



This Valentine’s Day join the Action Alliance staff, Governing Body, and Public Policy Committee in sending Valentines to Legislators who have demonstrated a commitment to building safe, inclusive, and healthy communities across the Commonwealth. These are just a few of our policy leaders who have, in recent sessions, championed legislation and/or efforts to increase survivor access to healthcare, secure and sustain funding for sexual and domestic violence agencies and/or ensure conditions in which every family and community has the opportunity to thrive.

**Here’s how it works:** Below you will find a series of letters - categorized under issue headings like “Ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment” or “Expanding Prevention and Consent Education in Schools” – addressed to various legislators (emails addresses are included), all ready for copying, pasting, and sending off. You’re encouraged to peruse the list and see if any of your legislators are named. As a reminder, if you don’t know who your legislators are, you can find that information by visiting <https://whosmy.virginiasenate.gov/>. If your legislators are included in the email templates below, be sure to send them some love. You may add to or change the template provided however you’d like. And even if you don’t notice your legislator’s name on this list, you’re encouraged to send as many of these Valentines out as you’d like. Perhaps your community or sexual and domestic violence agency has been hard at

work trying to increase access to forensic nurse examiners and healthcare services for survivors of violence? Maybe you've been working with law enforcement and coordinated community response teams to implement Lethality Assessment Protocol and reduce intimate partner homicide? Reach out to and say thank you to those legislators who are doing work to support those efforts, even if you're not their constituent.

Our policy leaders need to hear about what they're doing right and what better opportunity to show some love than Valentines Day? If you're feeling inspired and want to reach out to a specific legislator on a topic not listed below, please do! Our [2019 Legislative Advocacy Guide](#) is chock full of helpful hints, scripts, etc. that can support you in making contact with legislators.

**Have fun and let us know if you need any help!**

**Click on these links to jump directly to the corresponding section/issue area:**

- [Promoting Reproductive Freedom and Survivor Access to Healthcare](#)
- [Ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment](#)
- [Funding for Sexual and Domestic Violence Agencies](#)
- [Expanding Prevention and Consent Education in Schools](#)
- [Promoting Victim Safety by Reducing Offender Access to Firearms](#)
- [Recognizing cruelty to animals in the context of domestic violence](#)
- [Advancing Immigrant Safety and Justice](#)

## Promoting Reproductive Freedom and Survivor Access to Healthcare

**Delegate Kathy Tran, D – 42<sup>nd</sup> House District, Fairfax (Part)**

Email: [DelKTran@house.virginia.gov](mailto:DelKTran@house.virginia.gov)

Subject: Valentines to Legislators: Thank you from sexual/domestic violence advocates!

Dear Delegate Tran,

On behalf of survivors of sexual and intimate partner violence in the Commonwealth, I want to thank you for carrying HB 2491, a bill that would have eliminated medically unnecessary and politically motivated restrictions on access to reproductive and sexual healthcare in the aftermath of trauma.

The Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance supported this bill and supports you as a continued champion of peace, justice, and equity for all. As a coalition of 65 sexual and domestic violence agencies - and even more allied partners and community members - we believe in full access to non-judgmental, safe, legal, affordable, and medically accurate sexual and reproductive health care, including abortion, for all survivors of sexual and intimate partner violence. We know that a person's sexual and reproductive health are directly impacted by experiences of sexual and intimate partner violence. Because acts of violence serve to remove power and agency from individuals, informed consent is imperative for serving survivors. **A survivor of sexual violence who is pregnant must be able to make decisions about whether to end a pregnancy, choose adoption, or raise a child. Allowing survivors to make informed decisions regarding their care is an empowering step toward recovery.**

Your efforts to eliminate burdens and reduce the trauma that survivors face in navigating and accessing vital healthcare is essential. Please know that survivors, and the advocates who serve them, stand with you and applaud your bold leadership and passion in the General Assembly and beyond.

With deep gratitude and a shared vision for access and equity,

(Insert your name, title, etc.)

**Delegate Karrie Delaney, D – 67<sup>th</sup> House District, Fairfax (part) and Loudoun (part)**

Email: [DelKDelaney@house.virginia.gov](mailto:DelKDelaney@house.virginia.gov)

Subject: Valentines to Legislators: Thank you from sexual/domestic violence advocates!

Dear Delegate Delaney,

On behalf of survivors of sexual and intimate partner violence in the Commonwealth, I want to thank you for carrying HJ 614, a bill that would initiate the study of current access to Forensic Nurse Programs statewide.

