



Virginia Young Democrats

Composed of dozens of high school, college, and city/county Young Democrat chapters from across the Commonwealth ages 13-35, the Virginia Young Democrats are the largest partisan youth organization in Virginia. We train leaders and fight for progressive values and equal opportunity for all.

2016 Legislative Agenda

Virginia Student Loan Refinancing Authority established.

HB 400 (Simon) / SB 52 (Howell)

Bill Summary: Establishes the Virginia Student Loan Refinancing Authority, to be governed by a 10-member board, for the purpose of developing and implementing a program by which each individual who incurred qualified education loan debt as a Virginia student at an institution of higher education in the Commonwealth and who is eligible, on the basis of criteria established by the Authority that are substantially similar to criteria used by private lenders in the Commonwealth to evaluate student eligibility for an unsecured personal loan at market rates, may receive a loan from the Authority to refinance all or part of his qualified education loans, as that term is defined in relevant federal law.

Justification:

- Far too many hard-working Virginians are saddled with unaffordable student loan debt. Over 1 million Virginia borrowers owe over \$30 billion on student loans, and amount that is quickly climbing.
- For every \$250/month in student loan payments, a household's purchasing power is reduced by \$44,000.
- Refinancing student loans to take advantage of low interest rates is difficult to impossible for most borrowers.
- Approximately 629,000 Virginia borrowers would benefit from refinancing their student loans.
- 77% of Virginians support allowing borrowers to refinance their student loans.

Hate crimes; reporting to State Police.

HB 35 (Sullivan) / SB 82 (Favola)

Bill Summary: Includes within the definition of "hate crime" a criminal act committed against a person because of sexual orientation or gender identification and requires the reporting of the commission of such crime to the State Police.

Justification:

- All Virginians, including LGBT people, deserve to live without the fear of being subjected to a hate crime.
- Currently, Virginia provides no hate crime protections to its LGBT citizens.
- Including sexual orientation and gender identity under the definition of a hate crime, will allow for harsher punishments for perpetrators including felony convictions.
- Tracking data of hate related crimes against LGBT citizens will allow police to discern patterns and anticipate potential hate related crimes in certain geographic areas.

Human trafficking training; DCJS to establish for law-enforcement, etc.
SB 135 (Edwards)

Bill Summary: Requires the Department of Criminal Justice Services to establish compulsory training standards for law-enforcement personnel involved in criminal investigations or assigned to vehicle or street patrol duties to ensure that law-enforcement personnel are sensitive to and aware of human trafficking offenses and identification of human trafficking offenses. The bill also requires every person seeking initial licensure as a teacher and every person seeking renewal of a license who has not completed such training to complete training in human trafficking recognition, intervention, and prevention in accordance with curriculum guidelines developed by the Board of Education and the Department of Social Services.

Justification:

- Human trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery happening right in our backyards, and vulnerable, at-risk youth are often targeted.
- Virginia made progress last year when we passed our first human trafficking law, but we must build on that foundation.
- Law enforcement officials and community leaders should be trained to identify potential instances of this crime, so that we can make our communities safer.

Transfer of firearms; criminal history record information check; penalties.
HB 599 (Plum) / SB 199 (Lucas)

Bill Summary: Adds a definition of "firearms show vendor" or "vendor" and requires that a criminal history record information check be performed on the prospective transferee before the vendor may transfer firearms at a gun show. Under current law, only licensed dealers must obtain such a check. The bill also requires that the promoter of a firearms show provide vendors access to licensed dealers who will conduct the criminal history record information check.

Justification:

- 92% of gun owners support background checks prior to all gun sales.
- Background checks keep prohibited purchasers from buying firearms.
- Where states expand background checks: 38% fewer women shot and killed by intimate partners; 39% fewer law enforcement officers shot and killed by handguns; and 49% fewer firearm suicides.
- Virginia's state police want to and are prepared to conduct background checks on all firearm sales.

The Virginia Young Democrats would like to reiterate our strong and unwavering support for: equal rights; common sense gun violence prevention; Medicaid expansion; women's reproductive rights; environmental protection; funding for education; a strong social safety net; and voter protection.

For more information, contact VAYD Political Director Alexis Rodgers at political_director@vayd.org.