



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

2023 General Assembly Session: How Did Your Legislators Vote?

During the 2023 Virginia General Assembly session, your state senator and delegate cast key votes on critical issues impacting human life, dignity and the common good. This report contains three charts:

- A “Senate” chart showing how your senator voted;
- A “House” chart showing how your delegate voted; and
- A “Senate Education & Health Committee” chart with key votes on abortion.

The Senate Education & Health Committee chart was included due to the high number of VCC-supported pro-life bills that the committee rejected and thereby blocked from receiving full Senate consideration.

At the conclusion of the report are:

- **Descriptions of Legislation** featured in the charts, organized into four categories – Life, Religious Freedom, Families & Children, and Social & Economic Concerns; and
- An **Index of Legislation**, for those interested in more detail than what the brief bill descriptions provide.

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

√: Vote agreed with VCC position

X: Vote disagreed with VCC position

▪: No opportunity to vote because not on committee

NV: Did not vote

Name of Senator (Party, District)	Opposing "Right to Abortion"	Opposing Assisted Suicide	Opposing Contraceptive Mandate	Improving Clergy Access at Hospitals	Protecting Marriage	Strengthening School Choice	Opposing Marijuana Commercialization	Restoring Voting Rights	Limiting Isolated Confinement	Reducing Drug Costs
Barker, George L. (D-39)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√
Bell, John J. (D-13)	X	▪	X	▪	X	▪	X	√	√	NV
Boysko, Jennifer B. (D-33)	X	▪	X	▪	X	▪	X	√	√	√
Chase, Amanda F. (R-11)	√	▪	NV	▪	√	▪	√	X	X	X
Cosgrove, John A., Jr. (R-14)	√	√	√	√	√	▪	√	X	X	X
Deeds, R. Creigh (D-25)	X	▪	X	▪	X	X	X	√	√	√
DeSteph, Bill (R-8)	√	▪	√	▪	√	▪	√	X	X	X
Dunnavant, Siobhan S. (R-12)	√	NV	X	√	X	▪	X	X	√	X
Ebbin, Adam P. (D-30)	X	▪	X	▪	X	X	X	√	√	√
Edwards, John S. (D-21)	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√
Favola, Barbara A. (D-31)	X	▪	X	▪	X	▪	X	√	√	√
Hackworth, T. Travis (R-38)	√	▪	√	▪	√	▪	√	X	X	X
Hanger, Emmett W., Jr. (R-24)	√	▪	√	▪	√	√	√	X	X	√
Hashmi, Ghazala F. (D-10)	X	X	X	X	X	▪	X	√	√	√
Howell, Janet D. (D-32)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√
Lewis, Lynwood W., Jr. (D-6)	X	▪	X	▪	X	▪	X	√	√	√
Locke, Mamie E. (D-2)	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√
Lucas, L. Louise (D-18)	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√
Marsden, David W. (D-37)	X	▪	X	▪	X	X	X	√	√	√

Senate Votes

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NV: Did not vote

Name of Senator (Party, District)	Opposing "Right to Abortion"	Opposing Assisted Suicide	Opposing Contraceptive Mandate	Improving Clergy Access at Hospitals	Protecting Marriage	Strengthening School Choice	Opposing Marijuana Commercialization	Restoring Voting Rights	Limiting Isolated Confinement	Reducing Drug Costs
Mason, T. Montgomery "Monty" (D-1)	X	▪	X	▪	X	▪	X	√	√	√
McClellan, Jennifer L. (D-9)	X	▪	X	▪	X	X	X	√	√	√
McDougle, Ryan T. (R-4)	√	▪	√	▪	√	▪	√	X	X	X
McPike, Jeremy S. (D-29)	X	X	X	X	X	▪	X	√	√	√
Morrissey, Joseph D. (D-16)	NV	▪	X	▪	X	▪	X	√	√	√
Newman, Stephen D. (R-23)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X
Norment, Thomas K., Jr. (R-3)	√	▪	√	▪	X	√	√	X	X	X
Obenshain, Mark D. (R-26)	√	▪	√	▪	√	▪	√	X	X	X
Peake, Mark J. (R-22)	√	√	√	√	√	▪	√	X	X	√
Petersen, J. Chapman (D-34)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√
Pillion, Todd E. (R-40)	√	√	X	√	√	▪	√	X	X	X
Reeves, Bryce E. (R-17)	√	▪	√	▪	√	▪	√	X	X	X
Rouse, Aaron R. (D-7)	X	▪	X	▪	X	▪	X	√	√	√
Ruff, Frank M., Jr. (R-15)	√	▪	√	▪	√	√	√	X	X	X
Saslaw, Richard L. (D-35)	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√
Spruill, Lionell, Sr. (D-5)	X	▪	X	▪	NV	▪	X	√	√	√
Stanley, William M., Jr. (R-20)	√	▪	√	▪	√	▪	√	X	X	√
Stuart, Richard H. (R-28)	√	▪	√	▪	√	▪	√	X	X	√
Suetterlein, David R. (R-19)	√	√	X	√	X	▪	√	X	X	√