**Appropriately trained Forensic Nurses are a critical component to both public safety and public health.** They aid in caring for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence particularly in strangulation cases and in providing critical information to courts and jurors who may not understand the complexities of the physical injuries that can occur in these cases. We still have many rural areas of VA that lack accessible availability of these specially trained health care providers.

Your efforts to champion these issues on behalf of survivors of violence is recognized by the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance and the 65 sexual and domestic violence agencies serving communities statewide. We thank you for your continued leadership in this work.

With deep gratitude and a shared vision for access and equity,

(Insert your name, title, etc.)

## Ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment

**Senator Emmet Hanger, R – 24<sup>th</sup> Senate District, Rockingham (Part), Augusta (All), Greene (All), Staunton (All), Waynesboro (All), Madison (All), Culpeper**

Email: [district24@senate.virginia.gov](mailto:district24@senate.virginia.gov)

Subject: Valentines to Legislators: Thank you from sexual/domestic violence advocates!

Dear Senator Hanger,

I want to thank you for voting in support of Virginia becoming the 38<sup>th</sup> state to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) during the 2019 General Assembly Session. You have a strong history of voting in favor of policies that promote family stability, equal access to vital resources (particularly for under-resourced rural communities) and protecting against the erosion of rights.

**Today, most Americans believe that equality of the sexes belongs in the Constitution - with over 80% of Virginia voters believing that the General Assembly should ratify the ERA.** The American Bar Association supports ratification of the ERA, and recently sent Speaker Cox a letter urging him “to use the power of [his] office to secure ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.”. Most importantly, we know that these convictions cross party lines and we thank you for being a steadfast voice of reason on these issues. Please know that you have the support of those thousands of members who make up the VA Ratify ERA Coalition in addition to the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance and the 65 sexual and domestic violence agencies who serve victims of violence and work towards a Virginia where gender equity is enshrined in law.

With deep gratitude and a shared vision for access and equity,

(Insert your name, title, etc.)

**Delegate Jennifer Carol Foy, D – 2<sup>nd</sup> House District, Prince William (part) and Stafford (part)**

Email: [DelJCarrollFoy@house.virginia.gov](mailto:DelJCarrollFoy@house.virginia.gov)

Subject: Valentines to Legislators: Thank you from sexual/domestic violence advocates!

Dear Delegate Carol Foy,

I want to thank you for championing the efforts for Virginia to become the 38<sup>th</sup> state to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) during the 2019 General Assembly Session. While it looks like we may need to wait until the 2020 session for this to become law, your tireless advocacy both in and out of session has been inspiring and is supported by our broad network of sexual and domestic violence agencies who

work towards eliminating violence against women and achieving gender equity across the Commonwealth.

**As you know, most Americans believe that equality of the sexes belongs in the Constitution - with over 80% of Virginia voters believing that the General Assembly should ratify the ERA.** With your guidance and leadership, the American Bar Association supported the ratification of the ERA, and recently sent Speaker Cox a letter urging him “to use the power of [his] office to secure ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.”. Most importantly, we know that these convictions cross party lines and we thank you for being a steadfast voice of reason on these issues.

With deep gratitude and a shared vision for access and equity,

(Insert your name, title, etc.)

## **Funding for Sexual & Domestic Violence Services**

**Delegate Chris Peace, R – 97<sup>th</sup> House District, Hanover (part), King William (part), New Kent**  
Email: [DelCPeace@house.virginia.gov](mailto:DelCPeace@house.virginia.gov)

Subject: Valentines to Legislators: Thank you from sexual/domestic violence advocates!

Dear Delegate Peace,

On behalf of survivors of sexual and domestic violence and the agencies who serve them statewide, I want to thank you for your ongoing support to increase funding for these life-saving programs in communities. Dedicated state funding has helped to stabilize the sexual and domestic violence field which still largely relies on federal funding.

**In 2014 community sexual and domestic violence agencies (SDVAs) announced an \$18 million funding deficit for trauma informed crisis and advocacy services for survivors of sexual and domestic violence. Policy leaders like you responded—cutting the deficit to \$2 million.** You have been instrumental in supporting this change and nearly closing the funding gap for SDVAs statewide. While there’s certainly still work to do, I wanted to pause for a moment and extend my gratitude for your attention and dedication to this issue. With your help, here’s what we’ve accomplished:

- The number of sexual and domestic violence advocates has DOUBLED since 2014;
- Service deserts have nearly been eliminated;
- Access to 24/7 crisis hotlines and emergency shelter services expanded and fortified;
- Expanded access to trauma-informed counseling, legal advocacy, and children services; and
- Expanded access to trauma-informed services for children and prevention programming.

