



DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON · DIOCESE OF RICHMOND  
Representing the Virginia Catholic Bishops and their Dioceses in Public Policy Matters

## A far different 2020 General Assembly session yields sweeping changes

The 2019 elections swung both the Senate and House from majority Republican to majority Democrat. With the switch in power came a seismic shift in leadership priorities and a rush by the new majority to enact sweeping changes that Gov. Northam was eager to sign. In just two months, nearly 1300 bills passed, some drastically altering or even erasing decades of state policy. For the Virginia Catholic Conference, this session was far different than any other in its 15-year history. The sheer number and striking severity of threats, especially to life and religious liberty, created a triage-like environment for VCC advocacy this year.

### *What passed?*

**Abortion expansion legislation that dismantles decades of pro-life protections.** It eliminates health and safety regulations for abortion facilities, allows non-doctors to perform first-trimester abortions and removes nearly all requirements of informed consent before an abortion. Gov. Northam announced his signature in a press release issued on Good Friday. (To see how your legislators voted, see “Opposing Abortion Expansion” in charts.)

**Reversal of the Hyde Amendment restrictions against abortion funding** that VCC advocacy had helped secure just one year ago. (To see how your Delegate voted on an attempt to preserve the restrictions, see “Protecting Hyde Amendment” in House chart.)

Ratification of the ERA, even though its language has already been **used to challenge and overturn pro-life laws in other states.** (See “Opposing ERA” in charts.)

Legislation adding “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” as protected categories in many areas of state law. **VCC efforts to amend the legislation to ensure religious liberty protections** for religious employers, churches, schools and other ministries to practice their beliefs – including the beliefs that God created each person male or female and established marriage as the union of a man and a woman – **were thwarted at every turn.** (To see how your legislators voted on attempted religious liberty amendments, see “Religious Liberty in Employment” in Senate and House charts and “Religious Liberty in Public Accommodations” in Senate chart.) VCC involvement was, however, instrumental in ensuring these

new provisions do not change existing law on state contracts and thus **do not impact partnerships between Catholic Charities and the Commonwealth to provide refugee resettlement and other services.**

Legislation requiring health benefit plans to cover gender transition treatments and surgery. **VCC efforts to add an exemption for religious employers whose beliefs do not permit this coverage were defeated.** (To see how your Senator voted on the proposed religious exemption, see “Religious Liberty in Health Plans” in Senate chart.)

Legislation requiring **background checks for firearm purchases.** (See “Background Checks for Gun Purchases” in charts.)

Legislation ensuring that **crime victims and witnesses are not asked their immigration status** when they report crimes. (See “Immigrants – Protecting Crime Victims/Witnesses” in charts.)

Legislation **protecting borrowers from predatory lending practices.** (See “Curbing Predatory Lending” in charts.)

### *What did not pass?*

Bills to legalize assisted suicide, to repeal the law that protects the religious liberty of faith-based adoption and foster-care agencies, and to repeal the Education Improvements Scholarships Tax Credits program. **Proactive advocacy by the VCC and partnering organizations was key in keeping each of these three bills from receiving committee votes this year. In each case, however, the legislation is likely to resurface, requiring vigilance and intensified efforts by the VCC and its advocacy partners.**

Legislation to exempt from the death penalty those who had a severe mental illness at the time of the crime. The bill passed the Senate in a strong bipartisan vote but then stalled in a House subcommittee. (See “Supporting Death Penalty Exemption” in Senate chart.) **Bills to abolish the death penalty also failed to advance, but there were positive indications that movement could occur next year.**

Legislation that would have required **parental consent** for a child to participate in a public school FLE program. (To see how a House subcommittee voted, see “Requiring Parental Consent for FLE” in House chart.)

