



Community Forum

ON THE BALLOT: THREE VIRGINIA CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

SEPTEMBER 10, 2026, 7 PM

BLACKSBURG TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Free and open to the public.



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OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY
Working for Democracy in the New River Valley of Virginia

LIFELONG
LEARNING INSTITUTE
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NAACP

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Proposed Constitutional Amendments

1. Reproductive Freedom
2. Marriage Equality
3. Right to Vote

Amendment process



Done!

Constitutional amendments are difficult to pass, on purpose.

Proposed amendments must pass both the House and Senate in two successive sessions with an election in between.

Amendment process



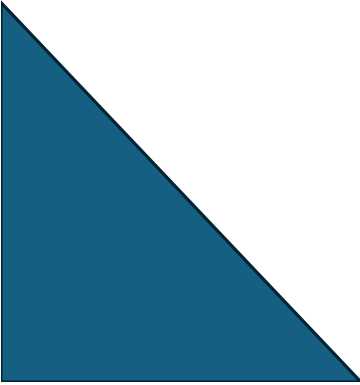
November 3, 2026

Virginians will vote yes or no
on a “ballot question” for
each amendment

Amendment 1

Reproductive Freedom

“That every individual has the fundamental right to reproductive freedom, including the ability to make and carry out decisions relating to one’s own prenatal care, childbirth, postpartum care, contraception, abortion care, miscarriage management, and fertility care.”

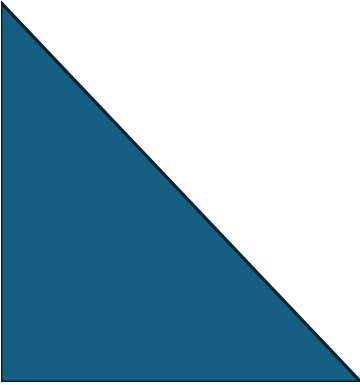


Other sections of the amendment

State *may* regulate the provision of abortion care in third trimester

State shall *not* penalize or prosecute based on individual's pregnancy outcome (i.e. miscarriage)

State shall *not* penalize or prosecute anyone who aids or assists an individual seeking care



Why does Virginia need an ***amendment?***

Provides lasting constitutional protections,
not subject to changing priorities of
legislators

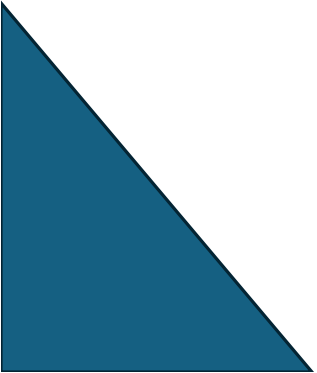
Affirms that medical decisions belong with
patients and healthcare providers

Protects the ***continuum*** of reproductive
healthcare, not just abortion

Recognizes that individuals and families
come to these decisions with different
beliefs, and government should not interfere

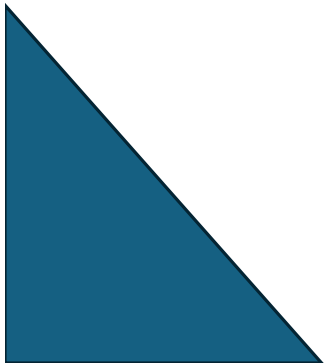
The Bottom Line

“At no point is a politician more qualified than a patient and their doctor to make personal decisions about pregnancy. This amendment simply keeps politicians out of the doctor’s office, so the people actually involved can decide what’s best.”



