



2025

LEGISLATIVE

AGENDA

 **VLBC**
VIRGINIA LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS

**A RIGHT DELAYED IS A
RIGHT DENIED.**

-REV. MLK, JR.

WE ARE THE VLBC

STANDING UP FOR WHAT'S RIGHT SINCE 1988.

The Virginia Legislative Black Caucus (VLBC), a coalition of 32 members across the state House and Senate, is stronger than ever and ready to fight for the people. Chartered in 1988, but informally in operation since the early 1970s, the VLBC has stood to protect the interests and equalize the civil standing of African Americans in the Commonwealth of Virginia. In 1968, William F. Reid was elected to the House of Delegates. Reid was the first African American to serve as a member of the General Assembly since 1890. In 1970, William P. Robinson, Sr. and L. Douglas Wilder followed Reid, joining him to form the initial trio of Black legislators since the end of Reconstruction. Their work laid the foundation of what would become the VLBC. Our work has been critical in achieving progress in our Commonwealth. For over three decades, the VLBC has dedicated itself to improving the economic, educational, political, and social conditions of African Americans and underrepresented groups. Through both legislation and activism, the VLBC has succeeded at its goals; raising the consciousness of other groups to the contributions made by African Americans to the Commonwealth and the Nation. Our alliance permitted the successful championing of historic policy reforms centered around justice, access, civil rights, and equity. Our efforts are ongoing; we are dedicated to declaring racism a public health crisis, providing an option to request racial impact statements on Legislation, and investing in and supporting our Commonwealth's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

**We are
committed to
improving the
conditions of
African
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marginalized
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Virginia.**

2025 AGENDA

DEFINING VIRGINIA'S PATH FORWARD

THROUGH ECONOMIC RELIEF & CONFIDENCE IN A SECURED FUTURE

In the last few years, the Virginia Legislative Black Caucus (VLBC) successfully championed and passed historic and important policy reforms centered around justice, access, civil rights, and equity. In the 2025 Session, the VLBC will protect and champion legislation on the following policy areas:

1. Civil rights and democracy for all
2. Justice reform
3. Economic opportunity and workers
4. Housing
5. Healthcare
6. Education and supporting Virginia's children
7. Environment and climate action
8. Public safety
9. Digital Equity & Protection

Our central and primary goal has always been to secure and protect the rights of those who have been historically denied them.

1 | CIVIL RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY

AS A CAUCUS WE'RE FIGHTING FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY FOR ALL VIRGINIANS.

We will champion and support legislation that will:

Ensure an honest, transparent campaign finance system

- **[HB2165 / SB1002]** The Campaign Integrity Act will ban the use of personal funds for non-campaign related expenses, while protecting candidates against frivolous complaints

Codify Constitutional Amendments

- **[HJ1]** The fundamental right to reproductive freedom
- **[HJ2]** Restore voting rights for returning citizens
- **[HJ9]** Affirm the right to marriage between two individuals by repealing the ban on same-sex marriage

Protect and expand access to the ballot box

- **[SB813]** Regulate reviews of voter registration records
- **[HB2276]** Establish voter protections in the list maintenance process, including the right to be notified of a potential registration cancellation
- **[HB2277]** Clarify an enforceable election certification process

The VLBC was proud to champion the Voting Rights Act of Virginia in 2021, making voting more accessible while protecting residents from discrimination at the ballot box. Last year, as Privileges and Elections Committee Chairs, members Sen. Aaron Rouse and Del. Cia Price successfully led the VLBC's fight to defend Virginians from extreme policies to reverse early voting, require excessive identification, and eliminate mail-in ballots and same day voting. Fortifying the civil rights of citizens, regardless of creed or orientation has been the driving force of our caucus. Without equal rights there can be no democracy.

2 | JUSTICE REFORM

OUR MISSION IS TO ACHIEVE THE “LIBERTY AND JUSTICE” PROMISED TO ALL AMERICANS.

Last year, the VLBC successfully passed:

HB 611

Patroned by Del. Cia Price

Requires law-enforcement, state, and juvenile correctional facilities to report information regarding the death of any person who is in the custody of a law-enforcement agency or correctional facility.

HB 1496

Patroned by Del. Sam Rasoul

Requires all state and local law-enforcement agencies and sheriff's departments to provide a list of utilized surveillance technologies to the Department of Criminal Justice Services.