*The Virginia Catholic Conference is the public-policy agency representing Virginia’s Catholic bishops and their two dioceses.  
To sign up for VCC email [alerts and updates](#), please visit [www.vacatholic.org](http://www.vacatholic.org).*

# How legislators voted in the 2020 General Assembly session

## Senate Votes

√: Vote agreed with VCC position

X: Vote disagreed with VCC position

NV: Recorded as not voting

Name of Senator (Party, District)	Opposing Abortion Expansion*	Opposing ERA	Religious Liberty in Public Accommodations	Religious Liberty in Employment	Religious Liberty in Health Plans	Supporting Death Penalty Exemption	Background Checks for Gun Purchases	Immigrants – Protecting Crime Victims/Witnesses	Curbing Predatory Lending
Barker, George L. (D-39)	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	√
Bell, John J. (D-13)	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	√
Boysko, Jennifer B. (D-33)	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	√
Chafin, A. Benton, Jr. (R-38)	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	X
Chase, Amanda F. (R-11)	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	X
Cosgrove, John A., Jr. (R-14)	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	√
Deeds, R. Creigh (D-25)	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	√
DeSteph, Bill R., Jr. (R-8)	√	X	√	√	√	√	X	X	X
Dunnivant, Siobhan S. (R-12)	√	X	√**	√	√	√	√	X	X
Ebbin, Adam P. (D-30)	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	√
Edwards, John S. (D-21)	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	√
Favola, Barbara A. (D-31)	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	√
Hanger, Emmett W., Jr. (R-24)	√	X	√	√	√	√	√	X	√
Hashmi, Ghazala F. (D-10)	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	√

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Howell, Janet D. (D-32)	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	√
Kiggans, Jen A. (R-7)	√	X	√	√	√	√	X	X	X
Lewis, Lynwood W., Jr. (D-6)	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	√
Locke, Mamie E. (D-2)	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	√
Lucas, L. Louise (D-18)	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	√
Marsden, David W. (D-37)	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	√
Mason, T. Montgomery "Monty" (D-1)	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	√
McClellan, Jennifer L. (D-9)	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	√
McDougle, Ryan T. (R-4)	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	X
McPike, Jeremy S. (D-29)	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	√
Morrissey, Joseph D. (D-16)	√	X	X**	X	X	√	√	√	√
Newman, Stephen D. (R-23)	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X
Norment, Thomas K., Jr. (R-3)	√	X	√	√	√	NV	X	X	√
Obenshain, Mark D. (R-26)	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	X
Peake, Mark J. (R-22)	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X

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Petersen, J. Chapman (D-34)	X	X	X**	X	X	√	√	NV	√
Pillion, Todd E. (R-40)	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X
Reeves, Bryce E. (R-17)	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	X
Ruff, Frank M., Jr. (R-15)	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	√
Saslaw, Richard L. (D-35)	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	√
Spruill, Lionell, Sr. (D-5)	X	X	X**	X	X	√	√	√	√
Stanley, William M., Jr. (R-20)	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X
Stuart, Richard H. (R-28)	√	X	√**	X	√	X	X	X	X
Suetterlein, David R. (R-19)	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	√
Surovell, Scott A. (D-36)	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	√
Vogel, Jill Holtzman (R-27)	√	X	√**	X	√	√	X	X	√

\* The vote on this bill was a 20-20 tie, and Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax – as President of the Senate – broke the tie with a yea vote. As a result, the bill passed.

\*\* The vote recorded in the Religious Liberty in Public Accommodations column was on a VCC-supported amendment to exempt religious organizations from the public accommodations section of SB 868. That vote took place February 5. On March 5, the Senate debated a very similar VCC-supported amendment on HB 1663, the House version of SB 868. Senators Petersen and Stuart patroned the VCC-supported amendment to HB 1663 on March 5. Although the VCC is unable to report the March 5 vote because it was an unrecorded voice vote, the Senators with a \*\* next to their votes on the Religious Liberty in Public Accommodations amendment to SB 868 (Feb. 5 vote) spoke in favor of the VCC-supported amendment to HB 1663 during the March 5 Senate floor debate. The amendment to HB 1663 was adopted by the Senate, but it was not ultimately successful.

