



## Action Alert 1 – 2025 General Assembly Session

November 12, 2024

Tomorrow the House Privileges and Elections Committee will meet to discuss the three Constitutional Amendments carried over from the 2024 Session; these are:

- HJ1 – fundamental right to reproductive freedom
- HJ2 – right to vote – restoration of rights
- HJ3 – marriage equality.

The meeting will be livestreamed

<https://viriniageneralassembly.gov/house/chamber/chamberstream.php>

The League will be there in person to testify. If anyone is interested in coming (who hasn't already told me), let me know. No signs are allowed but you can wear "League bling."

The meeting begins at 11:00 AM in room C- 206 in the General Assembly Building in Richmond.

Anyone can give written comments. Remember, if you do, you are speaking for yourself not LWW. These are your personal comments.

You can submit public comments here:

[https://hodspeak.house.virginia.gov/submit\\_testimony?meeting\\_id=17472](https://hodspeak.house.virginia.gov/submit_testimony?meeting_id=17472)

Here are some talking points you may wish to use – but it is always good to use your own voice.

### **Reproductive Health**

- Every Virginia resident should have access to affordable, quality health care, including abortion, birth control and the privacy to make reproductive choices. Virginians made their reproductive opinions clear when they chose to elect representatives who vowed to protect reproductive rights.
- Abortion should be legal, safe, and the decision left to those who are pregnant with guidance from medical professionals.
- True democracy depends on equal rights for all people. Losing our right to reproductive choice opens the door to the loss of other freedoms including other healthcare choices, marriage equality, access to contraception, and the right to engage in private, consensual intimacy without government interference.
- Not only is the right to a safe and legal abortion a matter of personal freedom, it's also a major factor in the movements for racial and economic equality. Black individuals, and all

underserved communities, already experience unfair barriers and limited access to adequate healthcare services.

- Our reproductive choices impact our physical and psychological well-being, including the foods we eat, where we live, our financial resources, and our capacity to gain and maintain employment and provide for ourselves and our families.

### **Voting Rights Restoration**

- The majority of Virginians believe that all qualified citizens should have access to the ballot, including those who have served their time for felony convictions and people with disabilities who want to participate in the democratic process.
- I support an amendment to the Virginia Constitution to guarantee that people who have been disenfranchised due to a felony conviction will have their rights automatically restored upon completion of their sentences, without additional steps or paperwork after they are no longer incarcerated, and to ensure people with disabilities never lose their rights without an appropriate judicial finding.
- This has never been a partisan issue. Both Democratic and Republican governors have chosen to restore voting rights to thousands of citizens; however, Virginia's current governor has reversed the trend. People should not be permanently defined by their past mistakes.
- Virginians who have successfully served their time should be able to fully rejoin civic life. It is time for Virginians to act to amend our Constitution to create a routine restoration process that reflects fair accountability and encourages civic engagement.

### **Marriage Equality**

- This ban does not reflect the attitudes and beliefs of Virginians in 2023. A 2021 poll from the Public Religion Research Institute found that 71% of Virginians support the right of same-sex couples to marry. This percentage has only increased since the question began being asked of voters. In 2006, 53% of voters supported the marriage ban. This huge swing shows the massive shift in public opinion on the issue of marriage, and it is clear evidence that the antiquated ban should no longer be a part of Virginia's constitution. It's only fair to revisit a political question that has shown such a vast change since it was first broached.
- With the removal of women's protections with the destruction of Roe v. Wade, it is possible that marriage equality will be destroyed on a national level as well. Virginia must take the lead to protect all citizens.
- If Virginia really is "for lovers," it should recognize that love is love and grant all citizens the right to live their lives in peace.