

**Bill R. DeSteph**

Virginia

Senator, SD-008 (R)

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Freedom
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VA Legislative Scorecard 2025

Based on the Principles of the U.S. Constitution

The Legislative Scorecard is a nationwide, nonpartisan educational program of The John Birch Society intended to inform voters about legislators' voting records. It does not promote any candidate or political party. Bills are chosen for their constitutional implications and taxpayer costs.

★ Constitutional ✗ Unconstitutional ? Did not Vote

Vote

1. SB1233 Speed Surveillance (Passed 25 to 15 on 2/22/2025). Permits state and local law enforcement to install and operate automated systems to monitor pedestrian-crossing and stop-sign violations in areas such as school zones, highway work zones, and high-risk intersections.

NO



2. HB2769 Forced PrEP Coverage (Passed 24 to 15 on 2/19/2025). Aimed to prohibit life and health-insurance companies from discriminating against individuals solely because they use pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), a medication that significantly reduces the risk of HIV infection.

NO



3. SB1307 Allowing Local Sales Tax Increases (Passed 27 to 12 on 2/17/2025). Proposed allowing all counties and cities in the state to impose an additional local sales-and-use tax of up to 1%, contingent upon voter approval through a local referendum, to fund government schools.

NO



4. SB851 Rainwater Harvesting (Passed 40 to 0 on 1/31/2025). Prohibits local governments from requiring or penalizing property owners who use advanced Tier 4 rainwater systems instead of connecting to municipal water supplies.

YES



5. HJR1 Reproductive "Freedom" Constitutional Amendment (Passed 21 to 18 on 1/31/2025). Proposed a constitutional amendment to establish a fundamental "right to reproductive freedom" in Virginia.

NO



6. SB995 Appraiser Market Manipulation (Passed 35 to 2 on 1/29/2025). Sought to enhance the training requirements for real estate appraisers by mandating a course on fair-housing laws and appraisal bias as part of the educational prerequisites for licensure.

YES

**Scorecard Votes: 83%**

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\$294,636

U.S. National Debt Per Household as of July 27, 2026

Why do these votes matter?

1. Speed Surveillance

SB1233 permits state and local law enforcement to install and operate automated systems to monitor pedestrian-crossing and stop-sign violations in areas such as school zones, highway work zones, and high-risk intersections.

The Virginia State Senate passed SB1233 on February 22, 2025 by a vote of 25 to 15. We have assigned pluses to the nays because traffic-monitoring systems undermine due process by removing human oversight and presuming guilt before innocence, violating principles protected by the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments. These systems also risk infringing on Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable searches and seizures.

2. Forced PrEP Coverage

HB2769 aimed to prohibit life and health-insurance companies from discriminating against individuals solely because they use pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).

The Virginia State Senate passed HB2769 on February 19, 2025 by a vote of 24 to 15. We have assigned pluses to the nays because no insurer should be forced to cover services that conflict with its principles, particularly contraceptives that may violate deeply held moral or religious beliefs. Mandating such coverage is a clear overreach of government power and undermines both religious liberty and free-market principles.

3. Allowing Local Sales Tax Increases

SB1307 proposed allowing all counties and cities in the state to impose an additional local sales-and-use tax of up to 1%, contingent upon voter approval through a local referendum, to fund government schools.

The Virginia State Senate passed SB1307 on February 17, 2025 by a vote of 27 to 12. We have assigned pluses to the nays because sales taxes violate property rights, and allowing taxation by direct democracy—through voter referendum—represents a form of majority tyranny. Education is not a legitimate function of government, but a personal responsibility and a fundamental parental right. Forcing citizens to subsidize a compulsory, failing, government-run K–12 system infringes on their individual liberties protected by the Bill of Rights. We strongly encourage parents to pursue alternatives—such as homeschooling or private, patriotic institutions like *FreedomProject Academy*—which operate independently from government.

4. Rainwater Harvesting

SB851 prohibits local governments from mandating that owners of Tier 4 rainwater harvesting systems connect to municipal water supplies and prevents localities from penalizing or condemning properties solely because they rely on these self-sufficient water systems.

The Virginia State Senate passed SB851 on January 31, 2025 by a vote of 40 to 0. We have assigned pluses to the ayes because this bill protects homeowners from being forced to connect to government-run water systems. It upholds the basic right to control and use private property without interference, supporting the Fourth, Fifth, and 14th Amendments, which protect against unreasonable government intrusion, property loss without due process, and ensure these rights apply at all levels of government.

5. Reproductive "Freedom" Constitutional Amendment

HJR1 proposed a constitutional amendment to establish a fundamental "right to reproductive freedom" in Virginia. The amendment aimed to ensure that every individual has the right to make and effectuate decisions about all matters related to pregnancy without interference from the state.

The Virginia State Senate passed HJR1 on January 31, 2025 by a vote of 21 to 18. We have assigned pluses to the nays because the care of human life—not its destruction—is the greatest responsibility of government. The right to life is the most fundamental, God-given, and unalienable right asserted in the Declaration of Independence and protected by the Fifth and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

6. Appraiser Market Manipulation

SB995 sought to enhance the training requirements for real estate appraisers by mandating a course on fair-housing laws and appraisal bias as part of the educational prerequisites for licensure.

The Virginia State Senate passed SB995 on January 29, 2025 by a vote of 35 to 2. We have assigned pluses to the nays because the government should not interfere with private entities or the free market. This bill imposes unnecessary regulations on appraisers, potentially leading to artificially adjusted property valuations that do not accurately reflect market conditions. In turn, this will increase taxes on the property. By mandating anti-bias training and restricting the factors appraisers can consider, SB995 subjects professionals to government oversight that could pressure them into valuations based on political considerations rather than economic realities. Such interference undermines property rights, distorts fair-market pricing, and sets a dangerous precedent for further state control over private industry, particularly private-property evaluations.