HB 452

Patroned by Del. Katrina Callsen

Expands first offense drug program such that any person can participate even if such person was previously convicted of an offense related to misdemeanor possession of marijuana or who has had a previous dismissal of a misdemeanor offense for possession of marijuana.

We will champion and support legislation that will:

Secure humane prison conditions

- **[HB222 & HB2235]** Regulate the shackling of youth and pregnant people in VA courts and correctional facilities
- Restrict the consecutive use of restorative housing and isolated confinement

Reduce unnecessary stays in jails and prisons

- **[HB2242]** Ensure Prompt Court Appearances for Probation Violations using PB-15 holds, which do not require an arrest warrant or court process
- **[HB2196]** Introduce a Restorative Justice Pilot Program, providing optional grant funding for public schools to implement
- **[HB2555]** Create an avenue for the modification of previous marijuana sentences
- **[HB1886]** Prevent the full payment of court costs from being a condition for case dismissal

Equalize and reduce the criminal justice system burden for low and middle-income people

- **[HB1665]** Require detailed, itemized statements of court costs to improve transparency for individuals
- **[HB1873]** Allow for the release of accused prior to trial on secured or unsecured bond
- **[HB1661]** Standardize minimum monthly court payments to ensure affordability and reduce excessive financial burdens
- **[HB2223]** Remove attorney fees for low-income defendants
- **[HB1865]** The Virginia Access to Justice Act will increase the number of public defender offices and support for court-appointed counsel

3 | ECONOMY & WORKERS

BUILDING A SOLID ECONOMY MEANS EMPOWERING A STABLE WORKING CLASS.

We will champion and support legislation that will:

- **[HB1610]** Establish a statute of limitations at 7 years for state debt collection
- **[HB1320 / SB1212]** The VA Consumer Protection Act will require the disclosure of all mandatory (“junk”) fees and charges included in the advertised and displayed price of any good or service
- **[SB970]** Regulate the cannabis market by establishing a framework for the creation of a retail cannabis market
- **[HB1928 & HB1625]** Gradually increase the minimum wage to \$15.00 per hour by January 1, 2027 & include farm workers & farm employees in the minimum wage
- **[HB1922]** Support small businesses by creating a program to help small businesses owned by minorities and women (SWaM Program) and setting a statewide goal for 42% of purchases to come from these certified businesses
- **[SB810 / HB1717]** Improve and expand the Earned Income Tax Credit
- Regulate car-related fees & make mobility more accessible
 - **[HB2214]** Apply State Corporation Commission regulations to towing practices
 - **[HB2368]** Maximize charges for toll relief
 - **[HB2213]** Fund Driver’s Education programs in School Divisions
- **[SB971]** Incentivize businesses to opt into the second chance employment program through employer tax credit
- **[HB2531]** Require the Virginia Employment Commission to establish and administer a paid family and medical leave insurance program

The VLBC knows that economic security is foundational to good health and wellbeing. The members of the VLBC are committed to dismantling economic systems and policies that hurt working Virginians and their ability to provide for their families. We’ve made progress in helping working people take home more pay and have more power in the workplace. The fight for an economy centered around working class Virginians is not over yet.

4 | HOUSING

WE ARE FACING AN EXISTENTIAL CRISIS AND HOUSING LIES AT THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM.

Last year, we passed:

SB 49

Patroned by Sen. Mamie Locke

Expanded ability for all localities to adopt a community revitalization fund for the purpose of preventing neighborhood deterioration.

SB 489

Patroned by Sen. Jennifer Carroll Foy

Directs the Department of Housing and Community Development to assess options for establishing a Virginia residential development infrastructure fund.

HB 368

Patroned by Del. Adele McClure

Directs the Board of Housing and Community Development to convene a stakeholder advisory group to evaluate and recommend revisions to the Uniform Statewide Building Code.

HB 701

Patroned by Del. Nadarius Clark

Requires landlords to include in the tenant's notice of routine maintenance the last date on which such maintenance may possibly be performed.