Senate Votes

√: Vote agreed with VCC position

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NV: Did not vote

Name of Senator (Party, District)	Opposing "Right to Abortion"	Opposing Assisted Suicide	Opposing Contraceptive Mandate	Improving Clergy Access at Hospitals	Protecting Marriage	Strengthening School Choice	Opposing Marijuana Commercialization	Restoring Voting Rights	Limiting Isolated Confinement	Reducing Drug Costs
Surovell, Scott A. (D-36)	X	▪	X	▪	X	▪	X	√	√	√
Vogel, Jill Holtzman (R-27)	√	▪	X	▪	X	√	X	X	√	X

House of Delegates Votes

√: Vote agreed with VCC position

X: Vote disagreed with VCC position

▪: No opportunity to vote because not on committee

Name of Delegate (Party, District)	Protecting Babies Born Alive	Strengthening Informed Consent	Helping Pregnant Women	Rejecting Abortion Expansion in Budget	Hyde Amendment	Improving Clergy Access at Hospitals	Strengthening School Choice	Protecting Kids from THC
Wilt, Tony O. (R-26)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	▪
Wright, Thomas C., Jr. (R-61)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	▪
Wyatt, Scott A. (R-97)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	▪

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Senate Education & Health Committee Votes on Abortion

√: Vote agreed with VCC position

X: Vote disagreed with VCC position

Name of Senator (Party, District)	Protecting Life at Conception	Protecting Pain-Capable Unborn	Protecting Babies Born Alive	Strengthening Informed Consent
Barker, George L. (D-39)	X	X	X	X
Cosgrove, John A., Jr. (R-14)	√	√	√	√
Dunnavant, Siobhan S. (R-12)	X	X	√	X
Edwards, John S. (D-21)	X	X	X	X
Hashmi, Ghazala F. (D-10)	X	X	X	X
Howell, Janet D. (D-32)	X	X	X	X
Locke, Mamie E. (D-2)	X	X	X	X
Lucas, L. Louise (D-18)	X	X	X	X
McPike, Jeremy S. (D-29)	X	X	X	X
Newman, Stephen D. (R-23)	√	√	√	√
Peake, Mark J. (R-22)	√	√	√	√
Petersen, J. Chapman (D-34)	X	X	X	X
Pillion, Todd E. (R-40)	√	√	√	√
Saslaw, Richard L. (D-35)	X	X	X	X
Suetterlein, David R. (R-19)	√	√	√	√

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DESCRIPTIONS OF LEGISLATION

LIFE

Protecting Life at Conception: The VCC supported legislation to affirm that life begins at conception and to prohibit abortion except in cases of danger to the life of the mother, rape or incest. A Senate committee rejected this measure. (See **Senate Education & Health Committee chart**.)

Protecting Pain-Capable Unborn: Currently, Virginia allows abortions at all stages of pregnancy. The VCC-supported Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act would have prevented most abortions when unborn children are able to feel pain. A Senate committee rejected this bill. (See **Senate Education & Health Committee chart**.)

