15th to Oct 31st with 175 agencies from 13 states, along with federal partners, for a coordinated effort to combat fentanyl.

ONE
PILL CAN
KILL

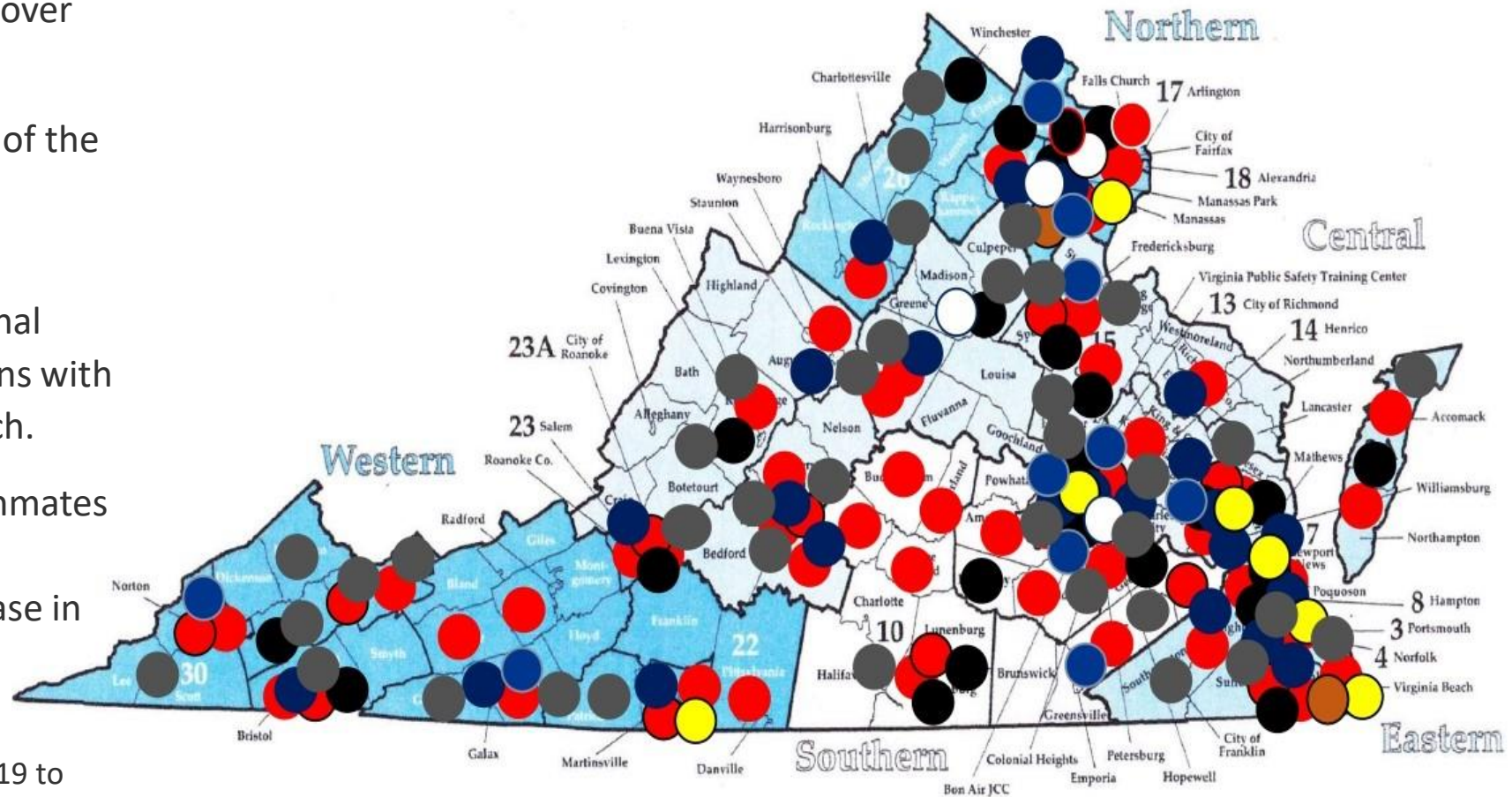
IT ONLY
TAKES
ONE 

Total Drug Seizures for Operation FREE 1.0 and 2.0

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Fentanyl – Powder (lbs) | 362.75 |
| Fentanyl – Pills (lbs) | 312.71 |
| Heroin (lbs) | 5.02 |
| Marijuana (lbs) | 1,815.37 |
| Cocaine (lbs) | 16,428.29 |
| Methamphetamine (lbs) | 221.88 |
| Other Drugs (lbs) | 224.67 |
| Denied Revenue | \$4.77 billion |

Violent Crime: Increased Gang Activity

- As of 2024, more than 33,000 violent gangs are criminally active in the U.S., with over one million gang members.
- Gangs are responsible for nearly half of the violent crimes in most jurisdictions.
- Virginia law enforcement is currently combatting over 650 identified criminal street gangs and criminal organizations with local, national, and international reach.
- While there has been a decrease in inmates housed within the Department of Corrections, there has been an increase in confirmed gang members within the Corrections system.
 - Increased from 12.8% in December 2019 to 17.6% in August 2024.



