



Increasing Voting Accessibility Voting Laws to Know in 2020

The Three Biggest Changes

1. **HB 108/SB 601** – This bill made Election Day a State Holiday.
2. **HB 1/SB 111** – Before this bill, only individuals who met one of a list of specific reasons for absentee voting could vote absentee. This bill lifted that requirement. So, now anyone can vote absentee if they choose to do so. This means individuals who work during polling place hours or who want to avoid crowds during Coronavirus are free to do so.
3. **HB 19/SB 65** – This bill removed the requirement to have a photo ID to vote. A form of ID is still required, but many more types of ID are now accepted. You can use:
 - Virginia driver's license (regardless of the expiration)
 - Voter registration confirmation documents
 - U.S. passport
 - Any other form of ID issued by Virginia or the United States government
 - Any student ID from a Virginia private school or any institution of higher education in the United States
 - Any photo employee ID issued by an employer
 - A copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that includes your name and address

If you don't have any of these documents, you can still vote if you sign a written, legally binding statement confirming your identity.

If you don't have access to your form of ID on Election Day and refuse to sign the statement of identification, you will be given a provisional ballot, which will be counted if you produce identification or sign one of these legally binding statements of identity by noon on the Friday after Election Day.

Changes Regarding Individual Rights:

Before the Polls:

SB 666 – Notice of Voting Registration Denial

- If your voter registration application was denied, you will now be notified of the denial by the General Registrar within 5 days of the denial decision both in writing and via email or telephone, where possible. It used to be that registration denials were only sent via postal mail.

HB 1086/SB 555 – Repealing Racial Restrictions on Voting

- Several Jim Crow era laws that existed to prevent people of color from voting been repealed.

HB 1491 – High School Registration

- Public high schools will now provide all students who are eligible to register to vote information about voting and the opportunity to register to vote during school hours.

HB 241 – Protective Voter Status

- Those who believe their personal safety is at risk, for reasons like stalking, will be granted protected voter status by completing a signed statement. This replaces the old requirement that the individual provide evidence of a complaint filed with the magistrate or law-enforcement official to receive protected voter status.

At the Polls:

HB 19/SB 65 – Voter Identification

- This bill removed the requirement to have a photo ID to vote. Now an individual can use any of the forms of ID listed under the top 3 changes on page 1. Note that signing a legal statement of your identity is also a valid form of ID to vote.

HB 1093 – Prisoners Obtaining Identification to Vote

- This bill states that Department of Corrections will work to assist prisoners in obtaining a government issued ID.

Provisional Ballot Changes

- **HB 43 – Wrong Precinct**
 - This bill says that voters who live in a split district and believe the polling location they were sent to is not the one they are registered to can vote with a provisional ballot.
- **HB 19/SB 65 – No ID and No Signature**
 - A voter who does not provide a form of ID and does not sign the statement of identity will be given a provisional ballot. Note that provisional ballots are not counted unless proof of identity is provided by noon the Friday after Election Day.

Absentee Voting:

HB 1/SB 111 – No Reason Required to Vote Absentee

- This bill removes the requirement to have a specified reason to vote absentee. Now anyone can vote absentee if they choose to do so.

HB 240 – Annual Application

- All voters are now eligible to apply to be an annual absentee voter, meaning apply absentee for all elections in a given year. This bill removes the previous requirement that only those individuals with a disability or illness were eligible to apply to be annual absentee voters.

SB 617 – Absentee Satellite Sites

- This bill authorizes cities and counties to create additional locations for in-person absentee voting, called Absentee Satellite Sites, and outlines the regulations for creating and running these sites.

HB 242 – Emergency Situations

- If you miss the deadline to vote absentee or cannot vote in person because of a personal emergency, like being in the hospital or experiencing a death in your family, you can apply for an emergency absentee ballot so that you don't miss your opportunity to vote.

HB 239 – Must Register to Vote By Mail-In Absentee Ballot by the 11th Day Before the Election

- The deadline to register for absentee voting by mail has been moved from 7 days prior to the election to 11 days prior to the election. In other words, you have to turn in your application to vote absentee by mail sooner than you used to.

HB 238/SB 455 – Absentee Ballot Return Requirements

- Absentee Ballots that are returned to the General Registrar postmarked on or before Election Day and received by noon 3 days after Election Day will be counted.

Procedural and Administrative Changes:

HB 235/SB 2 – DMV Sharing Information

- As long as the individual doesn't decline, when visiting the DMV for a number of reasons, such as renewing a driver's license or changing an address, information will be automatically shared with the Department of Elections for voter registration purposes.

HB 540 – Director of Operations established

- This bill establishes a new position at the Virginia Department of Elections, called the Director of Operations.

HB 1402 – Audible Repetition Requirement

- Election officers no longer have to repeat back the full residence address of each voter. Instead, the election officer will verify the voter’s full name and address and only audibly repeat the voter’s full name.

HB 146 – Sample Ballots No Longer Required to Be Printed on Yellow Paper

- Now sample ballots can be printed on any color paper, so long as it is not white.

The disAbility Law Center of Virginia is mandated by the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (PL 107-252) to advocate for the rights of Virginia voters with disabilities under the federal law.

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about accessing your right to vote, contact us:

By Email: info@dLCV.org

Call Us: 1-800-552-3962

OR

Drop In: 1512 Willow Lawn Drive,
Suite 100, Richmond, VA 23230

OR

Contact the Accessibility Coordinator at the Department of Elections:

Email: info@elections.virginia.gov

Phone: (800) 552-9745 or TYY 711

Make Voting Accessibility Complaints to the Department of Elections at:

www.elections.virginia.gov/voter-complaints

**For more voting accessibility information, frequently asked questions,
and to take our survey, visit our website at:**

www.dlcV.org/voting-rights

dLCV publications are available in alternate format, upon request.