



February 9, 2021

Dear Virginians,

Today I'm releasing a new policy plan in honor of my high school best friend. As a Delegate when I fought for legislation paving the way for and protecting the rights of LGBTQIA+ communities, I had them on my mind constantly and the day they told me they wanted to come out. That wasn't an easy thing to do in Petersburg, where I observed more instances of homophobia than I care to count. When I served in the House of Delegates, it was my best friend's bravery that inspired and motivated me each day to fight just as hard as the last to ensure that our Commonwealth protects and values all Virginians through legislation.

I fought for the Virginia Values Act, which established protections against discrimination in housing, employment, public spaces, credit applications, and healthcare for LGBTQIA+ communities.<sup>1</sup> I co-sponsored legislation to remove "statutory bans on same-sex marriages and civil unions,"<sup>2</sup> and I supported legislation to ban conversion therapy for individuals 18 and under.<sup>3</sup>

It's clear that our work is far from being done. Look no further than the GOP supporting the reversal of same-sex marriage protections — just two days ago. As Governor, I will fight for a Commonwealth that protects and values all Virginians. Here is my plan.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Carroll Foy

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<sup>1</sup> ["Governor Northam Signs Virginia Values Act," Governor's Press Releases, 04/11/20.](#)

<sup>2</sup> "HB 1490: Same-sex marriages," Virginia's Legislative Information System, Last Modified 03/02/20.

<sup>3</sup> "SB 245: Conversion therapy," Virginia's Legislative Information System, Last Modified 04/06/20.

## Protecting LGBTQIA+ Rights

As a state Delegate, I passed historic legislation to safeguard and expand civil rights protections for LGBTQIA+ individuals. As Governor, I will continue to ensure that our Commonwealth and the communities therein are protected and valued. It is time for us to finally fulfill the promise on which this country was founded: equality for all.

### As a delegate I:

- Co-patroned the Virginia Values Act<sup>4</sup>, making Virginia the first Southern state to provide sweeping protections for the “LGBTQIA+ community against discrimination in housing, employment, public spaces, and on credit applications.”<sup>5</sup>
- Helped pass bills to end conversion therapy for persons aged 18 and under,<sup>6</sup> and bar health care providers from limiting or denying coverage on the basis of gender identity or for being a transgender individual.<sup>7</sup>
- Co-patroned legislation to remove “statutory prohibitions on marriages and civil unions” between same-sex couples.<sup>8</sup>
- Successfully advocated to classify crimes against individuals on the basis of gender identity, disability, and sexual orientation as hate crimes.<sup>9</sup>

### AS GOVERNOR, I WILL:

1. Amend the Virginia state constitution to be consistent with the Supreme Court 2015 *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision to reinforce that marriage equality is the law of the land.
2. Eliminate the LGBTQIA+ “panic defense,” thereby suspending leniency for violence committed because of one’s gender identity or sexual orientation. D.C. recently banned the defense, following the direction of eleven states, and we will push for Virginia to be next.
3. Institute a statewide 100-day challenge to end LGBTQIA+ homelessness. This effort, modeled on successes in California to combat veteran and youth homelessness,<sup>10</sup> brings together local governments, nonprofits, and LGBTQIA+ centers to ensure that no person is without housing and to build on current community response initiatives.
4. Champion a bill that clarifies the Virginia Human Rights Act by defining sexual and workplace harassment to include harassment based on an individual’s sexual orientation and gender identity.
5. Review state-funded workforce development initiatives to ensure inclusive outreach, training, and hiring practices aimed at recruiting and retaining LGBTQIA+ employees.

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<sup>4</sup> [“SB 868: Discrimination,” Virginia’s Legislative Information System, Last Modified 4/11/20.](#)

<sup>5</sup> [“Governor Northam Signs Virginia Values Act,” Governor’s Press Releases, 04/11/20.](#)

<sup>6</sup> [“SB 245: Conversion therapy,” Virginia’s Legislative Information System, Last Modified 04/06/20.](#)

<sup>7</sup> [“HB 1429: Health insurance,” Virginia’s Legislative Information System, Last Modified 04/07/20.](#)

<sup>8</sup> [“HB 1490: Same-sex marriages,” Virginia’s Legislative Information System, Last Modified 03/02/20.](#)

<sup>9</sup> [“HB 618: Hate crimes,” Virginia’s Legislative Information System, Last Modified 04/06/20.](#)

<sup>10</sup> [“Governor Newsom Launches 100-Day Challenge Initiative for California Cities & Counties to Fight Homelessness,” Office of Governor Gavin Newsom, 12/05/19.](#)

6. Coordinate with the Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity to recognize LGBTQIA+-owned businesses and to ensure increased access to state-funded contracts.
7. Continue to declare every June as LGBTQIA+ pride month to further educate the public about the LGBTQIA+ movement and to commemorate its milestones and progress.
8. Appoint an LGBTQIA+ liaison to gather recommendations to address barriers and challenges facing the LGBTQIA+ community and offer policy solutions. This position would be in addition to the Director of LGBTQIA+ Outreach.
9. Support legislation to establish a Virginia LGBTQIA+ Advisory Board to promote and address prominent economic, social, and educational issues for LGBTQIA+ constituents.