

Key Issue(s):

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- School Discipline Policies



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF VIRGINIA

## Action Alert!

**Alert No: 17-02**

**January 12, 2017**

This "Action Alert!" is a call to action for League members and friends throughout the state to communicate with their local legislators and various committee members. We try to make them aware of the state League's position on bills that are being considered. While the legislature is in session is the best opportunity to educate legislators and to allow them to make informed decisions.

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### Proposed Change in School Discipline Policies

*Where do we want our children? In the Courtroom or in the Classroom?  
Vote for the Classroom!*

*Should 70,000 Virginia students, one-fifth of them in elementary school, have out-of-school suspensions, some for the entire school year? NO!*

Delegate Richard Bell and Senator Bill Stanley have proposed several bills that would change Virginia's school suspension policies and Keep Kids IN School. Ask your legislator to support these bills for the classroom: [HB1534](#), [HB1535](#), [HB1536](#); [SB995](#), [SB996](#), [SB997](#)

#### **Background:**

- Currently, long-term suspensions can be from 11 school days to 364 calendar days! HB1534 and SB995 would limit them to 45 school days.

- Now students at any and all levels may be suspended or expelled from school. Bills HB1536 and SB997 eliminate suspension or expulsion for students in preschool through grade five.
- What is the risk of Suspensions? More problems – dropping out, family hardship, lack of education, the path to justice system involvement.

### **Act Now!!**

Ask your legislator, especially if he/she is a member of the Education Committees, to support these bills to flatten suspension rates.

[HB1534](#), [HB1535](#), [HB1536](#); [SB995](#), [SB996](#), [SB997](#)

#### **Senate Education and Health Committee Members:**

Newman (Chairman), Saslaw, Lucas, Howell, Locke, Barker, Black, Carrico, Petersen, Cosgrove, Lewis, Dunnivant, Chase, Suetterlein

#### **House Education Committee:**

Landes, Pogge, Lingamfelter, Cole, Massie, Greason, D. Bell, LeMunyon, Robinson, Yost, Yancey, Dudenhefer, Davis, Leftwich, LaRock, Tyler, Bulova, Keam, Hester, Lindsey, Bagby

### **Need More information?**

#### **Center for Public Integrity:**

<https://www.publicintegrity.org/2015/04/10/17089/virginia-tops-nation-sending-students-cops-courts-where-does-your-state-rank>

#### **Legal Aid Justice Center:**

“Suspended Progress” describes the current problem as well as prevention measures and alternatives that work.

<https://www.justice4all.org/?s=suspended+progress>

#### **Governor’s Children’s Cabinet:**

<https://hhr.virginia.gov/childrens-cabinet/>

#### **Virginia DOE: School Quality Profiles:**

<http://schoolquality.virginia.gov/>

See the “Learning Climate” of every Virginia school in categories of attendance rate, absenteeism rate, number of offenses, short-term suspensions, long-term suspensions, expulsions, and free and reduced meals percentages.



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