Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of the Governor

Executive Order

EXECUTIVE ORDER 12 (2026)

PUBLIC SAFETY, CONSTITUTIONAL POLICING, AND COMMUNITY TRUST

By virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor under Article V of the Constitution of Virginia, I hereby establish the policy of the Commonwealth as it relates to the selfless service provided by Virginia law enforcement, and further direct state law enforcement agencies to ensure their policies and procedures align with the policy of the Commonwealth set forth in this Executive Order.

Importance of the Issue

Virginia law enforcement performs essential services in defense of public safety and the rule of law. Constitutional, professional policing enhances officer safety, public trust, and community cooperation. Trust-based partnerships between law enforcement and their communities improve safety, economic stability, and educational outcomes for Virginians. Public safety is most effective when measured by lives protected, harm reduced, and trust maintained. My administration stands with Virginia's law enforcement officers, honoring their courage, professionalism, and daily sacrifice to others.

To further deepen trust between Virginia law enforcement and all Virginians, it is critical to publicly acknowledge the principles and policies that have long served as the north star for Virginia law enforcement:

1. Law enforcement exists to preserve human life, protect people who are vulnerable, and uphold the U.S. Constitution and the Constitution of Virginia.
2. Public trust is a prerequisite to effective policing and should be fostered through professionalism, transparency, accountability, and consistent engagement.

3. Virginia law enforcement does not engage in fear-based policing, enforcement theater, or actions that create barriers to people seeking assistance in their time of need.
4. Virginia law enforcement efforts focus on upholding the rule of law, investigating and stopping criminal conduct, and protecting public safety, not the administrative enforcement of civil status.
5. Investment in training, recruitment, and retention of top-tier public safety professionals ensures that Virginia law enforcement is supported by the clear standards and sound training necessary to serve safely and effectively with the public's trust.
6. Collaborative partnerships among local, state, federal, and tribal law enforcement, residents, educators, faith and civic leaders, businesses, and local governments are essential for safe communities, a strong economy, and positive educational outcomes.

The commitment by Virginia law enforcement to these overarching principles is readily apparent, and this executive order is intended to highlight their work in accordance with these principles and policies, particularly as we have witnessed recent tactics by some federal law enforcement agents that disregard these policies and threaten broader public trust in policing.

Directives

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as the Chief Executive Officer of the Commonwealth and pursuant to Article V of the Constitution of Virginia, I hereby direct that:

1. The Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security shall support interagency coordination and the sharing of best practices consistent with these principles.
2. All state law enforcement agencies shall consult with their Secretariat about strategies and approaches to strengthen community partnerships that enhance trust, safety, and problem-solving capacity.
3. All state law enforcement agencies shall review policies, training, and practices to confirm alignment with this Executive Order and applicable constitutional standards.

Nothing in this Executive Order shall be construed to limit lawful authority, officer discretion, or existing intergovernmental agreements, provided actions remain consistent with constitutional requirements.

Effective Date of the Executive Order

This Executive Order shall become effective upon its signing and shall remain in full force and effect until amended or rescinded by further executive order.

Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia this 4th day of February 2026.

Abigail D. Spanberger, Governor

Attest:

Candi Mundon King, Secretary of the Commonwealth