We will champion and support legislation that will:

Strengthen tenants' rights

- **[SB1221]** The Housing Authority Tenants Rights Act will reduce eviction burdens and prevent excessive maintenance charges
- **[SB830 / HB1623]** Extend eviction Diversion Pilot Program to a permanent program, providing resources to prevent evictions
- Improve the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act: **[SB812 / HB1719]** increase mandatory waiting period between a notice of nonpayment of rent and eviction; **[HB1718]** empower localities to enforce landlord agreement to maintain unit in a habitable condition; **[HB1870]** ban corporate landlord price collusion and dynamic/algorithmic pricing; **[SB1128 / HB1638]** develop criminal record screening model policy for affordable housing; **[HB1867]** mandate written notices from landlords for lease non-renewal decisions

Create a more equitable affordable housing system

- **[SB1113]** Create an income tax credit for the adaptive repurposing of underutilized structures for affordable housing
- **[HB1189]** Virginia Residential Development Infrastructure Program and Fund will support affordable housing development through financial assistance for localities
- **[SB828]** Extend the Housing Opportunity Tax Credit
- **[SB832]** Establish a rental assistance voucher pilot program

Make housing more accessible for all

- **[HB2175]** Anti Rent Gouging Act will allow localities to opt into an ordinance which puts provisions on landlords' ability to raise rent above trends
- **[HB1598]** Create an individual income tax credit, up to \$10,000 for first-time homebuyers
- **[HB1693]** "PAVE Bill" will require real estate appraisers to undergo an anti-discrimination training course prior to licensing

5 | HEALTHCARE

THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF VIRGINIANS REMAINS A CRITICAL ISSUE TO RESOLVE. THE VLBC WILL CONTINUE THE FIGHT.

We will champion and support legislation that will:

Ensure equitable Black maternal healthcare (*Momnibus Bill Package*)

- **[HB1614]** Extend Medicaid coverage for postpartum doula visits
- **[SB831]** Provide presumptive eligibility Medicaid coverage for prenatal care
- **[HB1923]** Require equal private and expanded Medicaid coverage for midwife services
- **[SB1120]** Establish a Commission on Women’s Health Policy
- **[SB758]** Expand telemedicine reimbursements for pregnancy and postpartum care
- **[SB780 / HB2371]** Require health insurance carriers to provide coverage for contraceptive drugs and devices
- **[HB1716]** Establish the Right to Contraception
- **[HB1384]** Authorize doulas for c-section delivery teams

Prioritize the gaps in basic needs for vulnerable communities

- **[HB2500]** Create a Sickle Cell Research Endowment Fund
- **[SB740 / HB1649]** Direct the Board of Medicine to require unconscious bias and cultural competency training for renewal of licensure
- **[SB875]** Create a state Pharmacy Benefits Manager to direct prescription drug coverage for Medicaid plans, promoting affordability and limiting corporate interests
- **[HB1723]** Establish a Task Force on Improving Access to Food Assistance Programs to improve food access and maximize participation in federal public assistance programs

Our Commonwealth is experiencing a health and mental health crisis. We must invest in our care-giving systems. The health of every individual is critical—especially within our vulnerable populations.

6 | EDUCATION & VA'S CHILDREN SUPPORTING

OUR FUTURE LIES IN THE NEXT GENERATION. WE MUST SOW THE SEEDS OF TOMORROW IN EDUCATION OF TODAY.

We will champion and support legislation that will:

Invest in early childhood & childcare

- **[HB1771]** Provide matching funds to employers through an Employee Child Care Assistance Pilot Program
- **[SB756]** Direct the Department of Education to establish and maintain an Early Childhood Care and Education Fund and minimum slots
- **[HB2551]** Provide an income based Child Care Subsidy Program
- **[SB1378 / HB2180]** Expand the Child Tax Credit for low & middle income families

Increase teacher & staff support

- **[HB1594]** Raise teacher pay to the national average
- **[SB1236]** Increase the outdated School Support Cap
- **[HB2201 / SB1230]** Extend Long Term Substitute timeframes
- **[SB829]** Establish a Professionally Licensed Teacher Supplemental Pay Program to reduce teacher shortages
- **[HB564]** Direct JLARC to study a potential wage raise for all school support staff

Ensure an equitable public education system

- **[HB2118 & HB2454]** Encourage integration by reversing and revising the new school accountability system
- **[SJ251]** Direct JLARC to produce a report on the removal of books from public school libraries since 2020

The VLBC knows that education continues to be the “great equalizer” and will fight efforts to undermine our public school system. The VLBC will ensure that the truth about our history is taught. Every student deserves access to a quality education, a pathway to success, and support along their educational journey.

Last year, the VLBC successfully passed:

HB625

Patroned by Del. Sam Rasoul

Established an Office of Community Schools at the Dept. of Education to focus on physical, oral and mental health and wellness, financial success, and the coordination of services.

Supported

The General Assembly investment of \$72M to establish staffing ratios for English Language Learner students.

