



*Commonwealth of Virginia*  
*Office of the Governor*

## *Executive Order*

**NUMBER FIFTY (2025)**

### **ENSURING ADEQUATE SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL OFFENSES WITHIN VIRGINIA'S NATIONAL GUARD AND DEFENSE FORCE**

By virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, I hereby issue this Executive Order to evaluate and ensure the adequacy of Virginia's laws and policies regarding sexual assault and sexual harassment in the Virginia National Guard and Virginia Defense Force while also facilitating the proper support and response for our men and women in uniform who may be survivors of such sexual abuse or sexual harassment.

#### **Importance of the Initiative**

The safety and well-being of our service members are paramount. While the Virginia National Guard currently utilizes the federally funded Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) program, it is imperative to ensure that these measures effectively serve our men and women in uniform. This Executive Order establishes a work group to evaluate existing policies, procedures, and practices, determining if additional state-level interventions are necessary to improve efficacy. The Executive Order also directs the immediate appointment of an ombudsman within the Virginia Department of Military Affairs to be a confidential resource and advocate to men and women serving in the Virginia National Guard and the Virginia Defense Force.

#### **Directive**

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority vested in me in Article V of the Constitution of Virginia and as the Chief Executive Officer of the Commonwealth, and pursuant to § 2.2-103 of the *Code of Virginia*, I hereby,

- I. Direct the Secretary of Veterans & Defense Affairs to appoint an ombudsman to serve as a confidential resource and advocate for men and women serving in the Virginia National Guard and Virginia Defense Force and to assist survivors and complainants in the review of allegations of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and retaliation. The Virginia National Guard and Virginia Defense Force shall fully accommodate the ombudsman and this critical work.

- II. Direct the Secretary of Veterans & Defense Affairs to convene a work group comprised of representatives from the Virginia Department of Military Affairs, members of the Virginia National Guard and the Virginia Defense Force, victim advocates, and other stakeholders as deemed appropriate by the Secretary.

The work group shall:

- i. Conduct a comprehensive review of the current SAPR program, including the Sexual Assault Response Workforce (SARW) model, which consists of the Supervisory Principal Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), regional SARCs, victim advocates, and SARW program specialists;
- ii. Assess the efficacy of existing policies, procedures, and practices in addressing sexual offenses within the Virginia National Guard and Virginia Defense Force;
- iii. Identify any gaps or deficiencies in the current system and recommend necessary state-level interventions or enhancements;
- iv. Ensure that the rights and needs of victims are central to all evaluations and recommendations while protecting all existing procedural and due process rights; and
- v. Submit a comprehensive report of its findings and legislative recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by November 1, 2025.

**Effective Date**

This Executive Order shall be effective upon its signing and shall remain in force until amended or rescinded by further executive action. Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia, this 20th day of June 2025.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Glenn Youngkin".

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Glenn Youngkin, Governor

Attest:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kelly Gee".

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Kelly Gee, Secretary of the Commonwealth