Violent Crime: Human Trafficking

- Human trafficking is a global epidemic. Through force, fraud, or coercion, criminals exploit the most vulnerable of our population and force them into sex trafficking and forced labor.
- The Commonwealth is committed to ending the scourge of human trafficking. Our law enforcement works tirelessly to bring to justice those responsible for the exploitation of the most vulnerable.
- Human trafficking is an escalating problem in Virginia, deeply intertwined with a variety of other criminal activities, including gangs, drug trafficking, terrorism, and money laundering.
 - Over 27 million people are victims of human trafficking worldwide.
 - Over 80% of the cases each year involve sex trafficking, with females being the most affected gender.
 - The venues most frequently associated with sex trafficking cases included illicit massage and spa establishments, commercial sex in hotels and motels, residence-based sex trafficking, and escort services.
 - The labor trafficking sectors with the highest number of victims included domestic work, construction, and the restaurant/food service industry.

Human Trafficking – The Virginia Response

- On January 17th, 2024, the Virginia State Police announced the launch of a Human Trafficking Tip Line to anonymously report suspected incidents of human trafficking.
 - Since inception, the tip line has received over 333 submissions. There are 136 active human trafficking investigations, and 47 victims have been identified and offered services as of November 2024.
- 4th Annual Human Trafficking Summit - to be held Spring/Summer of 2025
- Virginia State Police introduced Operation Silence Shattered to share anti-human education and enforcement action targeting the demand for illicit sex throughout the Commonwealth.
 - Objectives of Operation Silence Shattered
 - Providing awareness and outreach concerning anti-human trafficking efforts;
 - Focusing awareness of trafficking within college and university campuses; and
 - Addressing the demand for illicit sex throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- Public Safety will work with state, local, federal and private partners to educate and protect our citizens and to target those committing these heinous crimes.

Human Trafficking & Internet Crimes Against Children

- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) reported a 12% increase in the Cyber Tipline, surpassing 36.2 million reports.
- 19% increase in the files included in the reports from the previous year to more than 100 million reports which included CSAM.
- 63,892 tips were escalated to law enforcement noting a dramatic escalation in content demonstrating “Urgent” or “Imminent” threats to a child.
- The overall Cyber tipline reports have increased by more than 20% over the past 3 years, the numbers of urgent, time-sensitive reports where a child is at risk of harm has grown by more than 140%.
- There is an alarming increase in reports involving Generative AI (GAI) used to create deepfake sexually explicit images and videos based on the photograph of a child.

| Categorization of CyberTipline Reports | 2021 Reports | 2022 Reports | 2023 Reports |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Child Pornography (possession, manufacture, and distribution) | 29,309,106 | 31,901,234 | 35,925,098 |
| Misleading Words or Digital Images on the Internet | 5,825 | 7,517 | 8,446 |
| Online Enticement of Children for Sexual Acts | 44,155 | 80,524 | 186,819 |
| Child Sex Trafficking | 16,032 | 18,336 | 17,353 |
| Unsolicited Obscene Material Sent to a Child | 5,177 | 35,624 | 45,746 |
| Misleading Domain Name | 3,304 | 1,948 | 6,883 |
| Child Sexual Molestation | 12,458 | 12,906 | 18,021 |
| Child Sex Tourism | 1,624 | 940 | 2,002 |
| Total | 29,397,681 | 32,059,029 | 36,210,368 |

In 2023, 35,944,826 CyberTipline reports were submitted by Electronic Service Providers. 1600 ESPs are registered to make reports, 16% of these are non-US based companies who voluntarily choose to report. In 2023, 245 companies submitted CyberTipline reports and 5 EXPs accounts for more than 91% of the reports.

Virginia Stats for Internet Crimes Against Children

| ICAC Stats | 2023 | 2024 |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Cybertips | 14659 | 18864 |
| Investigations | 2975 | 5307 |
| Arrests | 289 | 684 |
| Rescues | 143 | 451 |

Homeland Security: Protecting the Commonwealth

- Virginia is a highly desirable target for threat actors due to its large concentration of critical assets and proximity to the Nation's Capital. As criminals evolve and the reach of bad actors expands, the threat landscape changes.
 - The Open Southern border and the unprecedented number of undocumented immigrants which includes hundreds of Known Terrorist from the Terrorist Watch List has heightened the need to focus attention on protecting the Commonwealth.
 - We have an urgent need to have a clear threat picture and prevention posture.
- The open Southern border has made every State a Border State, with unprecedented numbers of known bad actors who are here to do harm and create chaos.
- Other threats to the Commonwealth include Chinese students infiltrating our universities and stealing intellectual property, Chinese attacking the supply chain of just about everything, cyber threats to every lifeline as we know it, attempts to break into our military bases, nuclear facilities, etc.
- The United States and the Commonwealth have a false sense of security. The enemy is amongst us and we must learn how to protect our critical assets and our citizens.