# House of Delegates Votes

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Adams, Dawn M. (D-68)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Adams, Leslie R. "Les" (R-16)	√	√	√	√	X	X	√	
Aird, Lashrecse D. (D-63)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Askew, Alex Q. (D-85)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Austin, Terry L. (R-19)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Avoli, G. John (R-20)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Ayala, Hala S. (D-51)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Bagby, Lamont (D-74)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Batten, Amanda Etter (R-96)	√	√	√	√	X	X	√	
Bell, Robert B. (R-58)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Bloxom, Robert S., Jr. (R-100)	√	√	√	√	X	√	√	
Bourne, Jeffrey M. (D-71)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Brewer, Emily M. (R-64)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Bulova, David L. (D-37)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	X

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Byron, Kathy J. (R-22)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Campbell, Jeffrey L. (R-6)	√	√	X	√	X	X	X	
Campbell, Ronnie R. (R-24)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Carr, Betsy B. (D-69)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Carroll Foy, Jennifer D. (D-2)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Carter, Lee J. (D-50)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Cole, Joshua G. (D-28)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Cole, Mark L. (R-88)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Collins, Christopher E. (R-29)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Convirs-Fowler, Kelly K. (D-21)	X	X	X	X	√	NV	NV	
Cox, M. Kirkland (R-66)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Coyner, Carrie E. (R-62)	√	√	X	√	X	X	√	
Davis, Glenn R., Jr. (R-84)	√	√	X	√	X	X	X	√
Delaney, Karrie K. (D-67)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Edmunds, James E., II (R-60)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	

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Fariss, C. Matthew (R-59)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Filler-Corn, Eileen (D-41)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Fowler, Hyland F. "Buddy", Jr. (R-55)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Freitas, Nicholas J. "Nick" (R-30)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Gilbert, C. Todd (R-15)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Gooditis, Gwendolyn W. "Wendy" (D-10)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Guy, Nancy D. (D-83)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	X
Guzman, Elizabeth R. (D-31)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	X
Hayes, C. E. "Cliff", Jr. (D-77)	√	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Head, Christopher T. (R-17)	√	√	√	√	X	NV	NV	
Helmer, Daniel I. (D-40)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Heretick, Stephen E. (D-79)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Herring, Charniele L. (D-46)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Hodges, M. Keith (R-98)	√	√	√	√	X	X	√	
Hope, Patrick A. (D-47)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	



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Hudson, Sally L. (D-57)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Hurst, Chris L. (D-12)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Jenkins, Clinton L. (D-76)	X	X	X	√	√	√	√	
Jones, Jerrauld C. "Jay" (D-89)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Keam, Mark L. (D-35)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Kilgore, Terry G. (R-1)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Knight, Barry D. (R-81)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Kory, Kaye (D-38)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Krizek, Paul E. (D-44)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
LaRock, David A. (R-33)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Leftwich, James A. "Jay", Jr. (R-78)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Levine, Mark H. (D-45)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Lindsey, Joseph C. (D-90)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Lopez, Alfonso H. (D-49)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Marshall, Daniel W., III (R-14)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	√

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McGuire, John J., III (R-56)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
McNamara, Joseph P. (R-8)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
McQuinn, Delores L. (D-70)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Miyares, Jason S. (R-82)	√	√	√	√	X	X	√	
Morefield, James W. "Will" (R-3)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Mugler, Martha M. (D-91)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Mullin, Michael P. (D-93)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Murphy, Kathleen J. (D-34)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
O'Quinn, Israel D. (R-5)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Orrock, Robert D., Sr. (R-54)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Plum, Kenneth R. (D-36)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Poindexter, Charles D. (R-9)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Price, Marcia S. "Cia" (D-95)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Ransone, Margaret B. (R-99)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Rasoul, Sam (D-11)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	

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Reid, David A. (D-32)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Robinson, Roxann L. (R-27)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	√
Roem, Danica A. (D-13)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Runion, Chris (R-25)	√	√	√	√	X	X	√	
Rush, L. Nick (R-7)	√	√	√	√	X	X	√	
Samirah, Ibraheem S. (D-86)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Scott, Don L., Jr. (D-80)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Sickles, Mark D. (D-43)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Simon, Marcus B. (D-53)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Simonds, Shelly A. (D-94)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Subramanyam, Suhas (D-87)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	X
Sullivan, Richard C. "Rip", Jr. (D-48)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Torian, Luke E. (D-52)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Tran, Kathy KL (D-42)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Tyler, Roslyn C. (D-75)	NV	X	X	X	X	√	√	

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VanValkenburg, Schuyler T. (D-72)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	X
Walker, Wendell S. (R-23)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Wampler, William C. III (R-4)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Ward, Jeion A. (D-92)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Ware, R. Lee (R-65)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Watts, Vivian E. (D-39)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Webert, Michael J. (R-18)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Willett, Rodney T. (D-73)	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	
Wilt, Tony O. (R-26)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Wright, Thomas C., Jr. (R-61)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	
Wyatt, Scott A. (R-97)	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	

\*Because a House subcommittee defeated the bill (5-3), most Delegates did not have an opportunity to vote on it. Subcommittee members' votes are recorded in chart.

