
Drafting Legislation

— The Process of Passing Legislation, —
Tracking Legislation, and Writing
Legislation

How a Bill Becomes a Law

- Bills may originate in either the Senate or the House of Delegates.
- **A Senator or Delegate, as requested by constituents, prepares to introduce legislation.** (For example: Permitting the governing bodies of localities to prohibit the sale and use of certain fireworks)
- The Senator or Delegate then explains exactly the proposal he/she has in mind to a staff attorney in the Division of Legislative Services. A staff attorney checks existing law and the constitutionality of the proposed legislation.
- The bill is then drafted by the Division of Legislative Services. Draft copies of the bill are made and delivered to the Senator or Delegate.
- The member signs his/her name on the bill and introduces it by laying the original and duplicate copies on the desk of the Clerk (of the Senate or of the House of Delegates).
- The bill is ordered printed and referred by the Senate Clerk or the House Speaker to the appropriate Standing Committee. (The Senate has 11 Standing Committees and the House of Delegates has 14 Standing Committees.)
- The members of the Committee -in public session- study, discuss, and vote on the bill.
- The Committee then reports ("approves") the bill, with or without amendments, to the originating body (Senate or House of Delegates).

- The [Constitution, within Article IV, Section 11](#), requires that every bill have three readings on three calendar days.
 - First Reading: The bill title is printed in the Calendar (the daily printed agenda of business) or is read by the Clerk.
 - Second Reading: The next day the bill title appears in its respective Calendar. Bills are considered in the order in which they appear in the Calendar. The Clerk of the Senate/House of Delegates reads the title of the bill.
 - A bill on second reading is amendable. Any amendments are taken up and agreed to or rejected. By voice vote, the bill is engrossed and passed to its third reading.
 - A bill that has passed the second reading with or without amendments is engrossed
 - If amendments are adopted, the bill is rewritten with amendments included and reprinted in its engrossed form for passage.
 - Third Reading: The next day, the engrossed bill title appears in the calendar on third reading. The bill is read by title by the Clerk. By a recorded vote, the bill is passed.
- Communication: When passed, the bill is sent to the other house for its consideration.
- In the other body's chamber: The bill goes through substantially the same procedure as it did in the originating body.
- The bill is read by title a first time, then the bill is referred to a Standing Committee, considered and reported by the Standing Committee, read a second time and a third time before passage by a constitutional majority.
- If there are differences between the Senate and House versions of the bill, a Committee of Conference is created to resolve them.
- **After the bill has been passed by both houses of the General Assembly, it is printed as an enrolled bill, and examined and signed by the presiding officer of each house.**

- The bill is sent to **the Governor** for approval, where the Governor may 1) sign the bill into law; 2) amend the bill and return it to the General Assembly for approval; 3) veto the bill and return it to the General Assembly, where the House of Delegates and the Senate may override the veto by a two-thirds vote of both houses; or, 4) take no action and the bill becomes law without the Governor's signature.
- After being signed by the Governor, the bill is sent to the Clerk of the House of Delegates (Keeper of the Rolls of the Commonwealth) and is assigned a Chapter number. All Chapters of a Session are compiled and bound as the Acts of Assembly.
- **Bills enacted at a Regular Session (or the Reconvened Session which follows) are effective the 1st day of July following adjournment of the Regular Session, unless another date is specified.**
- Bills enacted at a Special Session (or Reconvened Session) are effective the 1st day of the fourth month following the adjournment of the Special Session, unless another date is specified.
- The General Appropriations Act is usually effective July 1st and Emergency Acts become effective when signed by the Governor.

Researching Legislation and Bill Ideas

- Know your laws!
- Know other bills that propose similar changes!
- Know your topic!

Where Do I Start?

- Think of a topic you are passionate about or an example of injustice you have read about (ex. Virginia does not have a parole system, should it?).
- Search Virginia Code to look at current laws (maybe you bill will seek to amend current laws, repeal current laws, or create a new law)
- Google policy groups and experts who specialize on this topic
- Check if any existing bills cover this issue → it might be easier to support an existing bill than write a new one
- Try to determine a delegate or senator who would be a good sponsor

Tracking a Bill

- Go to the Virginia General Assembly's website to search for bills for whatever session you wish to look at (2018, 2019, 2020, etc.)
- <https://virginiageneralassembly.gov>
- Use the link above

Tracking a Bill

Click for Bill Tracking, Meetings, Who's My Legislator?

