

Sample Letters to the Editor on the need for Good Governance in Virginia

Below are some sample Letters to the Editor which you can take and personalize for submission to a local newspaper. Please check the Guidelines document for more specific messages.

1) In Virginia, good governance is an important campaign issue

It is shameful that our Commonwealth, characterized by a powerful history of fighting for political equality, is not a national model for good governance. We are proud of the role that Virginia played in our nation's history, overcoming political tyranny from overseas, and creating a democratic republic. Yet our Commonwealth is currently ranked 46 out of 50 states in the 2020 S.W.A.M.P Index, a ranking of states by the Coalition for Integrity based on laws and regulations related to transparency and accountability to citizens.

Virginians can change this. All voters, irrespective of party, agree that integrity in government is critical to building confidence that government works for the people, not corporations or special interests. The newly released Virginia Good Governance Scorecard asks candidates to present their views on a range of questions related to access to the ballot box, fair representation, getting big money out of politics, and ethics reforms.

In 1994, a commissioned report by Governor Wilder stated that, "continued scrutiny of the standards of accountability and conduct for public servants is a sign of vigilance." Three decades after the issuance of this report on government accountability, the citizens of Virginia should stand up and say, "Yes, we want government to work for all of our citizens, not just a few." Ask all the candidates running in your district to fill in the Virginia Good Governance Scorecard and find out if their values correspond to those of our forebearers who battled for our representative democracy.

2) Make good governance an election issue

Let's ask all candidates for office to support transparency and accountability in government. This is not a partisan issue for voters. There has been an erosion in trust that government actually works for citizens, according to Pew Research data. In Virginia, there is a solution.

Let's ask all candidates to fill in the Virginia Good Governance Scorecard that was launched recently by a coalition of non-partisan groups. The Scorecard asks candidates for office whether they would support proven solutions to ensure fair representation and an equal voice for all citizens. Citizens must have more of a voice than corporations and special interests.

Candidates need to confirm to their constituents that they believe in being accountable on issues that concern voters. Whether it be access to the ballot box, amplifying our voices over those of deep-pocketed donors, or ensuring ethical guardrails to govern legislative behavior, citizens should reach out and ask candidates running in their districts to commit to the principles of good governance.

Trust is critical in a representative democracy. Virginia is in the middle of a critical election. We should ask every candidate running for office to support transparency and accountability to us, the voters, by completing the Scorecard.

3) Making Virginia an example of good governance

Virginia ranks 46 out of 50 states in transparency and accountability to voters, according to [the Coalition for Integrity's 2020 S.W.A.M.P. Index](#). Let's change that by asking all candidates now running for office to show their support for integrity in government. There is bipartisan support for the concept that government should work for its citizens, not for corporations or special interests.

As we enter one of the most competitive elections in a generation, voters have a unique opportunity to ask all candidates to commit to a platform of good governance. Remind them to complete the recently launched Virginia Good Governance Scorecard that measures a candidate's commitment to ensuring access to the ballot box, listening to citizens voices over those of deep-pocketed donors, and putting ethical guardrails in place to govern legislative behavior.

Trust in government has eroded over recent decades. Many citizens believe that legislators no longer represent their interests. Now is the time to ask candidates for commitment to increasing the legitimacy and integrity of our government, thus ensuring that elected officials reflect the interests and will of Virginian citizens.

Check out these links to published letters to the editor about the need to get money out of politics.

- [Your Views: Campaign finance reform](#)
- [Santos is another reason why we need to overturn Citizens United](#)
- [A Shout Out for our Constitution](#)
- [The Sunshine Factor](#)
- [Get Money Out of Politics](#)

For more information about other good governance entry points for reform in Virginia, check out the following websites:

Ranked Choice Voting: [UpVoteVA](#)

Ethics reforms: [Coalition for Integrity](#)

Voting Rights: [ALCU](#)