



Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, Jan 28, 2025

HJ1 - Constitutional amendment; fundamental right to reproductive freedom (first reference). (Herring). NOT ELECTION RELATED-Chris to testify

HJ2 - Constitutional amendment; qualifications of voters, right to vote, persons not entitled to vote. (Bennett-Parker)

TESTIMONY

We support HJ2, as well as SJ248. Democracy is most representative when everyone has a voice, and thus voting should be protected in our constitution. Only 2 or 3 states permanently disenfranchise individuals who have felony convictions. At present, it is estimated that many thousands of eligible people are still disenfranchised in Virginia, with a disproportionate effect on minority and lower income Virginians. Please do not continue to punish people for life. Everyone deserves a second chance. If this resolution passes, the voters of Virginia would have an opportunity to voice their support or opposition at the ballot. We urge the Committee to vote in favor of HJ2.

SB775 - Elections; election offenses; dissemination of artificial audio or artificial visual media to influence an election; penalty. (Surovell)

TESTIMONY

The League of Women Voters supports SB775. Political campaigns and communications have many ways of disguising their sponsorship, adversely affecting voters' ability to make informed decisions. Requiring that media that use manipulated content, whether artificial intelligence or any such deceptive means, be clearly marked as doing so, with violators subject to criminal and civil penalties, is essential to a well-informed electorate. We also are working with Senator Surovell's staff to add language expanding the bill to prevent misrepresentations, including appearance, of election officials and government authorities, as well as candidates, for a longer timeframe.

SB906 - Campaign advertisements; independent expenditures, electioneering communications. (Stanley)

TESTIMONY

The League of Women Voters supports this bill as an important step in enhancing Virginia's transparency of campaign funding and the electorate's ability to know who is trying to influence their decision. The League supports the increases in disclosing and reporting dollar thresholds, and the requirement that independent expenditure reports be filed electronically.

SB940 - Elections; candidates for office, challenges to candidate qualifications. (Surovell)

NO TESTIMONY

SB945 - Campaign finance; appeal of penalties. (DeSteph)

TESTIMONY

The League of Women Voters supports this bill. Current campaign finance law addressing penalties for abuse lacks an appeals process. Bills limiting the amounts, solicitations, disclosure, and use of campaign funds frequently fail due to perceived unfairness or discrimination in how they will be implemented, particularly the provisions for handling alleged violations. An appeals process will offer reassurance for redress

SB988 - Elections; prohibited area, within 40 feet of the curbside voting area. (Williams Graves)

NO TESTIMONY

SB994 - Elections; prohibited area within 100 feet. (Williams Graves)

NO TESTIMONY

SB1002 - Campaign finance; prohibited personal use of campaign funds, etc. (Boysko)

TESTIMONY

The League of Women Voters supports legislation restricting personal use of campaign funds; Virginia currently has no legal restrictions on how campaign funds may be used. The League believes that funds raised for a campaign should be used only for expenses directly related to running for office. We support the expanded provisions for what constitutes personal use, and the provision disallowing converting any funds to personal use, not just surpluses at the end of a campaign or term in office

SB1050 - Campaign finance; contributions from corporations prohibited, civil penalty. (Roem)

TESTIMONY

The League of Women Voters of Virginia supports legislation that limits campaign contributions. Corporations, particularly public service corporations, and their political action committees should not be allowed to make contributions to any candidate's campaign committee or political action committee. The issue is the conflict of interest inherent in a corporation's donating to legislators who have control over their activities, and goes hand in hand with the public perception of corruption and "pay for play."

SB1185 - Campaign finance; coordination and required independent expenditure committee disclosure. (Carroll Foy)

TESTIMONY

The League of Women Voters of Virginia supports legislation that enhances transparency in campaign funding; Virginia continues to rank near the bottom of all

states and the District of Columbia in enactment and enforcement of effective campaign integrity and regulation. The League supports requirements that sponsorship of political ads and top donors, whether independent of or affiliated with interest groups, be easily available. The League supports this legislation's enhancement of legal definitions of and restriction on coordination among candidates, their committees, and independent expenders or donor groups.

SB1454 - Voter registration; systematic citizenship verification program. (Sturtevant) TESTIMONY

Only citizens should be registered voters but this bill resorts to draconian measures, such as requiring that certain jury questionnaire responses be transmitted to general registrars. The voter registration system should not be used to put a person who accidentally or intentionally misstates citizenship on a jury questionnaire in jeopardy of perjury. The bill could lead to unwarranted disenfranchisements, such as those we have already experienced in the past two years, and is also an example of needless government overreach. We urge you to vote no on SB 1454.

SB1469 - Campaign finance; campaign contribution limits, civil penalty. (Deeds)

TESTIMONY

The League of Women Voters of Virginia supports legislation that limits campaign contributions. Corporations, particularly public service corporations, and their political action committees should not be allowed to make contributions to any candidate's

campaign committee or political action committee. The issue is the conflict of interest inherent in a corporation's donating to legislators who have control over their activities, and goes hand in hand with the public perception of corruption and "pay for play."