

Summary of Human Rights Commission Recommendations by Category

Highest priorities for the Human Rights Commission:

Recommendation	Previously Introduced	Patron identified for 2026
Support the expansion of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for people with disabilities and others with complex needs.	Yes	No
Amend the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act to allow tenants to raise unsafe or unsanitary conditions as an affirmative defense to non-payment of rent in eviction cases.	Yes	Likely
Reinstate fourteen-day pay or quit notices. Under current law, after a tenant is five days late in paying rent, a landlord can issue a five day "pay or quit" notice requiring the tenant to pay full rent or face eviction proceedings. By extending the five day "pay or quit" window to fourteen days, tenants have a better chance of accessing funds and avoiding housing instability and homelessness.	Yes	Likely
Increase funding for the Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot Program (VERP). Established in 2020 to support the creation of local/regional coordinated systems to prevent evictions, this program provides local organizations with resources to help families access emergency financial assistance, case management, and court navigation.	Yes	Likely

Recommended items that do not appear to have patrons in other localities:

Recommendation	Previously Introduced
Limit fees for rental applications and/or allow groups of tenants to submit a single application.	Yes
Require that critical lease information be made available in languages other than English.	No
Amend the Virginia Residential landlord and Tenant Act to increase transparency during the tenant screening process by requiring landlords to list minimum criteria before accepting applications and provide reasons for a tenant's application denial.	Yes
Require landlords to disclose to prospective rental applicants a complete list of additional fees involved in renting as a separate document prior to tenant application.	Yes
Establish statewide pilot program funded at \$60 million annually for two years to provide rental assistance for 5,000 very low-income families across Virginia.	Yes
Support the expansion of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for people with disabilities and others with complex needs.	Yes
Recognize homelessness as a protected class in the Virginia Human Rights Act and Virginia Fair Housing Law to prohibit discrimination based upon an individual's housing status.	No
Support the passage of a Homeless Bill of Rights codifying the right of unhoused individuals to move freely in public spaces; to receive equal treatment by state and municipal authorities to maintain employment, privacy, and personal property; and to vote.	Yes

Recommended items that likely have patrons in other localities:

(Each of the recommendations below was previously introduced by a state legislator.)

- Amend the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act to allow tenants to raise unsafe or unsanitary conditions as an affirmative defense to non-payment of rent in eviction cases.
- Amend the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act to remove barriers to tenants enforcing the right to habitability. Under current law, a tenant must follow often lengthy procedures and be up to date on all rent payments before suing a landlord for conditions that make their homes uninhabitable.
- Reinstate fourteen-day pay or quit notices. Under current law, after a tenant is five days late in paying rent, a landlord can issue a five day "pay or quit" notice requiring the tenant to pay full rent or face eviction proceedings. By extending the five day "pay or quit" window to fourteen days, tenants have a better chance of accessing funds and avoiding housing instability and homelessness.
- Amend the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act to allow localities to sue landlords who fail to maintain health and safety standards of rental units.
- Increase protections against landlord retaliation by including nonrenewal of leases as a form of prohibited landlord retaliation against those who have filed complaints of discrimination.
- Grant localities right of first refusal during the sale of publicly-supported affordable housing. This would ensure localities have the opportunity to purchase affordable housing before it expires.
- Support enabling legislation to allow for local rent stabilization to prevent price gouging and resultant housing instability and displacement.
- Increase funding for the Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot Program (VERP). Established in 2020 to support the creation of local/regional coordinated systems to prevent evictions, this program provides local organizations with resources to help families access emergency financial assistance, case management, and court navigation.
- Increase annual funding for Virginia Housing Trust Fund (VHTF) from \$87.5 million to \$150 million. The VHTF provides loans to create, preserve, and support affordable housing, and provides grants targeted at reducing homelessness.
- Support comprehensive probation reform bills that offer increased housing support and services to aid in successful reentry of those exiting incarceration.

Items for future consideration:

- Require that each county and city in Virginia maintain a public overnight homeless shelter or fund a private equivalent.
 - At the time of submission, statewide advocacy organizations contacted were uncertain if any legislators plan to reintroduce this in 2026.
- Increase public mental health care funding.

Additional context for categorized recommendations presented above.

