



**Hamkae**  
Center

**Mission:** Organize Asian Americans to achieve racial, economic, and social justice in Virginia.

[hamkaecenter.org](http://hamkaecenter.org) | [@hamkaecenter](https://twitter.com/hamkaecenter)

## **2023 General Assembly Regular Session Policy Agenda and Priority Issues**

*Anti-Asian Hate | Education | Health Access | Language Access | Voting Access*

### **ANTI-ASIAN HATE**

*Hamkae Center strongly opposes legislation that specifically singles out or penalizes Asian Americans or any Asian ethnic group in Virginia on the basis of race or ethnicity.*

#### **OPPOSE:**

- **SB 1193 (Reeves)** prohibits employees of public universities and colleges in Virginia from recruiting Chinese talent and receiving Chinese-funded grants. *\*note: there is currently no other bill that singles out a specific country for employees at public colleges and universities to forbid participation, receive funding, and/or disclose any payments. This bill is bad for business and protecting intellectual pursuit.*

### **EDUCATION**

*Virginia's constitution guarantees residents the right to a high-quality education, which is critical to a vital community and a strong workforce. Yet, many students, including Asian American Virginians, are barred from opportunities to access this education, effectively participate, or improve their academic experience.*

#### **SUPPORT:**

- **HB 1851 (Subramanyam)**: requires the Board of Education to publish the names of each individual and organization consulted or paid by any state agency in Virginia to work on Standards of Learning (or SOL) revisions. These names must be published at least 30 days before the mandatory public hearings for feedback on the proposed SOL revisions.
- **HB 2111 (Bourne) / SB1325 (McClellan)**: improves the Standards of Quality for Virginia public schools. These include (but are not limited to): improving teacher professional development and leadership, lowering the ratio of ELL students to teachers, and increasing the number of credentialed student support and mental health professionals in schools.
  - Budget amendment - Fully fund the proposed changes to the Standards of Quality (SOQs).

#### **OPPOSE:**

- **HB 1448 (Orrock)**: Requires the Board of Education to write model policies on which books to select and remove from public school libraries.
- **HB 1434 (Ballard)**: Prevents school board members from changing names for students without paperwork for a legal name change.
- **HB 1707 (Durant)**: allows public school employees to "out" students to their parents or guardians without their consent if the student's self-identified pronouns do not match their sex-assigned-at-birth.
- **HB 1387 (Greenhalgh)**: requires students to identify their sex-assigned-at birth to play K-12, collegiate, intramural, and club sports; and prevents transgender students from playing on gender-affirming teams.

***\*In reference to Amendment 8 in the 2022 Special Session: Hamkae Center opposes any bill or budget amendment that reallocates funding away from programs that allow undocumented students in Virginia to pay in-state tuition rates and access state financial aid.***

## HEALTH ACCESS

*Access to affordable healthcare is consistently identified as one of the top 3 issues identified by Asian American voters in Virginia. Although federal, state, and local coverage options and programs exist - access to health coverage and vital care services are not guaranteed for all Virginians.*

### SUPPORT

- **HB 2210 (Tran) / SB 1327 (Ebbin):** provides Medicaid coverage for all eligible Virginians age 0-17, regardless of immigration status. This proposal also provides coverage for otherwise-eligible Virginian families who are disqualified from Virginia Medicaid or Affordable Care Act because of their status - including LPR (<5 years), student visa holders, and refugees.

### OPPOSE

- **SB 791 (Chase), SB 960 (Peake), SB 1203 (Reeves):** bans gender-affirming health care services for transgender and non-binary youth.

## LANGUAGE ACCESS

*Asian languages make up the 5 top languages most commonly spoken in Virginia after English and Spanish. Yet, Virginia state agencies continue to provide services without meaningful or adequate support for Virginians with limited-English proficiency (including Spanish). All Virginians need to be able to communicate with their state agencies and receive the support they need in their communities.*

### SUPPORT:

- **Budget Amendment (Del. Tran/Sen. Hashmi) - Preserving Funds for Language Access:** carry unused funds for language access in Virginia state agencies over into next year's state budget, designate funds to HHS, and have funding available to all Virginia state agencies/
- **Budget Amendment (Del. Tran/Sen. Hashmi) - Small Business Navigator Program:** establishes a navigator program within the Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity to support linguistically marginalized (a.k.a limited-English proficient) small business owner communities who speak Spanish, Chinese (incl. Cantonese and Mandarin), Vietnamese, Arabic, and Korean.

## VOTING ACCESS

*Turnout among Asian Americans voters have steadily increased, including by first-time and infrequent voters, in part because voting is more accessible. Expansions to early voting in-person, acceptable IDs, vote-by-mail, ballot drop boxes, more multilingual voter materials, and no-excuse absentee voting are important improvements to promote civic engagement while also preserving the security and integrity of our democracy.*

### OPPOSE:

- **HB 1444 (Ware)** Limits the absentee voting in-person time period from 45 days to 7 days, repeals the affidavit provision for voters without photo-ID, and repeals the permanent absentee voter registration list. Similar bills were presented last year and failed (HB24, HB46, and HB39).
- **HB 1467 (Wyatt)** Shortens the early voting, limits absentee voting in-person from 45 days to 4 days, and eliminates drop off locations, and voids any ballot without a voter's last-4 digits of their SSN and witness signature. Similar bills were presented last year and failed (HB35, HB178, and SB552).
- **SB 794 (McDougle)** Repeals the affidavit for voters who do not present a photo ID, and replaces it with a provisional ballot, which will hinder voters from casting their vote or disqualify otherwise valid votes. This exact bill was presented last year (HB942 (LaRock)) and failed.