Your efforts to champion these issues on behalf of survivors of violence is recognized by the greater advocacy community and we thank you for your continued leadership in this work.

With deep gratitude and a shared vision for safety and justice,

(Insert your name, title, etc.)

**Senator Janet Howell, D – 32<sup>nd</sup> Senate District, Fairfax (Part) and Arlington (Part)**

Email: [district32@senate.virginia.gov](mailto:district32@senate.virginia.gov)

Subject: Valentines to Legislators: Thank you from sexual/domestic violence advocates!

Dear Senator Howell,

On behalf of survivors of sexual and domestic violence and the agencies who serve them statewide, I want to thank you for your ongoing support to increase funding for these life-saving programs in communities. Dedicated state funding has helped to stabilize the sexual and domestic violence field which still largely relies on federal funding.

**In 2014 community sexual and domestic violence agencies (SDVAs) announced an \$18 million funding deficit for trauma informed crisis and advocacy services for survivors of sexual and domestic violence. Policy leaders like you responded—cutting the deficit to \$2 million.** You have been instrumental in supporting this change and nearly closing the funding gap for SDVAs statewide. While there's certainly still work to do, I wanted to pause for a moment and extend my gratitude for your attention and dedication to this issue. With your help, here's what we've accomplished:

- The number of sexual and domestic violence advocates has DOUBLED since 2014;
- Service deserts have nearly been eliminated;
- Access to 24/7 crisis hotlines and emergency shelter services expanded and fortified;
- Expanded access to trauma-informed counseling, legal advocacy, and children services; and
- Expanded access to trauma-informed services for children and prevention programming.

Your efforts to champion these issues on behalf of survivors of violence is recognized by the greater advocacy community and we thank you for your continued leadership in this work.

With deep gratitude and a shared vision for safety and justice,

(Insert your name, title, etc.)

**Delegate Chris Jones, R - 76th House District, Chesapeake (part) and Suffolk (part)**

Email: [DelCJones@house.virginia.gov](mailto:DelCJones@house.virginia.gov)

Subject: Valentines to Legislators: Thank you from sexual/domestic violence advocates!

Dear Delegate Jones,

On behalf of survivors of sexual and domestic violence and the agencies who serve them statewide, I want to thank you for your ongoing support to increase funding for these life-saving programs in communities. Dedicated state funding has helped to stabilize the sexual and domestic violence field which still largely relies on federal funding.

**In 2014 community sexual and domestic violence agencies (SDVAs) announced an \$18 million funding deficit for trauma informed crisis and advocacy services for survivors of sexual and domestic violence. Policy leaders like you responded—cutting the deficit to \$2 million.** You have been instrumental in supporting this change and nearly closing the funding gap for SDVAs statewide. While there's certainly still work to do, I wanted to pause for a moment and extend my gratitude for your attention and dedication to this issue. With your help, here's what we've accomplished:

- The number of sexual and domestic violence advocates has DOUBLED since 2014;
- Service deserts have nearly been eliminated;
- Access to 24/7 crisis hotlines and emergency shelter services expanded and fortified;
- Expanded access to trauma-informed counseling, legal advocacy, and children services; and
- Expanded access to trauma-informed services for children and prevention programming.

Your efforts to champion these issues on behalf of survivors of violence is recognized by the greater advocacy community and we thank you for your continued leadership in this work.

With deep gratitude and a shared vision for safety and justice,

(Insert your name, title, etc.)

## Expanding Prevention and Consent Education in Schools

Delegate Eileen Filler-Corn, D – 41<sup>st</sup> House District, Fairfax (part)

Email: [DelEFiller-Corn@house.virginia.gov](mailto:DelEFiller-Corn@house.virginia.gov)

Subject: Valentines to Legislators: Thank you from sexual/domestic violence advocates!

Dear Delegate Filler-Corn,

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to youth and to building a Commonwealth free of sexual and domestic violence! Through the years, you have championed the issue of expanding access to prevention and consent education in our schools - and sexual and domestic violence advocates, along with youth leaders and allies - have consistently supported you in these efforts.

**We know that evidence-informed and age-appropriate prevention education not only saves dollars, but it also saves lives.** And Virginia's Family Life Education (FLE) Program provides us with a unique opportunity to ensure that our young people are reached early and often by vital prevention and consent education programming. We thank you for listening to and partnering with advocates and prevention educators in an effort to advance policies that seek to prevent violence before it can occur.

Your championing of these issues on behalf of survivors of violence is recognized by the greater advocacy community and we thank you for your continued leadership in this work.

