



# 2018 Legislative Agenda

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## Guaranteeing the Right to Vote

The ACLU of Virginia supports guaranteeing a right to vote in the Virginia Constitution that cannot be abridged by law. Any citizen and resident of Virginia who is 18 or older should be guaranteed the right to vote. (SJR 9 Locke, SJR 12 Lucas)

The ACLU of Virginia supports allowing all voters the opportunity to vote absentee by mail or in person, and opposes adding additional excuses that will continue to privilege some voters over others. (SB 114 Locke, HB 57 Herring, and HB 1072 Heretick)

## Criminal Law Reform

The ACLU of Virginia opposes allowing the government to seize and forfeit the property of any person who has not been convicted of a crime. While we do not oppose actions to deprive convicted criminals of the financial rewards of their crimes, we oppose taking such action before conviction. (HB 900 Freitas, SB 463 Reeves, SB 341 Peake)

The ACLU of Virginia supports reforms to our criminal discovery rules that will assure all defendants access to the evidence against them before they are asked to enter a plea or in time to make informed decisions about their defense at trial and reforms that make prosecutors accountable for unethical and unconstitutional actions in violation of those rules. (SB 167 Stanley, HB 617 Foy)

The ACLU of Virginia supports increasing the felony larceny threshold in Virginia from \$200 (the lowest in the nation) to \$1500 (the threshold in many other states). A number of bills have been introduced to increase the threshold to \$500, \$750, \$1000 or \$1500: SB 5, Surovell; SB 102, McPike; SB 105 Suetterlein; SB 138, Petersen; HB 17, Hope; HB 173, Filler-Corn; HB 225, Hayes; HB 1073, Heretick; HB 1313, Lindsey)

The ACLU of Virginia opposes the death penalty and supports its repeal. We strongly support legislation to ban its imposition on people with serious mental illnesses but strongly urge its complete repeal. (HB758 Leftwich, SB 802 Favola)

The ACLU of Virginia supports decriminalizing the possession of marijuana as a first step toward legalization of recreational use. (SB 111 Ebbin, HB 1063 Heretick)

The ACLU of Virginia supports elimination of solitary confinement as a practice in the state's prisons. Forcing people to spend 22-23 hours a day in cramped isolation without human contact is cruel, torturous and causes mental illness. Returning individuals who have been held in solitary confinement without mental health treatment is a serious public safety issue. (HB 795 Hope)

## **Police Practices**

The ACLU of Virginia believes that police officers, like other professionals, should be subject to statewide standards of conduct governing issues like use of force and other conduct on the job, and that serious misconduct in violation of such standards should, after an appropriate due process hearing, result in the police officer's certification by the state that allows them to continue to serve in law enforcement. Currently officers can only lose their certification if they are convicted of a felony or certain misdemeanors, or fail to complete required training. (SB 196 Locke)

The ACLU of Virginia believes that we are all safer if all residents of Virginia feel comfortable reporting crimes to police and cooperating with police in the prosecution of criminals. A statewide policy that assures Virginians that a cooperating victim of or witness to crime will not be asked about their citizenship or immigration status unless that's relevant to the crime being investigated (for example, human trafficking of foreign nationals) will make every community in Virginia safer. (HB 953 Lopez)

## **Abortion Access**

The ACLU of Virginia favors assuring abortion access for all women as a basic element of health care. (HB 1231 Boysko, SB 910 McClellan)

## **Equality for All**

The ACLU of Virginia supports passage of nondiscrimination laws that assure public employees and all Virginians that they won't be victims of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity at work, in housing or in schools. (SB 202 Ebbin; SB 423 Wexton)

## **Open Government**

The ACLU of Virginia supports openness and transparency in government. Public meetings and government documents should be as accessible to the public as possible. Members of the public should have regular opportunities to address elected officials and other governing bodies. (HB 1247 Cline, SB 336 Peake)