Highest priorities for the HRC:

- Support the expansion of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for people with disabilities and others with complex needs.
 - Budget amendments for this were introduced in 2025.
 - At the time of submission, statewide advocacy organizations contacted were uncertain if any legislators plan to reintroduce this in 2026.
- Amend the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act to allow tenants to raise unsafe or unsanitary conditions as an affirmative defense to non-payment of rent in eviction cases.
 - Delegate Cousins (District 79 - Richmond) plans to introduce legislation related to this in the 2026 General Assembly session.
- Reinstate fourteen-day pay or quit notices. Under current law, after a tenant is five days late in paying rent, a landlord can issue a five day "pay or quit" notice requiring the tenant to pay full rent or face eviction proceedings. By extending the five day "pay or quit" window to fourteen days, tenants have a better chance of accessing funds and avoiding housing instability and homelessness.
 - This bill was passed in the House and Senate in 2025, but was vetoed by Governor Youngkin ([HB 1719/SB 812](#)).
 - Statewide advocacy organizations have identified potential patrons to reintroduce this bill in the 2026 General Assembly Session.
- Increase funding for the Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot Program (VERP). Established in 2020 to support the creation of local/regional coordinated systems to prevent evictions, this program provides local organizations with resources to help families access emergency financial assistance, case management, and court navigation.
 - Statewide advocacy organizations and legislative staffers have identified potential patrons to reintroduce this in the 2026 General Assembly Session.

Recommended items that do not appear to have patrons in other localities:

- Limit fees for rental applications and/or allow groups of tenants to submit a single application.
 - This was introduced in the 2022 General Assembly Session by Delegate Marcia Price and was left in the Committee on General Laws ([HB804](#)).
 - At the time of submission, statewide advocacy organizations were uncertain if there is a patron for this in 2026.
- Require that critical lease information be made available in languages other than English.
 - At the time of submission, no legislators' offices or statewide advocacy organizations contacted were aware of potential patrons to introduce a bill addressing this in the 2026 Session.
 - In the 2025 Session, HB 1587 was passed and signed by the Governor directing the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to translate all forms and documents that it is legally required to create and post on its website for use by residential landlords and tenants into the five non-English languages most commonly spoken in Virginia.
- Amend the Virginia Residential landlord and Tenant Act to increase transparency during the tenant screening process by requiring landlords to list minimum eligibility criteria before accepting applications and provide reasons for a tenant's application denial.
 - This bill was passed in the House and Senate in 2024, but was vetoed by Governor Youngkin ([HB996](#)).
 - At the time of submission, statewide advocacy organizations were uncertain if there is a patron for this in 2026.

- Require landlords to disclose to prospective rental applicants a complete list of additional fees involved in renting as a separate document prior to tenant application.
 - This bill was passed in the House and Senate in 2024, but was vetoed by Governor Youngkin ([HB996](#)).
 - At the time of submission, statewide advocacy organizations were uncertain if there is a patron for this in 2026.
- Establish statewide pilot program funded at \$60 million annually for two years to provide rental assistance for 5,000 very low-income families across Virginia.
 - These bills were left in the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations in 2025 ([HB1879](#), [SB832](#)).
 - At the time of submission, statewide advocacy organizations contacted were uncertain if there is a patron for this in 2026.
- Support the expansion of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for people with disabilities and others with complex needs.
 - Budget amendments for this were introduced in 2025.
 - At the time of submission, statewide advocacy organizations contacted were uncertain if any legislators plan to reintroduce this in 2026.
- Recognize homelessness as a protected class in the Virginia Human Rights Act and Virginia Fair Housing Law to prohibit discrimination based upon an individual's housing status.
 - At the time of submission, statewide advocacy organizations contacted were uncertain if there is a patron for this in 2026.
- Support the passage of a Homeless Bill of Rights codifying the right of unhoused individuals to move freely in public spaces; to receive equal treatment by state and municipal authorities to maintain employment, privacy, and personal property; and to vote.
 - This was introduced in the 2025 Session by Delegate Joshua Cole and was left in the Counties, Cities, and Towns Committee ([HB2602](#)).
 - At the time of submission, statewide advocacy organizations contacted were uncertain if any legislators plan to reintroduce this in 2026.