With deep gratitude and a shared vision for safety and wellbeing across the Commonwealth,

(Insert your name, title, etc.)

## Promoting Victim Safety by Reducing Offender Access to Firearms

Senator Janet Howell, D – 32<sup>nd</sup> Senate District, Fairfax (Part) and Arlington (Part)

Email: [district32@senate.virginia.gov](mailto:district32@senate.virginia.gov)

Subject: Valentines to Legislators: Thank you from sexual/domestic violence advocates!

Dear Senator Howell,

As a sexual and domestic violence advocate working every day to promote victim safety and offender accountability, I want to thank you for your support to reduce offender access to firearms this session. **Unfortunately, intimate partner homicide occurs at extraordinary rates in Virginia. And overwhelmingly, firearms are the means by which abusers escalate and enact lethal force on victims and their families.**

The Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance, in partnership with 65 sexual and domestic violence agencies statewide, support policy proposals that seek to expand firearm prohibitions to respondents of all protective orders and those proposals that would support the Department of Criminal Justice Services, local law enforcement, and coordinated community response teams to determine consistent and effective protocol for the surrender and seizure of firearms when a protective order is issued.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to preventing violence, including intimate partner homicide in Virginia! If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or our partners at the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance.

With deep gratitude and a shared vision for safety and justice,

(Insert your name, title, etc.)

**Delegate Rip Sullivan Jr., D – 48<sup>th</sup> House District, Arlington (part) and Fairfax (part)**

**Email: [DelRSullivan@house.virginia.gov](mailto:DelRSullivan@house.virginia.gov)**

**Subject: Valentines to Legislators: Thank you from sexual/domestic violence advocates!**

Dear Delegate Sullivan,

As a sexual and domestic violence advocate working every day to promote victim safety and offender accountability, I want to thank you for your support to reduce offender access to firearms this session. **Unfortunately, intimate partner homicide occurs at extraordinary rates in Virginia. And overwhelmingly, firearms are the means by which abusers escalate and enact lethal force on victims and their families.**

The Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance, in partnership with 65 sexual and domestic violence agencies statewide, support policy proposals that seek to expand firearm prohibitions to respondents of all protective orders and those proposals that would support the Department of Criminal Justice Services, local law enforcement, and coordinated community response teams to determine consistent and effective protocol for the surrender and seizure of firearms when a protective order is issued.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to preventing violence, including intimate partner homicide in Virginia! If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or our partners at the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance.

With deep gratitude and a shared vision for safety and justice,

(Insert your name, title, etc.)

**Delegate Kathleen Murphy, D – 34<sup>th</sup> House District, Fairfax (part) and Loudoun (part)**

**Email:** [DelKMurphy@house.virginia.gov](mailto:DelKMurphy@house.virginia.gov)

**Subject:** Valentines to Legislators: Thank you from sexual/domestic violence advocates!

Dear Delegate Murphy,

As a sexual and domestic violence advocate working every day to promote victim safety and offender accountability, I want to thank you for your support to reduce offender access to firearms this session. **Unfortunately, intimate partner homicide occurs at extraordinary rates in Virginia. And overwhelmingly, firearms are the means by which abusers escalate and enact lethal force on victims and their families.**

The Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance, in partnership with 65 sexual and domestic violence agencies statewide, support policy proposals that seek to expand firearm prohibitions to respondents of all protective orders and those proposals that would support the Department of Criminal Justice Services, local law enforcement, and coordinated community response teams to determine consistent and effective protocol for the surrender and seizure of firearms when a protective order is issued.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to preventing violence, including intimate partner homicide in Virginia! If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or our partners at the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance.

With deep gratitude and a shared vision for safety and justice,

(Insert your name, title, etc.)

**Delegate Charniele Herring., D – 36<sup>th</sup> House District, Alexandria (part)**

**Email:** [DelCHerring@house.virginia.gov](mailto:DelCHerring@house.virginia.gov)

**Subject:** Valentines to Legislators: Thank you from sexual/domestic violence advocates!

Dear Delegate Herring,

As a sexual and domestic violence advocate working every day to promote victim safety and offender accountability, I want to thank you for your support to reduce offender access to firearms this session. **Unfortunately, intimate partner homicide occurs at extraordinary rates in Virginia. And overwhelmingly, firearms are the means by which abusers escalate and enact lethal force on victims and their families.**

The Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance, in partnership with 65 sexual and domestic violence agencies statewide, support policy proposals that seek to expand firearm prohibitions to respondents of all protective orders and those proposals that would support the Department of Criminal Justice Services, local law enforcement, and coordinated community response teams to determine consistent and effective protocol for the surrender and seizure of firearms when a protective order is issued.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to preventing violence, including intimate partner homicide in Virginia! If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or our partners at the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance.

