



Virginia NOW (the Virginia Chapter of the National Organization for Women) is a statewide feminist advocacy organization advancing women's rights and social justice for all. Chapter locations: Alexandria, Arlington, Vienna Area, Charlottesville, Rockbridge County, Fredericksburg, Montgomery County, Richmond, & Williamsburg, with individual members all across Virginia.

House Bill Sheet: Family Health & Community Safety

Access to Healthcare, Community, & Mental Health Services—SUPPORT.

HB 1524 Ultrasound prior to abortion.

Introduced By: Del. Jeion Ward (D-Hampton)

Removes the requirement that a woman undergo a fetal transabdominal ultrasound prior to an abortion. Amends § 18.2-76, of the Code of Virginia

HB 1541 Birth control; definition.

Introduced By: Del. Vivian Watts (D-Annandale)

Adds a definition of birth control. "Birth control" means contraceptive methods that are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Birth control shall not be considered abortion for the purposes of Title 18.2.

HB 1552 Child welfare agencies; regulation, national criminal history record check requirement.

Introduced By: Del. Eileen Filler-Corn (D-Fairfax Station)

Establishes a national criminal history record check requirement for licensure as a child welfare agency, for approval as a family day home by a family day system, for approval as a foster or adoptive parent; for employment or to volunteer at a child welfare agency or family day home; and for all adults residing in a home in which a family day home is operated. The bill requires all family day homes that provide care for one or more children for compensation to be licensed by the Department of Social Services. Currently, only family day homes providing care for six or more children must be licensed. The bill also provides that, for the purposes of determining the number of children receiving care, the provider's own children and any children residing in the home shall be counted.

HB 1445 & HB 1605 Marijuana; possession or distribution for medical purposes.

Introduced By: Del. Dave Albo (R-Springfield); Del. Ken Plum (D-Reston)

Allows a person to possess marijuana or tetrahydrocannabinol pursuant to a recommendation of a prescriber acting in the course of his professional practice and allows a medical doctor or pharmacist to distribute such substances in the course of his professional practice without being subject to prosecution and eliminates the requirement that marijuana or tetrahydrocannabinol be recommended and dispensed solely for the treatment of cancer or glaucoma. The bill also clarifies that the penalties for forging or altering a recommendation for medical marijuana or for making or uttering a false or forged recommendation are the same as the penalties for committing the same acts with regard to prescriptions.

Interpersonal Violence and Stalking—SUPPORT

HB 1343 Campus police departments; sexual assault reporting.

Introduced By: Del. Eileen Filler-Corn (D-Fairfax Station)

Requires that mutual aid agreements between campus police force and law-enforcement agencies contain provisions requiring either the campus police force or an agency with which it has established a mutual aid agreement to notify the local attorney for the Commonwealth of any investigation involving felony criminal sexual assault occurring on property owned or controlled by the institution of higher education within 48 hours of beginning such investigation.

HB 1430 Unemployment compensation; benefit charges.

Introduced By: Del. Charniele Herring (D-Alexandria)

Excludes benefits paid to a claimant who leaves employment as a result of circumstances directly resulting from domestic violence or sexual assault from the benefit charges used in calculating his employer's state unemployment tax rate. Under this measure, these benefits will be charged against the pool rather than against the claimant's employer. The exclusion applies if the Virginia Employment Commission has determined that the claimant's leaving employment as a result of such circumstances constitutes leaving work for good cause. Circumstances directly resulting from domestic violence or sexual assault exist when the claimant (i) reasonably fears future domestic violence or sexual assault en route to or from his workplace, (ii) wishes to relocate to avoid future domestic violence or sexual assault against himself or his children, or (iii) reasonably believes that leaving work is necessary for his safety or that of his children.

HB 1453 Stalking; penalty.

Introduced By: Del. Jackson Miller (R-Manassas)

Provides that a person who on more than one occasion engages in conduct directed at another person with the intent to coerce, intimidate, or harass, or when he knows or reasonably should know that the conduct coerces, intimidates, or harasses, the other person or the other person's family or household member is guilty of stalking, a Class 1 misdemeanor. Amends § 18.2-308.1:4, § 18.2-60.3, of the Code of Virginia.

HB 1945 Domestic violence leave for employees.

Introduced By: Del. Jennifer McClellan (D-Richmond)

Requires employers to allow an employee to take domestic violence leave, with or without pay, if the employee or the employee's family member is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Domestic violence leave may be taken to (i) seek legal or law-enforcement assistance or remedies; (ii) seek treatment by a health care provider for physical or mental injuries caused by domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking or to attend to health care treatment for a victim who is the employee's family member; (iii) obtain, or assist a family member in obtaining, services from a domestic violence shelter, rape crisis center, or other social services program for relief from domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; (iv) obtain, or assist a family member in obtaining, mental health counseling related to an incident of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, in which the employee or the employee's family member was a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; or (v) participate in safety planning, temporarily or permanently relocate, or take other actions to increase the safety of the employee or employee's family members from future domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

HB 1964 Sex trafficking; penalties.

Introduced By: Del. Tim Hugo (R-Centreville)

Creates new felonies for trafficking of persons for commercial sexual activity. The bill provides that any person who recruits, transports, harbors, receives, provides, obtains, isolates, maintains, patronizes, solicits, or entices a minor to engage in commercial sexual activity is guilty of a Class 2 felony, the punishment for which includes a mandatory minimum sentence that is based on the age of the minor. The bill also provides that any person who engages in the same conduct with any other person knowing or in reckless disregard of the fact that coercion or fraud will be used to cause such person to engage in commercial sexual activity is guilty of a Class 2 felony. Finally, the bill provides that any person who receives money or its equivalent that he knows or has reason to know was derived from the trafficking of persons for commercial sexual activity is guilty of a Class 3 felony.

Interpersonal Violence and Stalking—OPPOSE

HB 1389 Higher educational institution; prohibition on regulating concealed handguns.

Introduced By: Del. Mark Berg (R-Winchester)

Prohibits any public institution of higher education from adopting or enforcing any rule, regulation, or policy prohibiting or limiting the carrying of a concealed handgun on property owned or operated by the institution by any person entitled to carry a concealed handgun. The bill also provides that any rule, regulation, or policy adopted prior to July 1, 2015, prohibiting or limiting the carrying of a concealed handgun is invalid. Amends § 23-9.2:3, of the Code of Virginia.