7 | ENVIRONMENT

THE MOST MARGINALIZED AMONGST US ARE THE FIRST TO SUFFER THE EFFECTS OF DISASTER—AND THE LONGEST TO SUFFER FROM ITS CONSEQUENCES. WE MUST TAKE ACTION.

The effects of global climate change and environmental degradation are already being felt across our Commonwealth and disparately impacting Black Virginians and Virginians of Color. We are committed to fight global climate change, protect the environment, and address inequities in environmental policy.

We will champion and support legislation that will:

Protect vulnerable communities from extreme weather

- **[HB2233]** The Extreme Weather Relief Act will require large fossil fuel companies to help offset mounting costs of extreme weather caused by climate change
- **[SB777]** Establish a Low-Income Energy Efficiency and Weatherization Task Force

Invest in clean water

- **[HB1618]** Direct the Commissioner of Health to study and develop recommendations for the reduction of microplastics in public drinking water
- **[HB2178]** Limit pre-production plastic pellet pollution

Invest in a clean energy economy

- **[HB1616]** Establish an Offshore Wind Industry Workforce Program and Fund to support related workforce training
- **[HB1672]** Eliminate the Renewable Energy Kill Switch, allowing Virginians to purchase 100% renewable energy from competitive service suppliers
- **[SB1225]** Create an Electric Vehicle Rural Infrastructure Program and Fund to assist private developers with non-utility costs for electric vehicle charging station installations in rural & low-income areas
- **[SB823]** Require electric utilities to address the interests of local workers, economic benefits, job creation, training opportunities, historically economically disadvantaged communities and veterans when developing any renewable energy facility

8 | PUBLIC SAFETY

WE WILL CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON RESTORING THE SAFETY OF VIRGINIANS FROM ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE.

The VLBC will continue to work to ensure a safe and secure Virginia for all of its residents, including by addressing preventable harm, violence, and death.

We will champion and support legislation that will:

- **[HB1992]** Establish a Virginia Emergency Management Preparedness and Capabilities Grant Program and Fund to assist localities in enhancing emergency management
- **[SB824]** Provide that public health and safety, the economy, the promotion of workforce development, and the maintenance of fair labor standards are considered in State Corporation Commission proceedings relating to utilities

Protect our communities from gun violence

- **[HB1660]** Prohibit the manufacture, sale, or possession of devices altering firearm firing rates
- **[HB1869]** Further regulate the purchase, possession, or transportation of a firearms by including intimate or dating partners in the legal definition a domestic assault or battery using a firearm
- **[SB1110 & HB1876]** Prohibit the ability to bring firearms into hospitals, the State Capitol or on College Campuses
- **[HB1597]** Create a legal penalty for failing to securely store a firearm
- **[HB1736]** Create a Virginia Center for Firearm Violence Intervention and Prevention and establish an accompanying fund
- **[HB2064]** Require a locking device and warning against accessibility to children for firearm sales and transfers

The VLBC has stood on the side of liberty and safety since its inception. All persons, not just Black and Brown people, suffer when violence is the norm—from the state or individuals.

9 | DIGITAL EQUITY & PROTECTION

WE MUST BE INCORPORATED INTO THE STORYLINES OF THE FUTURE.

Algorithms, like everything humans create, are subject to the biases present in our world. At the modern intersection of data privacy and civil rights, the VLBC is dedicated to preserving the liberation and perspective of African Americans.

We will champion and support legislation that will:

- **[SB1214 & HB2094]** Regulate the use of high-risk AI systems by private industry and public bodies
- **[HB1642]** Prohibit criminal justice processes related to pretrial release, sentencing, probation, or parole from relying solely on the recommendation of artificial intelligence
- **[HB1648]** Provide additional support and resources to the Office of Data Governance and Analytics by changing its oversight from the Office of the Secretary of Administration to the Virginia Information Technologies Agency
- **[HB2411]** Require Dept. of Criminal Justice Services to develop standards for safe, ethical AI/ML and surveillance
- **[HB2462]** Create a property right for one's voice and visual likeness, pertaining to digital replicas
- **[HB2250]** The Consumer Data Protection Act & Artificial Intelligence Training Data Transparency Act will allow consumers to authorize a third party to opt out of processing their personal data and require developers to disclose information on the data set used to train a generative AI system or service

**WE NEED TO BRING
PEOPLE BACK OUT...
WE NEED TO CREATE A
SENSE OF COMMUNITY
AGAIN.**

- SPEAKER DON SCOTT (HD-88)

CONTACT US

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