# Future Threats

The VCC-opposed bills described in this section did not advance out of committee during the 2020 session but are expected to return in some form in 2021. The legislation's patrons and co-patrons are listed below the descriptions.

**“Right to reproductive choice”**: This bill would have designated the “right to reproductive choice” – including abortion, sterilization and contraception – as a “fundamental right” in Virginia law.

**Senate Patrons:**

Surovell (D-36), (**chief patron**); Boysko (D-33), (**chief co-patron**); Barker (D-39); Bell (D-13); Deeds (D-25); Ebbin (D-30); Edwards (D-21); Favola (D-31); Hashmi (D-10); Howell (D-32); Lewis (D-6); Locke (D-2); Lucas (D-18); Marsden (D-37); Mason (D-1); McClellan (D-9); McPike (D-29); Saslaw (D-35); Spruill (D-5)

**House Patrons:**

Aird (D-63); Askew (D-85); Ayala (D-51); Bagby (D-74); Bourne (D-71); Carr (D-69); Carroll Foy (D-2); Carter (D-50); Cole, J. G. (D-28); Convirs-Fowler (D-21); Guy (D-83); Heretick (D-79); Hope (D-47); Jenkins (D-76); Jones (D-89); Keam (D-35); Kory (D-38); Krizek (D-44); Levine (D-45); Lopez (D-49); Murphy (D-34); Plum (D-36); Rasoul (D-11); Samirah (D-86); Scott (D-80); Sickles (D-43); Simon (D-53); Simonds (D-94); Torian (D-52); Ward (D-92); Watts (D-39); Willett (D-73)

**“Right to personal reproductive autonomy”**: This bill sought to add a “right to personal reproductive autonomy” to Virginia’s constitution.

**Chief Patron:** Saslaw (D-35)

**Covering Abortion on Demand:** This bill would have allowed coverage of abortion on demand by health insurance plans offered through the health exchange operating in Virginia. Currently, health plans offered through this exchange are prohibited from covering abortions outside the three federal Hyde Amendment cases (danger to life of the mother, rape or incest).

**Chief Patron:** Hudson (D-57)

**Abortion Health Plan Mandate:** Introduced legislation would have required health plans in Virginia to cover abortions, abortion-inducing drugs, sterilizations and contraceptives.

**Senate Patrons:** Locke (D-2), (**chief patron**); Boysko (D-33)

**House Patrons:** Kory (D-38), (**chief patron**); Price (D-95), (**chief patron**); Hope (D-47)

**Legalizing Assisted Suicide:** For the second consecutive year, a bill was introduced that would have legalized assisted suicide.

**Patrons:** Kory (D-38), (**chief patron**); Guzman (D-31)

**Repealing Religious Liberty Protections in Adoption:** This bill sought to end a law that ensures faith-based adoption and foster-care agencies cannot be forced to participate in placements that violate their beliefs.

**Patrons:** Levine (D-45), (**chief patron**); Kory (D-38)

**Repealing Scholarship Tax Credit:** This bill sought to end the Education Improvement Scholarships Tax Credits program that provides education options and opportunities to thousands of low-income students.

**Chief Patron:** Bulova (D-37)

**Legalization of Marijuana:** Introduced legislation would have legalized possession of marijuana by adults 21 and older.\*

**House Patrons:** Heretick (D-79), (**chief patron**); Herring (D-46); Convirs-Fowler (D-21); Delaney (D-67); Guy (D-83); Guzman (D-31); Hope (D-47); Kory (D-38); Levine (D-45); Murphy (D-34); Carter (D-50), (**chief patron**); Samirah (D-86)

**Senate Patron:** Morrissey (D-16)

\* Though legalization did not pass, “decriminalization” did (meaning those possessing certain amounts of marijuana will not be subject to criminal penalties for possession but will only be subject to monetary fines instead). **The debate on legalization is expected to resurface next year.**

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*The Virginia Catholic Conference is the public-policy agency representing Virginia’s Catholic bishops and their two dioceses.  
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