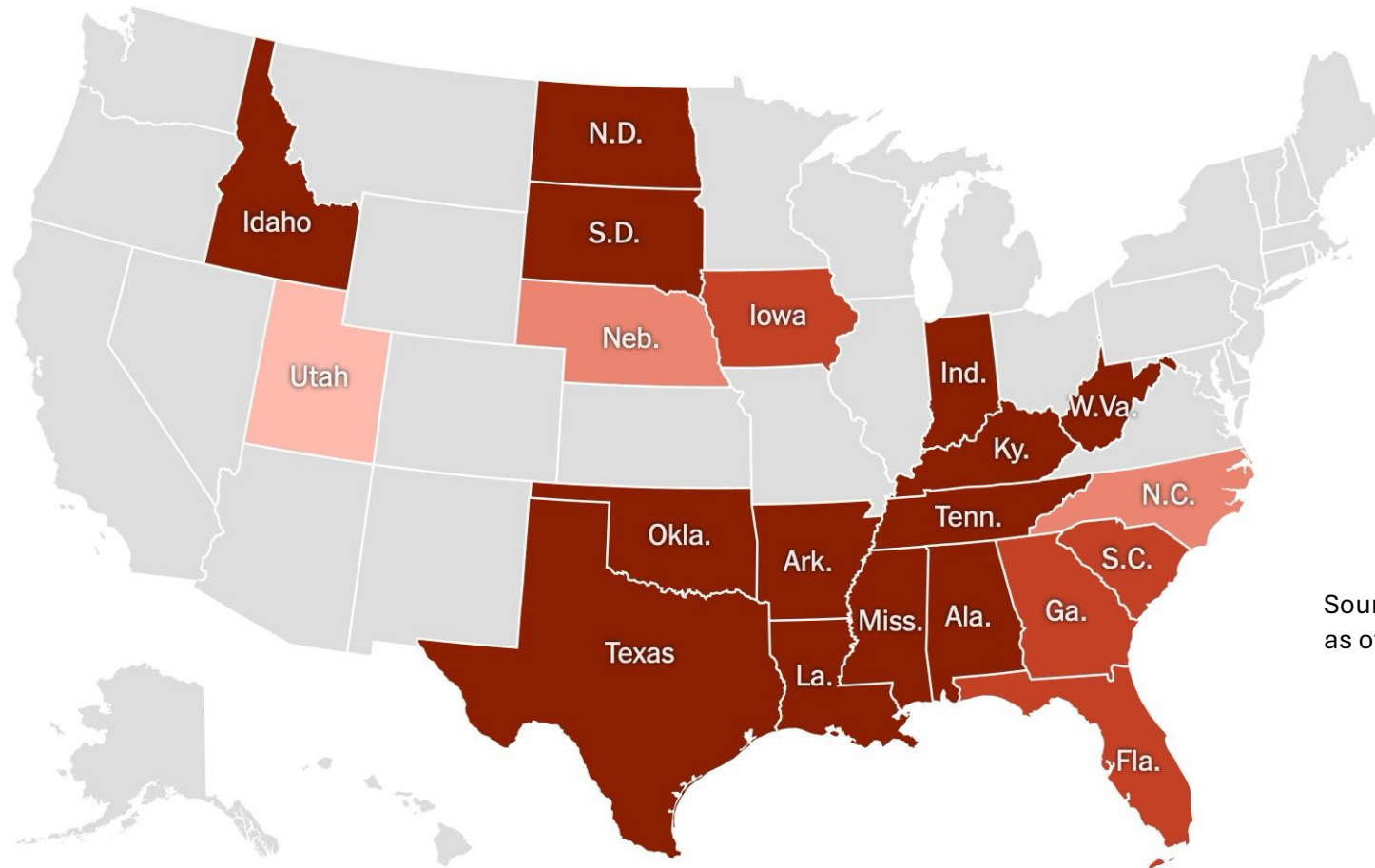
Do Virginians
support the
amendment?

Recent statewide polls
find about **two-thirds** of
Virginians support
protecting reproductive
rights in the Virginia
Constitution.



Where abortion bans are in effect

Full ban Six weeks 12 weeks 18 weeks



Source: New York Times
as of May 15, 2026

Since the
Dobbs
decision in
2022...

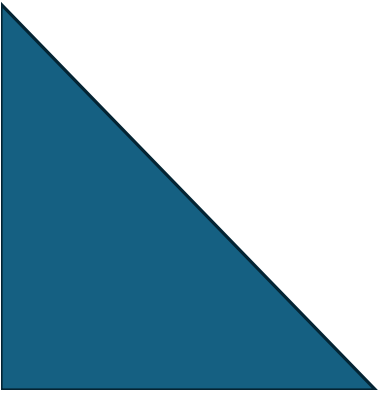
Twenty states now ban or restrict abortion earlier in pregnancy than the standard set by Roe v. Wade

Some state bans are absolute—no exceptions for rape or incest, or life of mother

Maternal outcomes are worse in states with abortion bans

Alarming increase in states considering prosecution of pregnant people for homicide if they have an abortion—14 states in 2026, including 12 where convictions could lead to the death penalty

War on medication abortions, mifepristone, telemedicine delivery



On
November 3,
Virginians
can

Make sure that medical decisions belong with patients and healthcare providers, not politicians

Protect doctors, nurses, and patients from being punished for these decisions

Cover a wide range of reproductive healthcare for future generations

Guarantee this fundamental right provides lasting protection regardless of political changes

Amendment 2

Marriage Equality

...This Commonwealth and its political subdivisions shall not deny the issuance of a marriage license to **two adult persons** seeking a lawful marriage on the basis of the sex, gender, or race of such persons.

The Commonwealth and its political subdivisions **shall recognize any lawful marriage** between two adult persons and treat such marriages equally under the law...

Marriage Equality

Current language (2006)

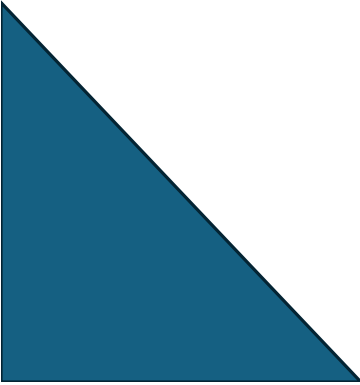
[valid marriage]: union between **one man and one woman**

...the Commonwealth ...[shall not] **create or recognize** another union

Proposed revision

This Commonwealth [may issue] a marriage license to **two adult persons**

[and will] **treat such marriages equally under the law, regardless of the sex, gender, or race of such persons.**



On
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Virginians
can

Align Virginia's constitution to national policy established in Obergefell v Hodges

Protect Virginians from a possible overturn of Obergefell by the Supreme Court

Recognize all marriages between two adults regardless of sex, gender, or race

Treat all marriages equally, including out-of-state marriages

Amendment 3

***Right to Vote:* Automatic Restoration of Voting Rights for Felons Released from Incarceration**

“...upon release from incarceration ...and without further action required of him, such person shall be invested with all political rights, including the right to vote.”

