



## 2021 LEGISLATIVE & BUDGET PRIORITIES

### RESTORE CRUCIAL INVESTMENTS IN PREVENTION

Currently, the Commonwealth invests \$0 toward the important goal of preventing sexual and domestic violence through primary prevention efforts. [In 2020, policy leaders recognized the critical need to prevent violence](#) before it happens and established the first-ever state fund to support and expand these efforts. Unfortunately, this was one of the funding initiatives put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the enormous fiscal impact it had on our state budget.

Now, more than ever, funding for sexual and domestic violence **prevention work is urgently needed to counteract the effects of the pandemic and to undo family and community risk factors for violence.** See our [factsheet for more talking points](#).

#### ***What are we asking for?***

Support budget items [301 #2s](#) (Favola) and [301 #3h](#) (Herring), restoring the original \$1.5 million per biennium, or \$750k annually to the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Prevention Fund.

### ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY

The existence of the death penalty for any crime perpetuates the use of violence to exert control over individuals and groups and creates a society that tolerates abuse. Recognizing that the death penalty is disproportionately and unjustly applied to survivors, people of color, low-income people, and people with serious mental health needs, it is not consistent with the Action Alliance's mission this practice. See our [policy position on the death penalty](#).

#### ***What are we asking for?***

Pass [SB 1165](#) (Surovell) and [HB 2263](#) (Mullin) abolishing the death penalty, including for those persons currently under a death sentence.

### REPEAL VIRGINIA'S DISCRIMINATORY PROHIBITION ON LGBTQ MARRIAGE

We support healthy relationships between consenting adults and believe that ALL Virginians have the right to safe, respectful, and violence free relationships and homes. Advancing equality and respect for LGBTQ Virginians is integral to creating a Virginia free from sexual and domestic violence.

#### ***What are we asking for?***

Pass [HJ 582](#) (Sickles) repealing the constitutional provision defining marriage as only a union between one man and one woman as well as the related provisions that are no longer valid as a result of the US Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. 644 (2015).

## ELIMINATE MANDATORY MINIMUM SENTENCES

Mandatory minimums are a costly and simplistic tool that serve to remove judicial discretion, disproportionately impact historically marginalized and oppressed communities, and provide little real safety for victims or accountability for offenders. See our [position here](#).

### *What are we asking for?*

Pass [SB 1443](#) (Edwards) eliminating all mandatory minimum sentences of confinement from the Code of Virginia and providing a petition process for a person who was previously convicted.

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## EXPUNGE CRIMINAL RECORDS FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING

Many of those who have been trafficked were forced to commit crimes against their will. A vacatur statute would serve to clear wrongful convictions and expunge criminal records, making survivor access to resources like trauma counseling, housing, education, and employment easier.

### *What are we asking for?*

Pass [HB 2123](#) (Delaney), allowing victims of trafficking to vacate and expunge criminal convictions.

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## PASS THE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH EQUITY ACT (RHEA)

Access to reproductive health care is critical for the health and economic security of survivors. Survivors need comprehensive insurance coverage for the full spectrum of reproductive health services, including family planning, abortion, and postpartum care.

### *What are we asking for?*

Pass [HB 1922](#) (Price) revising health benefit plans and the state plan for medical assistance to include specific reproductive health services.

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## REDUCE OFFENDER ACCESS TO FIREARMS

The presence of a firearm in abusive relationships makes it five times more likely that homicide will occur. Expanding firearm prohibitions to include DV/SA crimes has tangible results in reducing IPV homicide and community violence. For more, see the Action Alliance's [DV & Firearms infographic](#).

### *What are we asking for?*

Pass [HB 1992](#) (Murphy) prohibiting a person who has been convicted of assault and battery of a family or household member from purchasing, possessing, or transporting a firearm.

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## CREATE A PAID FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE PROGRAM

Without the option for paid leave, 55% of Virginia families face impossible choices when children are born and when serious personal or family health needs arise. Proposals to [create a family friendly economy](#), like this one, are directly linked to reducing risk factors for violence and supporting an environment in which every family can fully thrive.

### *What are we asking for?*

Pass [SB 1330](#) (Boysko) and [HB 2016](#) (Ayala) requiring the VA Employment Commission to administer a state paid family and medical leave program.