



Contact: Ashna Khanna
Legislative Director
804.523.2161
akhanna@acluva.org

**Grant Virginians an Affirmative Right to Vote that Cannot be Abridged by Law
Support HJR 598, SJR 261 and SJR 262**

- It is time to eliminate this Jim Crow-era law and make clear that the vote belongs to the people and to guarantee that right to every Virginian resident who is a U.S. citizen and at least 18 years of age.
- Virginia is one of only three states whose constitutions permanently disenfranchise citizens with felony convictions, unless the government individually restores their right to vote.
- In 2016, an estimated 500,000 Virginians were barred from voting because of a felony conviction, including more than one in five African-Americans — the second highest rate of African-American disenfranchisement in the country. Racial disparities remain in spite of recent efforts by governors to restore the right to vote for people convicted of a felony.
- The right to vote is fundamental to our democracy and is protective of all other rights. It belongs to the people and should not be subject to the whims of any governor or legislature.
- We should seek to rehabilitate people who have been convicted of a felony, and one way to do that is to give them a stake in their community and to encourage civic-minded activities like voting.
- The process of amending the Virginia constitution is a long one. Legislators should start the process now so Virginia voters can have their say in 2020.