Search Information and Virginia Legislation

Enter Keyword Here [Tips](#)

Virginia
GENERALASSEMBLY.GOV

Welcome to the website of the Virginia General Assembly, your portal to the Commonwealth's state legislature.

- Members and Session
- Virginia State Capitol
- Virginia's Legislature
- Law & Resources
- State Budget
- Capitol Classroom

Designated Dates and Meeting Schedules

Important Annual Dates enacted into VA law by the Virginia General Assembly. (All Dates Listing)

January	July
February	August
March	September
April	October
May	November
June	December

Meeting Schedules

- Virginia House of Delegates Meeting Schedule
- Capitol Events
- Legislative Information System Meeting

General Assembly Building Move News
New Location, Directions & More

Where is the new, temporary General Assembly Building? New Location and Directions

General Assembly Building Move News

Follow us on Twitter: @vahouse and @vasenate on twitter.

Search Legislation with LIS
What's This?

Track a 2019 Regular Session Bill:

Enter a Bill Number:

2019 Regular Session Tracking:

Searchable Databases:

Select "Bills and Resolutions" and then hit "Go" to explore



VIRGINIA'S LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION SYSTEM

2019 SESSION

BILLS & RESOLUTIONS SEARCHABLE DATABASE

SEARCH SITE

enter keyword here

GO

Enter your search phrase and press submit. (see [search examples](#))

QUICK LINKS

all types

exclude failed legislation

Take a look at our [subject index](#) for broad categories of legislation.

OTHER SESSIONS

LOBBYIST in a BOX
Free bill tracking service

VIRGINIA LAW PORTAL

[Code of Virginia](#)

[Virginia Administrative Code](#)

[Constitution of Virginia](#)

[Charters](#)

[Authorities](#)

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[RIS Users](#) (account required)

SEARCHABLE DATABASES

[Bills & Resolutions](#)
session legislation

[Bill Summaries](#)
session summaries

[Reports to the General Assembly](#)
House and Senate documents

[Legislative Liaisons](#)
State agency contacts

Links to meetings, committees, House Minutes, Senate Minutes, statistics, etc.

Virginia Code, read through it to discover areas that you might want to change!

Search keywords, bill numbers (HB 2203 or SB 207), committee names, etc.

Gives a brief synopsis of the bill, the bill itself, and a summary of its progress through the General Assembly (passage or failure to pass).



VIRGINIA'S LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION SYSTEM

2019 SESSION

SEARCH SITE

enter keyword here

GO

Search by bill number: GO examples: hb1, sj2, ch3, hr*

VIEW BILLS BY CATEGORY

QUICK LINKS

INTRODUCED

[All legislation](#)

[By Member](#)

[By Committee](#)

[By subject](#)

[By day](#)

[Most frequently accessed](#)

PASSED

[Passed the House](#)

[Passed the Senate](#)

[Passed](#)

[Enrolled](#)

[Signed by Speaker & President](#)

FAILED OR AWAITING ACTION

[Failed](#)

[Pending](#)

[Continued from last session](#)

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SENT TO CONFERENCE

[In conference](#)

[Conference report agreed to](#)

[Conference report rejected](#)

GOVERNOR

[Governor's recommendations](#)

[Governor's recommendations adopted](#)

[Approved or enacted](#)

[Vetoed](#)

[Acts of Assembly chapters](#)

Use these search links to search for bills you might be interested in. The "By Committee" link takes you to the Committee the bill is in. The "By subject" link takes you to bills that are along a similar theme. The "By Member" link takes you to bills submitted by certain Delegates or Senators. Remember, HB stands for House Bill and SB stands for Senate Bill.





2019 SESSION

SEARCH SITE

enter keyword here

GO

[another bill?](#) | [print version](#)

HB 1753 School buildings; electronic room partitions.