With deep gratitude and a shared vision for safety and justice,

(Insert your name, title, etc.)

## Recognizing cruelty to animals in the context of domestic violence

Senator Bill Stanley, R – 20<sup>th</sup> Senate District, Galax (All), Martinsville (All), Patrick (All), Henry (All), Carroll (Part), Franklin (Part), Halifax (Part), Pittsylvania (Part), Danville (Part)

Email: [district20@senate.virginia.gov](mailto:district20@senate.virginia.gov)

Subject: Valentines to Legislators: Thank you from sexual/domestic violence advocates!

Dear Senator Stanley,

On behalf of survivors of domestic violence and the statewide network of community advocates who serve them, thank you for carrying SB 1276 during the 2019 General Assembly Session.

**All too often advocates hear stories of abusers who use a family pet as a means of manipulating their victims into staying in abusive relationships and who threaten harm in order to exert power and control.** A recent national study confirmed that almost half of all victims of domestic violence reported delaying seeking shelter or leaving their abuser because they were worried about what might happen to their pets. This bill is an important step in providing law enforcement and prosecutors with more tools to recognize animal abuse in the context of domestic violence and to intervene swiftly and effectively on behalf of victims, families, and their pets.

Your efforts to champion these issues on behalf of survivors of violence is recognized by the greater advocacy community and we thank you for your continued leadership in this work.

With deep gratitude and a shared vision for safety and justice,

(Insert your name, title, etc.)

Senator Adam Ebbin, D – 30<sup>th</sup> Senate District, Alexandria (Part), Arlington (Part), Fairfax (Part)

Email: [district30@senate.virginia.gov](mailto:district30@senate.virginia.gov)

Subject: Valentines to Legislators: Thank you from sexual/domestic violence advocates!

Dear Senator Ebbin,

On behalf of survivors of domestic violence and the statewide network of community advocates who serve them, thank you for carrying SB 1276 during the 2019 General Assembly Session.

**All too often advocates hear stories of abusers who use a family pet as a means of manipulating their victims into staying in abusive relationships and who threaten harm in order to exert power and control.** A recent national study confirmed that almost half of all victims of domestic violence reported

delaying seeking shelter or leaving their abuser because they were worried about what might happen to their pets. This bill is an important step in providing law enforcement and prosecutors with more tools to recognize animal abuse in the context of domestic violence and to intervene swiftly and effectively on behalf of victims, families, and their pets.

Your efforts to champion these issues on behalf of survivors of violence is recognized by the greater advocacy community and we thank you for your continued leadership in this work.

With deep gratitude and a shared vision for safety and justice,

(Insert your name, title, etc.)

## Advancing Immigrant Safety and Justice

Delegate Kathy Tran, D – 42<sup>nd</sup> House District, Fairfax (Part)

Email: [DelKTran@house.virginia.gov](mailto:DelKTran@house.virginia.gov)

Subject: Valentines to Legislators: Thank you from sexual/domestic violence advocates!

Dear Delegate Tran,

I want to thank you for carrying HB 2025 during this 2019 General Assembly Session. The Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance, and our statewide network of sexual and domestic violence agencies, supports policies ensuring that all persons, regardless of immigration status, have equal access to safety and justice. This includes access to sexual and domestic violence advocacy services, healthcare, safe and legal transportation options, and the opportunity to pursue work and education without fear of being targeted or facing family separation/deportation.

As you may know, many immigrants experience an increased risk of violence in the home and exploitation in the workplace, exacerbated by cultural and language barriers. Abusive partners or other abusers often exploit lack of immigration status, or dependent immigration status, as a way to maintain power and control, and to keep survivors of abuse silent. Immigrant survivors are frequently threatened with deportation by their abusers, increasing their reluctance to seek help from the authorities or advocacy services.

**When Virginia adopts policies that make it easier for immigrant survivors to access healthcare, transportation, and criminal/civil remedies to violence, we also make it more likely that all Virginians will report crimes and access safety and justice throughout the Commonwealth.** Your bill would have connected immigrant survivors with much needed resources - like legal and safe transportation options – which in turn, reduces barriers for those immigrant survivors and their families who need to access our services.

Your efforts to champion these issues on behalf of survivors of violence is recognized by the greater advocacy community and we thank you for your continued leadership in this work.

With deep gratitude and a shared vision for access and equity,

(Insert your name, title, etc.)