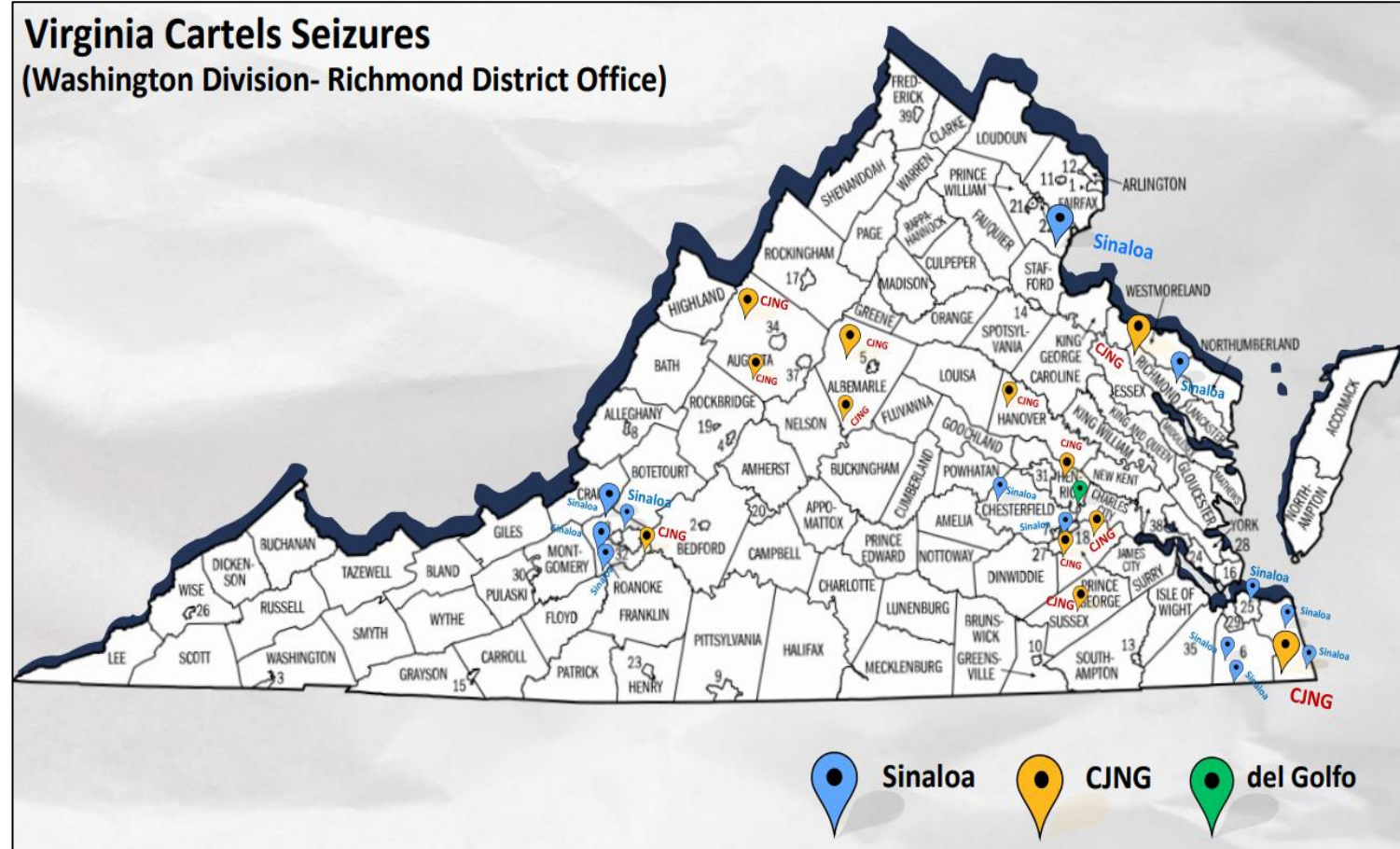
Homeland Security: Drones

- For the past 3 years the Commonwealth and its critical assets have had numerous drone incursions. This activity has expanded to several states along the East Coast. There is little transparency from the Federal Government and the Commonwealth is forced to actions of its own.
- Well documented, well known, and increasingly sophisticated unmanned surface, subsurface and air domain vehicles being developed and deployed in Ukraine and Israel have changed the face of the global battlefield.
- How these battlefield changes translate to domestic operations is causing a paradigm shift in the Homeland threat spectrum.
- The landscape of domestic Anti-Terrorism Force Protection and homeland security are merging into complex and rapidly changing domestic homeland defense requirements in countering those threats.
- The Ukraine theater of operations has demonstrated the effectiveness of weaponizing commercial off the shelf UAS systems, creating an unprecedented range of threats, from use of UAS systems for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, to kinetic weapons delivery platforms, and more concerning to homeland security and homeland defense threats, by minimally trained or experienced 'first person view' vehicle operators. These weaponized UAS systems are proving incredibly effective against a global military power, and we are starting to see them being used domestically in the U.S.

Mexican Cartels Operating in the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth of Virginia is experiencing significant public safety and homeland security challenges which is attributed to the violence associated with:

- Street Gangs
- Human / Labor Trafficking
- Influx of illegal narcotics
- Legislation which has weakened law enforcement's ability to interdict
- Sale of unregulated marijuana products



Questions?

