

BUILDING **thriving**
COMMUNITIES

questions for candidates



Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence
ACTION ALLIANCE

questions for candidates*

* While non-profit organizations cannot endorse or oppose any individual candidates or groups of candidates for public office, non-profits may ask candidates to respond to questions that are phrased in a neutral manner (e.g. avoiding yes/no or “would you support or oppose” questions). Candidates’ fitness for office should be judged on a variety of qualifications that go beyond their responses to the questions contained here. The Action Alliance does not support or oppose candidates for public office.

building trauma-informed schools

Students who have experienced trauma, either in their home or in their community, often exhibit challenging and sometimes disruptive behaviors in the classroom. More and more we are seeing schools harshly discipline these students and even refer them to law enforcement. **What would you do to ensure that teachers and school divisions have the resources needed to address their students’ trauma and meet their social and emotional needs?**

responding to harm

Most survivors of sexual violence and/or intimate partner violence never make a report to the police, often because they believe that the police and the criminal justice system will not make them safer. At the same time, many survivors of violence have indicated satisfaction and reduced trauma symptoms after voluntarily participating in restorative or transformative justice approaches as an accountability measure for the person who harmed them.¹ **How might you expand access to restorative or transformative justice options for survivors of violence?**

equity + trauma

Measures like school segregation and neighborhood redlining have negatively impacted generations of black and brown families and neighborhoods. For some children, adverse childhood experiences (“ACEs”) are layered on top of these historical traumas. **Which policy solutions would you advocate for to undo historical marginalization and oppression and to support a culture of equity?**²

equity + income

The overall median household income in Virginia is just above \$60,000. However, there is a large disparity between median income for White earners versus that of Black earners. In 2017, the median household income for White households was \$63,704, \$49,793 for Latinx households, and \$40,232 for Black households. **What would you do to narrow the income gap and promote economic security for all?**³

guns + intimate partner violence

Perpetrators of intimate partner violence frequently use guns to threaten and control victims. A study by the Harvard School of Public Health concluded that “hostile gun displays against family members are more common than gun use in self-defense.”⁴ According to a 2018 medical study, “about 4.5 million women have had an intimate partner threaten them with a gun and nearly 1 million have been shot or shot at by an intimate partner.”⁵ **What would you do to prevent the use of firearms in cases of intimate partner violence?**

mass shootings + gender-based violence

According to an analysis of F.B.I. data on mass shootings in the U.S. that occurred between 2009 and 2017, offenders of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking accounted for 54% of all mass shooters.⁶ **Given this connection between mass shooters and people who commit domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking, what would you do to prevent mass shootings?**

child separations + trauma

The practice of separating children from parents who care for them, as they legally seek asylum in the U.S., has a deeply traumatizing impact for children and families. **If elected, what steps would you take to protect asylum-seekers in Virginia from harmful immigration enforcement and detention practices?**

survivor access to reproductive healthcare

A person’s sexual and reproductive health are directly impacted by experiences of sexual and intimate partner violence. Full access to non-judgmental, safe, legal, and affordable options about reproductive care, including contraceptives and abortion, are essential components of building a society where government no longer exercises power and control over how and when people care for and build families. **How would you ensure that Virginians are able to access non-judgmental, medically accurate information about a full range of reproductive options?**

survivor access to resources + support

Access to basic resources like housing, healthcare, and transportation are crucial building blocks to achieving a thriving community. Survivors of sexual and intimate partner violence often experience housing and financial instability and inadequate access to healthcare in the aftermath of trauma. **How would you work to ensure that community-members’ basic needs are met and that trauma survivors are supported?**

1 Restorative Justice Victim Satisfaction Survey Research report Research and Evaluation, New Zealand Ministry of Justice September 2016. <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/20170303-RJ-Victim-Report.pdf>. Retrieved 8/20/19.

2 Adapted from Voices for Virginia’s Children: Questions for Candidate: https://vakids.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/2019-VVC-Election_Toolkits_Trauma_WEB.pdf. Retrieved 8/20/19

3 Voices for Virginia’s Children: Questions for Candidates. https://vakids.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/2019-VVC-Election_Toolkits_EconomicSecurity_WEB.pdf Retrieved 8/20/19.

4 Violence Policy Center (VPC) study When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2014 Homicide Data (September 2016).

5 Sorensen S, Schut R. Nonfatal gun use in intimate partner violence: A systematic review of the literature. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*. 2018 Oct;19(4):431-442.

6 Everytown Research study Mass Shootings in the U.S.: 2009-2017 (December 2018)

Science fiction
is simply a way to
**practice the future
together.**

**It is our right &
responsibility to
*create a
new world.***

~ adrienne maree brown

