

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

ACLU
Virginia

A Guide to the Virginia Legislature

HOW THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WORKS



140

seats in the Virginia General
Assembly

40 Senate Districts

100 House of
Delegates Districts

EACH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MEMBER MUST BE:

- ✓ at least 21 years of age at the time of the election,
- ✓ residents of the district they represent, and
- ✓ qualified to vote for members of the Virginia General Assembly.



VIRGINIA ELECTS **40** SENATORS AND **100** DELEGATES.

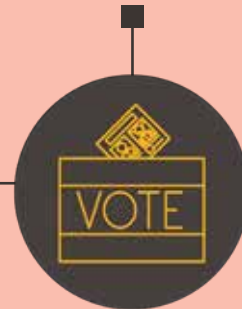
State Senators are elected **every four years**, and Delegates are elected **every two years**. General Assembly elections **always happen on odd years**, and there are no term limits.

LEGISLATORS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

**DRAFTING AND
INTRODUCING BILLS**



**VOTING TO
PASS OR KILL BILLS**



**DEBATING THE
MERITS OF BILLS**



The Virginia General Assembly session starts on the **2nd Wednesday of January** every year.

The legislature meets for 60 days in even years and 30 days in odd years, which has traditionally been extended to 45 days.



60 DAYS
IN EVEN YEARS



45 DAYS
IN ODD YEARS

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY



ELECTED OFFICIALS

CONSTITUENTS



If your legislators don't hear from you, they assume you approve of their actions.



FIRST THINGS FIRST, FIND YOUR LEGISLATORS



<https://whosmy.viriniageneralassembly.gov/>



WAYS TO CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS



CALL THEM OR WRITE THEM



TIP 1

Know your house and senate district and the names of your legislators.



TIP 2

Plan out what you will say.



TIP 3

Remember to mention the bill number (if any) and why you are calling or writing.



TIP 4

Make it short and sweet. Get to your point quickly.



TIP 5

Tell a personal story they can connect to.



TIP 6

Problem, solution, action (i.e. "Vote yes on HB xxxx!").

WAYS TO CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS

MEET THEM IN PERSON/VIRTUALLY

- ✓ **STEP ONE**
Schedule your meeting.
- ✓ **STEP TWO**
Be flexible and patient.
- ✓ **STEP THREE**
Prepare and educate yourself. Establish clear goals.
- ✓ **STEP FOUR**
Follow up and say thank you!



ENGAGE WITH THEM ON SOCIAL MEDIA



- ✓ **TIP 1**
Follow and comment on your legislator's page.
- ✓ **TIP 2**
Ask them where they stand on issues.
- ✓ **TIP 3**
Urge them to support or oppose bills.
- ✓ **TIP 4**
Share our content on social media @acluva and tag your legislator.

**CONNECT WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS
EARLY AND OFTEN!**

IMPACT YOUR COMMUNITY



WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR



STAY CONNECTED WITH US

(SUBSCRIBE TO OUR EMAIL LIST & FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA)



JOIN PEOPLE POWER

(WWW.PEOPLEPOWER.ORG)



PUBLIC MARCH OR PROTEST

WHY IS SHARING YOUR STORY IMPORTANT?

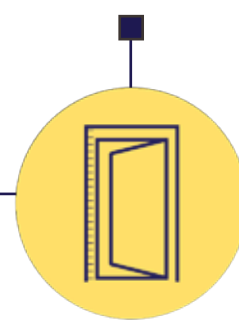
PERSONAL STORIES

MAKE AN IMPACT



OPEN THE DOOR

TO LASTING CHANGE



START IMPORTANT

CONVERSATIONS

SHOWING UP IS VITAL. NO MATTER HOW YOU DO IT.

**With your efforts, stories and voices, we can move mountains and build
a Commonwealth in which everyone belongs.**

