



## 2025 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

### TOP PRIORITIES

#### **394 #7H/394 #1s Fund Sexual and Domestic Violence Crisis Agencies and Hotline**

- ✓ \$8.25M in state annual appropriations to DCJS for the administration of Virginia's sexual and domestic violence crisis centers and Statewide Hotline.

##### **TALKING POINTS:**

Over the last five years, federal funding for Virginia's sexual and domestic violence agencies and statewide hotline has significantly dropped by **54%**. Without a state investment, survivors of sexual and domestic violence in Virginia are at risk of losing crucial access to essential services and resources. To stabilize services, we need a total combined state and federal investment of \$27.75M, the average annual funding available to the field before recent cuts to federal VOCA awards.

#### **SB744: Purchase, possession, or transportation of firearm; assault and battery of a family or household member or intimate partner; penalties**

- ✓ A bill to clarify and align protocol for firearms transfer across Virginia code sections.

##### **TALKING POINTS:**

State and federal law prohibits respondents to final protective orders and those convicted of domestic violence from purchasing, possessing, or transporting firearms. But right now, our courts and law enforcement have no way of ensuring that firearms transfer is happening, leaving victims vulnerable to increasingly lethal threats of violence. Aligning protocol across code sections will not only create greater clarity, but it will also support robust implementation of the laws statewide.

#### **SB883: Close the dangerous boyfriend loophole**

- ✓ A bill to strengthen protections for survivors of intimate partner violence by closing a dangerous loophole in firearm restrictions.

##### **TALKING POINTS:**

Prohibiting firearm possession for individuals convicted of assault and battery against an intimate partner addresses the proven link between firearm access and the heightened risk of lethal violence in abusive situations.

## **CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS**

### **HJ9: Repeal VA's discriminatory prohibition on LGBTQ marriage (Marriage Rights)**

- ✓ Bill to repeal VA's constitutional provision defining marriage as only a union between one man and one woman.

#### **TALKING POINTS:**

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. It's time to repeal VA's 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 because of the US Supreme Court decision in Obergefell v. Hodges, 576 U.S. 644 (2015).

### **HJ1: Fundamental right to reproductive freedom (Reproductive Rights)**

- ✓ Bill to protect the fundamental right to reproductive freedom, prohibiting state interference and penalties.

#### **TALKING POINTS:**

We support the fundamental right to reproductive freedom and believe that ALL Virginians should have the ability to make personal decisions about their reproductive options without state interference or penalties. Reproductive freedom is critical for survivors of domestic and sexual violence as it allows them to reclaim control over their bodies and decisions, especially after experiencing coercion, abuse, or assault. Survivors often face reproductive coercion, such as forced pregnancies or contraceptive sabotage, used as a tool of control by abusers. Access to reproductive healthcare enables survivors to make choices that support their safety, healing, and autonomy, empowering them to rebuild their lives free from violence and control.

### **HJ2: Fundamental right to vote (Voting Rights)**

- ✓ Bill to guarantee the fundamental right to vote for all Virginians who meet voter qualifications, with specific exceptions.

#### **TALKING POINTS:**

We believe in second chances and the power of redemption. HJ 2 presents an opportunity to affirm that voting is a fundamental right and that all Virginians, including those who have served their time, deserve a voice in our democracy. This amendment is a step toward restoring dignity, equity, and participation for individuals seeking to rebuild their lives and contribute to their communities.

## **PREVENTION**

### **HB 2196: Restorative Schools in Virginia program pilot**

- ✓ Bill assists schools in creating restorative practice as an alternative to school discipline.

#### **TALKING POINTS:**

Now more than ever, it is essential to create supportive school environments that help youth develop resiliency, accountability, and conflict resolution skills. Restorative practices offer students, especially those affected by violence and trauma, a safe space to heal, learn, and grow. By fostering stronger connections and reducing disruptive disciplinary actions, these practices pave the way for empowering youth and building healthier, more inclusive school communities.

## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

### **HB 2123: Extending maximum time for a protective order**

- ✓ Bill to increase protective orders from two years to four years.

#### **TALKING POINTS:**

Extending protective orders from two to four years offers survivors of domestic violence and family abuse sustained protection and peace of mind, minimizing the need for frequent court renewals that can retraumatize them. This approach recognizes the long-term impacts of abuse, provides survivors the security to heal, rebuild, and ensures courts can focus on other critical cases.

### **HB1968/SB1200: Compensating victims of crime**

- ✓ Bill to change the provision for Victim Compensation Fund claims to (1) extend the filing period from one year to three years, and (2) claims can be accepted with a permanent protective order, any police record or consideration of the victims physical, emotional, mental, and family situation.

#### **TALKING POINTS:**

Expanding the Victim Compensation Fund by extending the filing period to three years and allowing claims based on protective orders or other circumstances increases access for survivors facing financial hardships. This inclusive approach ensures more survivors can receive the support they need to heal and rebuild.

# WE OPPOSE

*Any proposals that would seek to limit access to safety, support, and wellness for immigrant survivors, LGBTQ survivors, BIPOC survivors, and pregnant and parenting survivors*

## **HB 2389: Localities may not restrict the enforcement of federal immigration laws**

- ✓ Bill prohibits localities from adopting ordinance, procedures or policies intended to restrict enforcement of federal immigration and include transfers from correctional facilities to ICE.

### **TALKING POINTS:**

Forcing localities to enforce federal immigration laws undermines trust with immigrant communities, discourages crime reporting, and creates a climate of fear that disproportionately impacts marginalized populations, jeopardizing public safety and exacerbating inequities.

## **HB 1651/SB 772: Inquiry of immigration status for public benefits**

- ✓ Bill requires the Director or Commission of Social Services to request immigration status for applicants.

### **TALKING POINTS:**

This bill poses significant risks to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking, many of whom rely on public assistance as a lifeline to escape abusive situations and rebuild their lives. Requiring immigration status inquiries could deter survivors from seeking critical support due to fear of exposure, deportation, or retaliation from abusers who often exploit immigration status as a means of control. Public assistance programs are often the only safety net available to survivors, and creating additional barriers places their safety, health, and well-being in jeopardy. Survivors should not have to choose between safety and accessing the resources they need to survive and thrive.