



VPLC

**Virginia Poverty
Law Center**

2019 Legislative Agenda | Main Issues



**CENTER FOR
ECONOMIC JUSTICE**

Housing | Consumer | Utility Fairness

- Evictions Suite of Legislation:
 - Reciprocity of Attorney's Fees
 - Increase the time tenants have to "pay and stay"
 - Limit to filing only one case at a time against a tenant who is behind on rent.
 - Prohibit evictions based solely on unpaid late fees
 - Requiring landlords to offer written leases
 - Funding for pilot eviction prevention program
 - Eviction Diversion Pilot Program in three courts
- Eliminating Discrimination in Housing based on Source of Income
- Supporting a Refundable State Earned Income Tax Credit
- Supporting Consumer Finance Act Changes that help regulate Internet lending
- Supporting Regulation of Open-End Credit in the Same Manner as Other Similar Forms of Lending
- Supporting a Borrower's Bill of Rights with respect to Student Loans Servicing in Virginia
- Giving Utility Customers more protection of their data with an opt-in provision over non-utility service use.



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**CENTER FOR
FAMILY ADVOCACY**

Domestic and Sexual Violence | Elder Law | Family Law and Child Welfare

- Supporting a Longer Term Protective Order When there is a Conviction
- Supporting In-Camera Interviews with Children in Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts
- Supporting Long-term Care Ombudsmen – Funding
- Supporting Guardian Reporting Requirements
- Supporting the Creation of Temporary Conservatorships
- Supporting the initial steps to implement the federal Family First Prevention Services Act
- Supporting streamlining the no-fault divorce process, to make it easier for self-represented litigants to file uncontested divorces.
- Supporting making changes in Virginia’s anti-SLAPP laws to protect statements made by victims of intimate partner violence to police, magistrates, and in court.
- Supporting increased protections for victims of interpersonal violence.
- Supporting reducing barriers for youth in foster care to obtain driver's licenses.
- Supporting bringing additional supports to the kinship caregivers.
- Supporting a requirement to track data on children diverted from foster care.
- Supporting a freeze on credit for children who are in foster care for more than 90 days to prevent fraudulent activity.
- Supporting clarifying Virginia’s laws relating to mothers with substance abuse disorders and their infants, to encourage pre-natal care and support the mother/child dyad.
- Increase accountability of Child Protective Services and Foster Care by clarifying and strengthening the authority of the Virginia Department of Social Services.
- Supporting increased DSS staff capacity at the regional level and better pay for frontline workers.
- Supporting creation of a children’s ombudsman as an independent investigative office.



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**CENTER FOR
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES**

Health Law | Public Benefits Law | Reducing Hunger

- Ensure successful implementation of Medicaid Expansion and oppose work requirements and cost-sharing that would jeopardize coverage.
- Protect consumers from surprise medical bills and balance billing.
- Improve stability of the health insurance marketplace and reduce premiums and out-of-pocket insurance costs.
- Protect immigrants' access to health care and other public benefits programs.
- Improve access to SNAP benefits (food stamps) through "Categorical" eligibility.
- Eliminate the drug felony ban that limits access to TANF benefits and SNAP.
- Increase TANF cash assistance levels.
- Protect SNAP and TANF from harmful changes such as drug testing and mandatory E&T programs.

VPLC Access to Justice Legislative Issues

- Reinstating Suspended Drivers Licenses for Lack of Payment on non-driving related Issues (Repeal 46.2-395)
- Supporting efforts to clean up code language and standardize court practices pertaining to waivers of court fees for indigent litigants.