NEW VIRGINIA MAJORITY

OUR TEN YEAR VISION FOR DEMOCRACY, JUSTICE & PROGRESS

POLICY AGENDA
Table of Contents

01  Declaration
02  Economic Justice
03  Education
04  Health
05  Housing
06  Environmental Justice
07  Criminal Justice
08  Expanding Democracy
09  Freedom from Fear and Hate
New Virginia Majority started twelve years ago with the audacious goal of building a bloc of conscious, consistent voters to advance a new politics that is democratic, sustainable and just.

We envision a Virginia that centers the needs and struggles of working class people, people of color, immigrants, women, and young people to build a real democracy rooted in racial and economic justice.

We are not quite there yet, but together we have come a long way.

- Over 50,000 formerly incarcerated people are now registered to vote;
- Voter participation is up among new majority voters; and
- Nearly 400,000 more Virginians have access to affordable health coverage.

The 2019 election is over, but our movement for real, systemic change is not. Let’s turn electoral promises into policies and laws that lift up and advance our people.

In our policy agenda we offer steps to make this vision a reality, one that centers working class people of color in Virginia as the drivers of a bold new agenda for all.

This agenda is rooted in racial, gender, environmental, and economic justice. It is one that calls for not just inclusion and tolerance, but an unapologetic embrace of democracy, justice and progress.
ECONOMIC JUSTICE

We want an economy that works for all of us, not just the wealthy few. Virginians deserve a fair and equitable tax system that advances racial justice, stronger worker protections, and a living wage so families can thrive and invest in the future. We support legislation that will:

1. Increase Virginia’s minimum wage to at least $15.00 per hour to support low-wage workers.
2. Strengthen the state’s Earned Income Tax Credit by making it fully refundable.
3. Expand access to comprehensive paid family and medical leave.
4. Eliminate corporate tax loopholes to ensure that corporations pay their fair share.
5. Legalize marijuana and use a portion of the tax revenue to provide grants to Black entrepreneurs to enter the market.
6. Repeal anti-worker policies that limit workers’ ability to collectively bargain for better wages, benefits and working conditions.
7. Establish worker protections so employees do not live in fear of losing their jobs due to their gender identity or sexual orientation.
8. Ensure that all workers receive equal pay for equal work regardless of sex, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation.
We believe that all Virginia students should have access to a high-quality education, regardless of their zip code, race, immigration status, or country of origin. This includes having fully funded schools, affordable higher education and workforce training, and safe and supportive learning environments. We support legislation that will:

**PreK-12**

1. Fully fund our public schools and ensure that they have the necessary instructional, support, and administrative staff.
2. Strengthen programs that provide additional funding to support low-income students.
3. Guarantee that all children have access to high-quality early childhood education.
4. Provide free breakfast and lunch for all public school children.
5. Collect and report data on the use of force, arrests, and other disciplinary actions taken by school resource officers (SROs) or other school security personnel.

**Higher Education**

1. Allow undocumented Virginians to pay in-state tuition.
2. Cover the full cost of higher education for low-income students and families, including tuition, required fees, course materials, and cost of living.
3. Provide preferential admissions and tuition assistance to descendants of enslaved people who built Virginia’s public colleges and universities.
Access to affordable and quality health care is the foundation of building strong and thriving communities. This means that everyone deserves access to health care no matter where they live, work, or play. We support legislation that will:

1. Stop the imposition of Medicaid work requirements and cost-sharing provisions.
2. Ensure that health insurance plans sold in Virginia cannot discriminate based on health status and must cover the ten essential health benefits outlined in the Affordable Care Act.
3. Cover doula and midwifery services for Medicaid beneficiaries to help reduce the number of Black maternal and infant deaths.
4. Provide targeted support to increase the number of women of color who obtain medical, nursing, doula, or midwifery, education or credentials.
5. Eliminate Virginia’s 40 quarters rule.
6. Increase access to health coverage and services for undocumented immigrants.
7. Codify in state law the reproductive health rights guaranteed through Roe v. Wade.
8. Establish a single-payer health insurance program that provides access to health coverage for all Virginians, regardless of immigration status.
9. Increase support for HIV treatment and prevention services, including educating healthcare providers and patients about pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).
All Virginians deserve access to clean, safe, and affordable housing regardless of their income, gender identity, sexual orientation, immigration status, or if they are returning citizens. We support legislation that will:

1. Invest in more affordable housing, implement eviction prevention programs, and increase tenant protections, including rent control.