Opposing “Right to Abortion”: A VCC-opposed resolution to enshrine a “right to abortion” in Virginia’s constitution passed the Senate (see **Senate chart**) but was defeated in a House subcommittee.

Protecting Babies Born Alive: A VCC-supported measure to protect babies born alive after an attempted abortion passed the House but was defeated in a Senate committee. (See **House chart** and **Senate Education & Health Committee chart**.)

Strengthening Informed Consent: VCC-supported legislation to require physicians to provide pregnant women who are considering abortion information about alternatives and available resources passed the House but was defeated in a Senate committee. (See **House chart** and **Senate Education & Health Committee chart**.)

Helping Pregnant Women: A VCC-supported bill to establish a website that would provide pregnant women access to information about life-affirming assistance passed the House (see **House chart**) but was defeated in a Senate committee.

Rejecting Abortion Expansion in Budget: A proposed amendment sought to establish a “fundamental right” to “terminate a pregnancy” within the state budget. Opposed by the VCC, the budget amendment was rejected in a House floor vote. (See **House chart**.)

Hyde Amendment: Gov. Youngkin introduced a VCC-supported budget amendment seeking to adopt the Hyde Amendment in the state budget. This essential provision would stop the funding of abortions with state taxpayers’ money to the fullest extent possible under federal law. The House voted in favor of the budget amendment. (See **House chart**.) Because the General Assembly adjourned without completing its work on budget amendments, the Hyde Amendment issue has not been finally resolved as of the date of this report.

Opposing Assisted Suicide: For the fourth time in five years, legislation was introduced to legalize assisted suicide. A Senate committee rejected this VCC-opposed bill. (See **Senate chart**.)

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Opposing Contraceptive Mandate: VCC-opposed legislation would have required health plans to cover all drugs the FDA defines as contraceptives, including some drugs that can cause abortions. It passed the Senate (see **Senate chart**) but was defeated in a House subcommittee.

Improving Clergy Access at Hospitals: The House passed a VCC-supported bill to strengthen Virginia’s law regarding patient access to clergy visits at hospitals and other facilities during public health emergencies. A Senate committee, however, rejected the legislation. (See **Senate and House charts**.)

FAMILIES & CHILDREN

Protecting Marriage: Virginia’s constitution defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman – a definition approved by Virginia voters in November 2006. A VCC-opposed resolution to remove this provision from Virginia’s constitution passed the Senate (see **Senate chart**) but was defeated in a House subcommittee.

Strengthening School Choice: VCC-supported legislation to make several improvements to the Education Improvement Scholarships Tax Credits program passed the House. A Senate committee, however, rejected the legislation. (See **Senate and House charts**.)

Opposing Marijuana Commercialization: Although Virginia enacted legislation in 2021 to legalize marijuana possession and home cultivation, legislation to allow the sale of marijuana – including high-potency THC – in “pot shops” was defeated for the second straight year. While the Senate passed the measure (see **Senate chart**), a House subcommittee rejected it. Hence, sales remain illegal. The VCC opposes commercialization because of the severe risks to children, health and public safety.

Protecting Kids from THC: Gaps in federal and state law have contributed to a high potency THC “copycat” market in Virginia. Many edible products (e.g., Delta-8 gummies) land in the hands of children, resulting in calls to poison control centers and hospitalizations – often involving toddlers. The VCC supported a bill to ban these products – none of which are FDA-approved. The measure failed in a House committee on a tie vote. (See **House chart**.) However, separate legislation to regulate these substances did pass the General Assembly.

SOCIAL & ECONOMIC CONCERNS

Restoring Voting Rights: A VCC-supported resolution to restore voting rights to persons convicted of a felony once they have completed their sentences passed the Senate (see **Senate chart**) but was defeated in a House subcommittee.

Limiting Isolated Confinement: The Senate passed a VCC-supported bill to limit isolated confinement in prisons. (See **Senate chart**.) The House also passed a similar measure unanimously.

Reducing Drug Costs: A VCC-supported proposal to establish a framework to make especially expensive prescription drugs more affordable passed the Senate (see **Senate chart**) but was defeated in a House subcommittee.

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