



SENATE PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE FEBRUARY 24,
2026

Chair Rouse and Members of the Committee:

The League of Women voters supports the following House bills, which have identical counterparts that have passed the Senate and crossed over to the House of Delegates: **HB28** (Henson) - Senate corollary is **SB52** (Rouse); **HB82** (McClure) – Senate corollary is **SB56** (Favola); **HB964** (Price) – Senate corollary is **SB162** (Locke); and **HB965** (Price) – Senate corollary is **SB322** (Ebbin).

In addition, the League supports the following bills and urges the Committee to report them to the Senate.

The Committee should report **HB78** (Price) to the Senate despite having continued to 2027 the comparable Senate Bill 831 because the bill serves a necessary purpose. Once a local Electoral Board has accomplished its post-election duties, which include reviewing the statements of results, checking the machine tapes, adjudicating provisional ballots, and preparing the abstract of results, the electoral board’s members are required to certify the election. Certification is a ministerial act, with no room for discretion, as the bill codifies.

We support **HB113** (Helmer) in its current form. It is common sense that it should be illegal to bribe a person to vote or register to vote, or to solicit or accept such a bribe. Third parties, such as the League of Women voters, would not be in violation if they offer a stipend to interns who participate in state-authorized voter registration activities among their other duties, nor if they offer a sticker or armband to a registrant.

HB212 (Gardner) improves the process for protecting all the people who run Virginia’s elections from intimidation, bribery, coercion or threats. The bill addresses the inherent challenge in proving that someone *willfully* committed one of the crimes enumerated in the statute. A prosecutor would still need to prove intent, without also proving what was going on inside that person’s head.

HB215 (Henson) includes the entire text of **SB57** (VanValkenburg) but is more expansive, requiring that two thirds of the State Board of Elections must vote to enter into, modify, or

cancel a memorandum of understanding with a third party to share Virginia's voter registration data. We recommend incorporating SB57 into HB215.

HB639 (Krizek) amends the so-called "Zuckerbucks" law, which was based on a misunderstanding of funds provided to local election offices during the pandemic. The current rule uses language so vague that many registrars have become reluctant to work with organizations like the LWV on voter registration, including in the high schools. This has limited our ability to achieve one of our core functions, registering voters. The existing restrictions were interpreted differently throughout the Commonwealth, further inhibiting our ability to serve voters. This bill permits volunteers to assist election officials to a reasonable extent, resolving much of the confusion.

HB640 (Krizek) properly transfers jurisdiction over an individual's right to challenge a voter's registration from a voting location or the General Registrar to a circuit court. Election officers have no way to know if a person is eligible to vote and registrars should not be acting like judges.

HB909 (Shin) distinguishes between the 40-foot prohibited area for electioneering, which properly allows interactions between campaigns and voters, and a new 100-foot prohibited area for the carrying of firearms by those other than appropriate law enforcement and security personnel. Regardless of whether an individual carrying a firearm intends to use a dangerous weapon, The bill includes common sense guardrails while reflecting that an armed person can induce fear and intimidation.

HB967 (Price) provides important amendments to the Virginia Voting Rights Act, expanding the current law's protections of minority voting rights in Virginia. Among the additional rights and protections, the bill grants judicial standing to certain organizations, allowing them to file in circuit courts to seek redress from violations of the Act. The League of Women Voters of Virginia, which has minority members and whose mission pertains to voting rights protection, would qualify as such an organization. We believe that the bill is a good starting point but we look forward to working with the legislature to further strengthen it to preclude potential misinterpretation or misapplication and to more fully protect voters at a time when federal protections are being weakened.

