



## 2022 General Assembly Wrap Up

# BILLS WE SUPPORTED

### **SB 494 (Sen. McClellan)**

- ✓ Strengthen protections for those impacted by workplace discrimination and sexual harassment.

**STATUS: FAILED TO PASS**

SB 494 sailed through the Senate and was assigned to the House General Laws Committee and then rereferred to the Committee on Commerce & Energy where it died on a party-line vote.

Workplace and sexual harassment continue to be a pervasive issue in Virginia. The Virginia Human Rights Act (VHRA) requires procedural clarity, particularly with regards to a consistent and expanded statute of limitations and employer size threshold. For more [see our one-pager](#).

### **HB 671 (Del. Hope)**

- ✓ Expand the Supreme Court's Hope Card Program for Petitioners of Final Protective Orders.

**STATUS: PASSED & SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**

HB 671 moved through the House and Senate quickly and did so with strong bipartisan support and little to no questions or hesitation from legislators.

The Hope Card Program, operated by the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia, allows anyone who has a final protective order to obtain a card summarizing the order's critical information. For more, [see our one-pager](#).

### **SJ 5 (Sen. Ebbin) and HJ 57 (Del. Sickles)**

- ✓ Constitutional Amendment to repeal Virginia's Discriminatory Ban on LGBTQ Marriage.

**STATUS: FAILED TO PASS**

HJ 57 was given an incredibly emotional hearing with committee members and legislators moved to tears in the House Committee on Privileges & Elections. The Republican lead committee voted down this proposal on a party-line vote. [Read more here](#).

SJ 5 is passed the Senate and was referred to the same House Committee where it failed.

The Action Alliance supports healthy relationships between consenting adults and believe that ALL Virginians have the right to safe, respectful, and violence free relationships and homes.

# BILLS WE OPPOSED

## **HB 69 (Del. Davis)**

- ☒ Creates a “shared parenting” presumption in child custody and separation determinations.

### **STATUS: FAILED TO PASS**

HB 69 was left in the House Committee on Courts of Justice. This bills, and bills like it, continue to have strong opposition from the Action Alliance, the Virginia Family Law Coalition, the Virginia Poverty Law Center, and the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia.

## **SB 174 (Sen. Peake)**

- ☒ Reciprocal no-contact protective orders, affirmative defense for violations of protective orders.

### **STATUS: FAILED TO PASS**

SB 174 passed in Senate Judiciary and Senate Finance, squeaking by with a few Democrat supporters, and aided by the fact that the patron offered last minute substitute bills that changed the nature of the proposal but not the impact on survivors. The final bill that passed the Senate included an affirmative defense for ANY violation of a protective order when the petitioner or victim “initiated or invited contact with the respondent”.

This was quickly docketed in the House Committee on Courts of Justice, just days after crossover, where the Virginia Association of Commonwealth’s Attorneys, Virginia Poverty Law Center, Virginia Victim Assistance Network, and Action Alliance joined forces to defeat the bill. It failed to pass in the House of Delegates.

## **HB 1051 (Del. Phillip Scott) and similar bills**

- ☒ Increasing abuser access to lethal firearms.

### **STATUS: FAILED TO PASS**

Thankfully, this bill which would have repealed all firearm prohibitions imposed on respondents in protective order cases, was never docketed and did not receive a hearing in the House.

## **HB 212 (Del. Greenhaulgh) and similar bills**

- ☒ Limiting survivor access to healthcare, including abortion, by imposing TRAP restrictions.

### **STATUS: FAILED TO PASS**

HB 212 passed on strictly party-line votes in the Republican controlled House. It was heavily debated and widely opposed by reproductive health and justice advocates. It was assigned to Senate Education, Subcommittee on Health Professions for consideration, where it failed, again on a party-line vote.

# BUDGET ITEMS WE SUPPORTED

## Budget Item [344 #2s](#) (Sen. Favola) and Budget Item [344#2h](#) (Del. Delaney)

- ✓ \$2M in annual appropriations to the [Virginia sexual and domestic violence prevention fund](#) + commitment from the General Assembly and administration to get these funds out to local programs immediately.
- ✓ Since initial approval during the 2020 General Assembly Session, prevention funds have been held up by state agencies and unreleased to the sexual and domestic violence field. We have lost 2 years of crucial programming statewide. It's time to fund prevention, fully and effectively.

### **STATUS: INCLUDED IN FINAL BUDGET**

The final Budget provides \$1.3 million each year from the general fund and transfers \$650 thousand each year from the Department of Health to **invest a total of \$2.7 million each year in the prevention fund**, administered by the Department of Social Services.

The Department of Social Services is required to solicit applications for funding by August 1 of each year and to award funds to sexual and domestic violence agencies by October 1 of each year.

Full Budget text for this item can be found by [clicking here](#).

## Budget Item [486 #19s](#) (Sen. Favola) and Budget Item [486 #5h](#) (Del. Coyner)

- ✓ \$9M in federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) appropriations, \$6M in 2022 and \$3M in 2023, to maintain stop-gap funding for Virginia's sexual and domestic violence crisis centers.
- ✓ Significant reductions in the federal VOCA reserve have threatened the life-saving work of sexual and domestic violence agencies in Virginia. While we anticipate the VOCA fund balance to experience moderate annual increases – with increased deposits from the federal VOCA Fix Act – Virginia's crisis centers need stability via state stopgap funding right now.

### **STATUS: INCLUDED IN FINAL BUDGET**

The final Budget **provides \$6 million the first year and \$3 million the second year** in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to the Department of Criminal Justice Services to go to sexual assault and domestic violence agencies for services for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.

The Department of Criminal Justice Services is required to use these funds to support sexual assault and domestic violence applicants of the Victims Services Grant Program (VSGP).

Full Budget text for this item can be found by [clicking here](#).