What is a felony?

6 classes in Virginia; classes determine the sentence

Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 5	Class 6 (examples)
Murder	• First-degree murder • Aggravated bank robbery • Kidnapping	• Providing material support to terrorists • Child sex trafficking			• Theft of \$1,000 or more • Drug possession • Multiple DUIs • Credit card fraud of \$500 or more • Animal cruelty
life in prison	20–life	5–20 yrs	2–10 yrs	1–10 yrs	1–5 yrs

Virginia is one of two states in the nation that lack automatic restoration of voting rights for people with felony convictions.

Racist origins of the policy

1902 Constitution
Jim Crow
Voter Suppression

Consequences

1 in 10 Black Virginians is disenfranchised.
Nationally, 1 in 19.
Virginia's rate of Black disenfranchisement is about twice the national average.
50% of disenfranchised Virginians are Black.
Black people are just 18% of the population.

Governors can restore rights

- 1,000 - 2,000
become eligible
each month
- Basis for
decision making
can be political

Governor		Rights restored
Bob McDonnell	Ended the policy of permanent disenfranchisement	
Terry McAuliffe		173,000
Ralph Northam		126,000
Glenn Youngkin		10,000
Abigail Spanberger		66,000

1 year

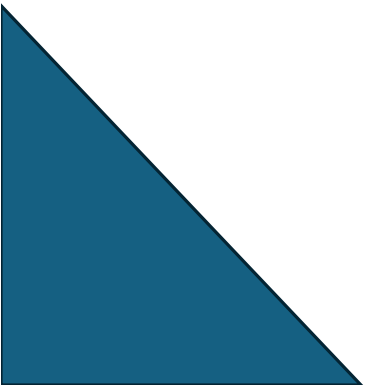
Reasons to support automatic restoration

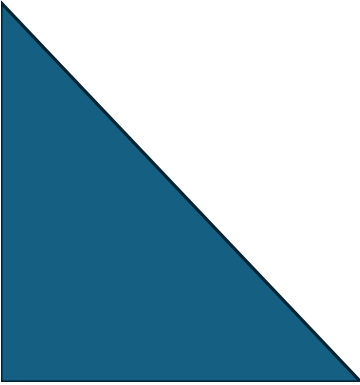
If a fair sentence is determined to be, say, 2 years or 5 years, should a person be punished for a lifetime?

Re-engaging former prisoners in civic responsibilities is a way to lower recidivism.

Black people have disproportionately borne the burden of this policy.

Virginia should align with the rest of the nation and break with its racist past.





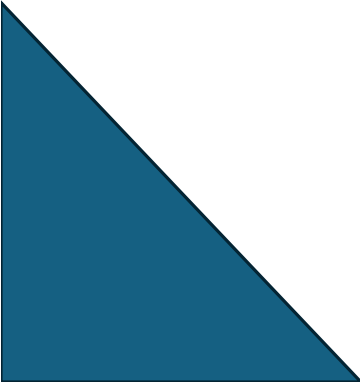
Right to vote
Another
reason to
support the
amendment

Last part of the amendment

to update the existing prohibition on voting by persons found to be mentally incompetent to instead apply to persons who have been found to lack the capacity to understand the act of voting

“Understand the act of voting” is more specific and more accurate to apply than “mentally incompetent.”

If the amendment passes, a court will determine whether the prospective voter understands the act of voting.



On
November 3,
Virginians
can

Assert the fundamental right to vote in the Commonwealth

Respect the debt paid by felons who have completed their sentences and not extend punishment for a lifetime

Reduce the racism in the justice and penal systems

Determine competence to vote on the applicant's understanding of voting

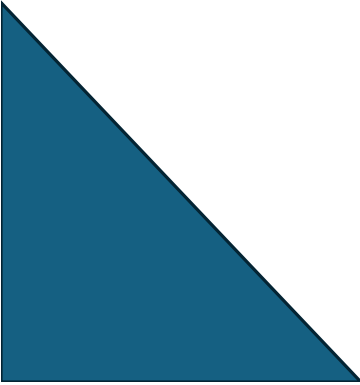
Summing up



Proposed Constitutional Amendments

1. Reproductive Freedom
2. Marriage Equality
3. Right to Vote

On your ballot November 3, 2026



All three
proposed
amendments...

...affirm the value of individuals—
especially women, people who are
gay, and racial minorities.

These people have often been
marginalized by the laws and
customs of our society.

“All men [and women] are created equal.”

Early Voting

September 18 – October 31

Saturdays and Sundays

October 18, 24, 25, 31

Mail Ballots

Request and post before the deadlines.

Check if you have not received a ballot two weeks after requesting it.

You can deposit a mail ballot in a drop box at the Office of Elections.

STAND UP FOR DEMOCRACY



VOTE 2026



LWV LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®