2. Establish source of income, gender identity, and sexual orientation as protected classes in Virginia’s Fair Housing Act.

3. Allow tenants more time to pay past due rent before landlords can file for an eviction case.

4. Ensure that tenants have the proper protections, including the fundamental right to live in homes that are clean, safe, and affordable.

5. End blanket bans that prevent returning citizens from obtaining affordable and stable housing.

6. Establish a dedicated corporate tax to help address Virginia’s housing crisis and fund affordable housing for communities vulnerable to displacement.
We believe that communities should be informed of and have the power to make decisions about environmental policies, projects, and practices that impact their health and daily lives and have access to workforce training and education for the green jobs of tomorrow. We support legislation that will:

1. Move us towards an equitable 100% clean and renewable energy plan.
2. Ensure that the state adopts formalized processes to analyze and address the environmental and public health impacts of policies and projects and provide meaningful opportunities for community input and accountability.
3. Provide targeted support for low-income individuals and people of color to obtain credentials, post-secondary education, or workforce training in environmental, renewable energy, or related fields.
4. Ensure a just transition and utilize the Environmental Protection Agency’s definition of environmental justice.
CRIMINAL JUSTICE

We believe that a fair and just criminal justice system ensures that law enforcement officers are accountable to their communities, there are more community-based alternatives to incarceration, poverty is decriminalized, and returning citizens have a fair shot to succeed. We support legislation that will:

1. End cash bail, fees and fines for pretrial services, and reduce pretrial detention.
2. Raise the felony larceny threshold from $500 to $1,500.
3. Increase community-based alternatives to youth and adult incarceration.
4. Repeal mandatory minimum sentencing and reinstate discretionary parole.
5. Decriminalize marijuana and expunge charges from individual records.
6. Create or strengthen independent and civilian review of local police departments to increase transparency and community accountability.
7. Increase support for local reentry programs to reduce recidivism and facilitate a successful transition back into society.
8. End the privatization of Virginia’s prison system.
Our democracy is strongest when we all have the ability to participate. The right to vote, to choose our leaders, and to weigh in on issues affecting our lives is at the heart of what it means to be in a democracy. We want our elections to be fair, our votes to count, and our voices to be heard. We support legislation that will:

1. Establish redistricting criteria that includes careful protections for communities of interest and partisan neutrality.
2. Establish a constitutional right to vote that cannot be abridged or taken away.
3. Establish automatic voter registration.
4. Allow early voting to ease burdens around getting to the polls on Election Day.
5. Provide access to same-day voter registration.
We believe in a Virginia that is welcoming and provides an opportunity for all of its residents to succeed and live happy and healthy lives. This means that we must include and protect all that call Virginia home regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, immigration status and more. We support legislation that will:

1. Provide driver’s licenses for undocumented immigrants.
2. End local collaborations with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).
3. Establish and strengthen anti-violence protections and prevention services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals.
4. Establish anti-bullying laws to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender students from bullying by other students, teachers, and school staff.

FREEDOM FROM FEAR & HATE
People of color and the new American majority are the driving force of our democracy and we demand change. Everyone should have access to a driver’s license, safe and affordable housing, a livable wage, the right to vote, and be able to live free of fear.

For too long, our communities have been shut out of the political and legislative process in Virginia. We have been told to be satisfied with small changes and short-term solutions, while major corporations and the wealthy few continue to thrive.

In order to have a healthy Virginia for all of us that brings us good, family supporting jobs, quality housing and schools, equity and protection in our neighborhoods and on the streets, those in power must center the needs and struggles of working class people of color.

The 2019 election was about ensuring that the voices of working class people of color were heard, our issues prioritized, and those in power were held accountable.

Our state lawmakers must take proactive steps to address racial inequality, to strengthen our democracy, and advance economic justice.

New Virginia Majority works to create a powerful multi-issue, multi-racial movement to transform Virginia through large-scale civic engagement, issue advocacy, community organizing and strategic communications. We organize within Latinx, African American, Asian American Pacific Islander, and youth communities, centering the leadership and demands of working class women of color. Together, we vote, mobilize, and engage to end mass incarceration, build just economic and social policies, protect immigrants, and preserve the environment.

**Contact Us**

**Alexandria Office**
3801 Mt. Vernon Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22305
Phone: (571) 699-3139

**Richmond Office**
220 Hull St, STE 200
Richmond, VA 23224
Phone: (804) 918-7142

[Website](http://www.newvirginiamajority.org)
[Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/newvirginiamajority)
[Email](communications@newvirginiamajority.org)