Introduced by: [Mark D. Sickles](#) | [all patrons](#) ... [notes](#) | [add to my profiles](#)

QUICK LINKS

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SUMMARY AS PASSED: (all summaries)

School buildings; electronic room partitions. Prohibits school employees from opening or closing an electronic room partition in any school building except under certain limited circumstances. The bill requires any annual safety review or exercise for school employees in a local school division to include information and demonstrations, as appropriate, regarding the operation of such partitions. The bill also requires the Department of Education to make available to each school board model safety guidance regarding the operation of such partitions.

FULL TEXT

12/21/18 House: Prefiled and ordered printed; offered 01/09/19 19100322D pdf | [impact statement](#)

01/30/19 House: Committee substitute printed 19106060D-H1 pdf | [impact statement](#)

02/22/19 House: Bill text as passed House and Senate (HB1753ER) pdf | [impact statement](#)

03/12/19 Governor: Acts of Assembly Chapter text (CHAP0369) pdf

AMENDMENTS

[House subcommittee amendments and substitutes offered](#)

[House subcommittee amendments and substitutes adopted](#)

[House committee, floor amendments and substitutes offered](#)

[Senate amendments](#)

[Senate amendments engrossed](#)

HISTORY

12/21/18 House: Prefiled and ordered printed; offered 01/09/19 19100322D

12/21/18 House: Referred to Committee on Education

01/11/19 House: Assigned Education sub: Subcommittee #1

01/28/19 House: Subcommittee recommends reporting with substitute (8-Y 0-N)

01/30/19 House: Reported from Education with substitute (22-Y 0-N)

01/30/19 House: Committee substitute printed 19106060D-H1

01/31/19 House: Read first time

Brief summary of the bill.

Link to the actual language of the bill. Go to the latest version.

Gives a full history of the bill and its movements through the General Assembly.

Name(s) of person (people) who proposed the bill. Click "all patrons" to see full list.

List of any amendments made to the bill during the session.


Read the actual bill language to familiarize yourself with the Virginia Code and what the bill is trying to change.

2019 SESSION [history](#) | [hilite](#) | [pdf](#) | [print version](#)

SEARCH SITE
enter keyword here

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CHAPTER 369
An Act to amend and reenact § 22.1-138 of the Code of Virginia, relating to school buildings; electronic room partitions.
[H 1753]
Approved March 12, 2019

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

- That § 22.1-138 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:
§ 22.1-138. Minimum standards for public school buildings.
A. The Board of Education shall prescribe by regulation minimum standards for the erection of or addition to public school buildings governing instructional, operational, health and maintenance facilities where these are not specifically addressed in the Uniform Statewide Building Code.
B. By July 1, 1994, every school building in operation in the Commonwealth shall be tested for radon pursuant to procedures established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for radon measurements in schools.
School buildings and additions opened for operation after July 1, 1994, shall be tested for radon pursuant to such EPA procedures and regulations prescribed by the Board of Education pursuant to subsection A of this section. Each school shall maintain files of its radon test results and make such files available for review. The division superintendent shall report radon test results to the Department of Health.
C. No school employee shall open or close an electronic room partition in any school building unless (i) no student is present in such building, (ii) (a) no student is present in the room or area in which such partition is located and (b) such room or area is locked or otherwise inaccessible to students, or (iii) such partition includes a safety sensor that automatically stops the partition when a body passes between the leading edge and a wall, an opposing partition, or the stacking area.
D. Any annual safety review or exercise for school employees in a local school division shall include information and demonstrations, as appropriate, regarding the provisions of subsection C.
E. The Department of Education shall make available to each school board model safety guidance regarding the operation of electronic room partitions.

Also Look Up the Virginia Code

<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/>

Let's Practice Tracking HB 1622

<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?191+sum+HB1622>

- Who was this bill's patron?
- Did it start in the House or Senate? HB means the bill started in the House and SB means the bill started in the Senate.
- What was the committee or sub-committee's decision? When did this happen?
- Did it pass the House? When did this happen?
- Did it pass the Senate? When did this happen?
- Was it signed into law by the Governor? When did this happen?

