



## **OPPOSED!!!**

**SB 1024**, sponsor is Sen. Black (R- Leesburg).  
Assigned to Senate Courts of Justice.

### **Allowing Guns in Worship**

**Carrying dangerous weapon to place of religious worship.** Repeals the statutory prohibition on carrying a gun, pistol, bowie knife, dagger, or other dangerous weapon, without good and sufficient reason, to a place of worship while a meeting for religious purposes is being held at such place.

**As people of faith, we want our sacred worship spaces to be holy, safe and a refuge.** Faith communities across Virginia stand by the belief that houses of worship should be free of violence.

Since 1950, Virginia legislators of all partisan stripes have supported the continuation of the ban on carrying a dangerous weapon to a place of worship. We have witnessed numerous attacks on peaceful worshippers across the country over the past few years. Now is not the time to increase the risk for Virginians at their houses of worship.

**We are seeing upswings in attacks on mosques and synagogues and continued attacks on African American churches.** Nine mosques and Islamic centers a month are attacked. Attacks on synagogues are up 60 percent from 2016 to 2017, the largest increase in history. And hundreds of African American churches have been bombed or torched, plus attacked by shooters, as we saw in South Carolina. These attacks reflect a growing intolerance of people of different faiths and the historic racism in our society. Our congregations must do what we can to secure and protect themselves. But we also must find new ways to build relationships across race, ethnicity and religion. Our leaders should encourage tolerance and respect, and refrain from stoking fears or prejudice.

**SB 1024**, introduced by Senator Dick Black, puts all Virginians at risk. Defeating this bill will take determination and coordination of our members from across the commonwealth.

**During the 2018 General Assembly session**, Senator Ben Chafin (R-Tazewell) introduced SB 372, an identical bill to SB 1024, which was passed out of the Senate Courts of Justice Committee and ultimately passed by the Virginia Senate. In the House of Delegates, it was scheduled for a floor vote, but never voted upon, so the bill died.

**It is a significant accomplishment for a bill to pass one chamber of the General Assembly, we must be vigilant to ensure SB 1024 does not become law in 2019.**