

# Advocacy Alert

SAARA of Virginia



Dear SAARA Friends,

Yesterday, Governor Northam vetoed the felony homicide bill; house bill 2528! Thank you all for responding to SAARA of Virginia's Call to Action! Your phone calls and emails, along with the advocacy efforts of the strong coalition of advocacy organizations that partnered in opposition to HB2528, had a positive impact.

Here is a bit of what Governor Northam said in regard to his veto of HB2528: "The disease of addiction has long devastated our communities. While I share the goal of addressing the opioid crisis and ensuring drug dealers are punished for supplying dangerous drugs, this bill goes beyond drug dealers and would punish individuals who are themselves struggling with addiction. The way to help individuals struggling with addiction is to ensure they receive proper treatment."

Here is the link to the Governor's full press release:

<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/all-releases/2019/may/headline-840389-en.>

Below is the list of organizations and legislators who worked together, with their members and supporters, to make this happen:

- *ACLU Virginia*
- *The Substance Abuse and Addiction Recovery Alliance (SAARA) of Virginia*
- *The Legal Aid Justice Center*
- *Honesty Liller, Chief Executive Officer of The McShin Foundation*
- *Virginia State NAACP Criminal Justice Committee*
- *Virginia Disability Law Center*
- *Interfaith Action for Human Rights*
- *Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants*
- *CARITAS*
- *VOCAL Virginia*

- *The Chris Atwood Foundation*
- *Social Action Linking Together (SALT)*
- *Del. Jennifer Carroll Foy*
- *Del. Jennifer McClellan*

The McShin Foundation also sent out a powerful Action Alert yesterday.

Please take a few minutes to contact Governor Northam's office and say thank you. Governor Northam's comments in vetoing this legislation indicates that he gets it and cares!

SAARA of Virginia sends a GREAT BIG THANK YOU to everyone for working together to create this positive change. Together, we make a difference!

Kathy Harkey, MA-MPP, BSP, BSMDS  
Executive Director

*The Substance Abuse Addiction Recovery Alliance (SAARA) of Virginia is a grassroots advocacy organization that maximizes the power of the community to advocate for treatment and promote recovery to prevent the harmful affects of Substance Use Disorder and Addiction on individuals, families, businesses, and the community.*

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