Legislative Drafting

- Write simply and carefully
 - deliberate , intentional, and clear wording
- Write purposefully
- Research efficiently
 - rudimentary understanding of the issue your legislation addresses
 - Awareness of time constraints/deadlines
 - See if there is other related legislation
 - Find relevant background material about the bill topic
- Ask for clarification from the office sponsoring the bill
- Read through others' legislation to develop our own drafting style

Legislative Drafting

A properly prepared bill consists of:

- 1) A bill number (assigned);
- 2) Sponsorship;
 - At least one individual sponsor or committee
- 3) A title;
 - General statement/summary.
- 4) An enacting clause;
- 5) The body of the bill**

Body of the Bill

- The body of the bill sets forth the material intended to be enacted. The purposes may be one or any combination of the following:
 - enactment of new substantive law, amendment of existing law, appropriation of funds, adoption of new material to a specific chapter, repeal of existing law
- Bill sections:
 - The body of the bill should be divided into sections of convenient length. Short sections facilitate reference to particular provisions. Generally, each distinct proposition should be in a separate section, which, in turn, may be divided into subdivisions, if necessary.
 - May need a section with relevant definitions/explanation of terminology, section for actual lawmaking, and then a section on the bill will be funded
- Begin bill with preamble explaining the reasons for the bill
- Bill should be presented like a legal document

1 A BILL to amend and reenact § 22.1-207.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to family life education;
2 medical accuracy of instruction.

3 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

4 **1. That § 22.1-207.1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

5 **§ 22.1-207.1. Family life education.**

6 A. As used in this section, ~~"abstinence"~~

7 "Abstinence education" means an educational or motivational component that has as its
8 exclusive purpose teaching the social, psychological, and health gains to be realized by teenagers'
9 abstaining from sexual activity before marriage.

10 "Medically accurate" means verified or supported by research conducted in compliance with
11 accepted scientific methods and published in peer-reviewed journals, where appropriate, and recognized
12 as accurate and objective by professional organizations and agencies with expertise in the relevant field,
13 such as the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

14 B. The Board of Education shall develop Standards of Learning and curriculum guidelines for a
15 comprehensive, sequential family life education curriculum in grades kindergarten through 12. Such
16 curriculum guidelines shall include instruction as appropriate for the age of the student in family living
17 and community relationships; the benefits, challenges, responsibilities, and value of marriage for men,
18 women, children, and communities; the value of family relationships; abstinence education; the value of
19 postponing sexual activity; the benefits of adoption as a positive choice in the event of an unwanted
20 pregnancy; human sexuality; human reproduction; dating violence, the characteristics of abusive
21 relationships, steps to take to deter sexual assault, and the availability of counseling and legal resources,
22 and, in the event of such sexual assault, the importance of immediate medical attention and advice, as
23 well as the requirements of the law; the etiology, prevention, and effects of sexually transmitted
24 diseases; and mental health education and awareness.

Finding a Representative Sponsor

- Within the General Assembly, there are legislators who stake out a certain area for legislative intervention
 - Ex. Senator X almost exclusively writes bills related to area Y, so Senator Z does not write bills in area Y
- Try to figure out who this legislator is

Talking to a Representative/Finding a Sponsor

Call the representative: The purpose of this phone call is to gauge reaction and see who might help us in the future. If the representative is opposed, be sure to discuss problem areas so we can prepare for opposition.

Before you call:

- Do a little research on the representative. See if you can predict how they will react to the idea of medical accuracy
- See what they've done recently so you can compliment them on any recent accomplishments

When you call:

- Don't say Mr. or Mrs., say Delegate or Senator
- Introduce yourself
 - If you are in their constituency, tell them!
 - Say you go to UVA and you are involved in an organization called Legislators of Tomorrow
 - Legislators of Tomorrow is a bipartisan organization that aims to get students involved in the legislative process in Virginia. We focus on issues that affect students
- Be polite. Listen to concerns they might have and respect opinions.

After you call:

- Send an email or note thanking them for taking the time to talk to you.

Lobbying

— Themes and Objectives —

What is Lobbying?

- Lobbying is any attempt by individuals or private interest groups to influence government decisions.
 - Want to influence lawmakers who decide on legislation
- It is protected by the First Amendment



Skills for Lobbying Government

https://fod-infobase-com.proxy01.its.virginia.edu/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=93378

Skills for Lobbying Government Full Video (13:05)



Lobbying Tips

- Practice presenting in everyday life
 - Try to convince people you have the best option
- Know your allies and opponents
- Know the bill you're advocating for
- Put your analytical and critical thinking skills to work!