Recommended items that likely have patrons in other localities:

- Amend the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act to allow tenants to raise unsafe or unsanitary conditions as an affirmative defense to non-payment of rent in eviction cases.
 - This was introduced in the 2023 Session by Senator Adam Ebbin and was left in the Committee on General Laws and Technology ([SB284](#)).
 - Delegate Cousins (District 79 - Richmond) plans to introduce legislation related to this in the 2026 General Assembly session.
- Amend the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act to remove barriers to tenants enforcing the right to habitability. Under current law, a tenant must follow often lengthy procedures and be up to date on all rent payments before suing a landlord for conditions that make their homes uninhabitable.
 - Staff from Delegate Rae Cousins' office (District 79 - Richmond) indicated that Del. Cousins plans to introduce legislation related to this in the 2026 General Assembly session.
 - Delegate Cousins introduced legislation to remove the requirement that tenants be current on their rent in order to file a tenants assertion in 2024 and 2025; this passed in the house and senate in 2025, but it was vetoed by Governor Youngkin ([HB 2229](#)).
 - Delegate Alfonso Lopez introduced legislation in 2025 to prohibit a landlord from waiving the duty to maintain a fit premises ([HB2075](#)); this is commonly referred to as "warranty of habitability" legislation. HB2075 was left in the Committee on General Laws. Statewide advocacy organizations have identified potential patrons to reintroduce this bill in the 2026 General Assembly Session.

- Reinstate Fourteen-day pay or quit notices. Under current law, after a tenant is five days late in paying rent, a landlord can issue a five day "pay or quit" notice requiring the tenant to pay full rent or face eviction proceedings. By extending the five day "pay or quit" window to fourteen days, tenants have a better chance of accessing funds and avoiding housing instability and homelessness.
 - [HB 1719/SB 812](#): This bill was passed in the House and Senate in 2025, but was vetoed by Governor Youngkin.
 - Statewide advocacy organizations have identified potential patrons to reintroduce this bill in the 2026 General Assembly Session.
- Amend the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act to allow localities to sue landlords who fail to maintain health and safety standards of rental units.
 - Legislation to allow this has been introduced multiple times and passed in the house and senate in 2025, but it was vetoed by Governor Youngkin ([HB1718](#)).
 - Delegate Callsen was a patron on this bill in 2025, and staff from her office have indicated that she may support it again in 2026, if another delegate reintroduces it. Statewide advocacy organizations have identified potential patrons to reintroduce this bill in the 2026 General Assembly Session.
- Increase protections against landlord retaliation by including nonrenewal of leases as a form of prohibited landlord retaliation against those who have filed complaints of discrimination.
 - This bill was passed in the House and Senate in 2024, but was vetoed by Governor Youngkin ([HB817](#)).
 - Statewide advocacy organizations have identified a potential patron to reintroduce this bill in the 2026 Session.
- Grant localities right of first refusal during the sale of publicly-supported affordable housing. This would ensure localities have the opportunity to purchase affordable housing before it expires.
 - Legislation to allow this has been introduced multiple times and passed in the house and senate in 2025, but it was vetoed by Governor Youngkin ([HB1973](#)).
 - Statewide advocacy organizations have identified potential patrons to reintroduce this bill in the 2026 General Assembly Session.
- Support enabling legislation to allow for local rent stabilization to prevent price gouging and resultant housing instability and displacement.
 - This bill failed in the Senate General Laws and Technology Committee in 2025 ([SB 1136](#)).
 - Statewide advocacy organizations have identified potential patrons to reintroduce this bill in the 2026 General Assembly Session.
- Increase funding for the Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot Program (VERP). Established in 2020 to support the creation of local/regional coordinated systems to prevent evictions, this program provides local organizations with resources to help families access emergency financial assistance, case management, and court navigation.
 - Statewide advocacy organizations and legislative staffers have identified potential patrons to reintroduce this in the 2026 General Assembly Session.
- Increase annual funding for Virginia Housing Trust Fund (VHTF) from \$87.5 million to \$150 million. The VHTF provides loans to create, preserve, and support affordable housing, and provides grants targeted at reducing homelessness.
 - Budget amendments for this have been introduced multiple times.
 - Statewide advocacy organizations have identified potential patrons to reintroduce this in the 2026 General Assembly Session.
- Support comprehensive probation reform bills that offer increased housing support and services to aid in successful reentry of those exiting incarceration.
 - Criminal justice reform is often a priority for Delegate Katrina Callsen.