

Please Join Us in Supporting The Campaign for Donovan's Law



Donovan's Law is named in honor of the beloved 25-year-old African American college graduate, entrepreneur, and former high school football and basketball all-star, Donovan Lynch, who was killed by a Virginia Beach Police Officer on March 26, 2021 at the Virginia Beach oceanfront. Donovan was a 2014 graduate of Norfolk Christian School and a 2019 graduate of the University of Virginia College at Wise. There are many questions that remain unanswered regarding the circumstances of Donovan's tragic killing.

- On October 28, 2020, Governor Ralph Northam signed House Bill 5055 and Senate Bill 5035 into law.
- This new law empowers localities to create Civilian Law Enforcement Review Boards. It also gives Civilian Review Boards the authority to issue subpoenas and make binding disciplinary decisions.
- We believe that this new law is a good start toward implementing oversight as an important first step toward police accountability and transparency in our communities.
- However, we also strongly believe that this recently approved Civilian Review Board Law falls short of its objective and is therefore flawed because it gives cities and municipalities the discretion to opt out of establishing a Civilian Review Board in their city.
- As a result this current law giving cities an option, the Virginia Beach City Council has stubbornly refused to establish a Civilian Review Board that would provide oversight of the VBPD.
- Donovan's Law would fix this flaw in the current law by eliminating the discretionary option for municipalities and would instead make it mandatory that Virginia cities with a minimum population of 100,000 residents **must** be required to form a Civilian Review Board that will serve as an oversight authority of their local police department.

Our community believes that the passage of Donovan's Law will ensure that no other family in Virginia will have to endure the same heart wrenching agony that the Lynch family has experienced in their effort to try to find out the truth about what happened to their son, their brother, their nephew, and their dear friend.

It is abundantly clear that Donovan's Law needs to become a reality when you also consider the fact that he is yet another African American citizen who was killed by a police officer whose body camera was not activated. It was even more agonizing for all those who loved Donovan when they learned that even the Virginia Beach Police Chief himself could not explain why the Police Officer who killed Donovan did not have his body camera activated. We strongly believe that Donovan's family and the public deserve to know the truth about what happened to this young man, who by all accounts, was an inspiring leader in our community who uplifted young people in Virginia Beach and beyond. Donovan's Law will achieve that transparency.

Donovon's Law will strengthen the current law in the following manner:

- The current law states that *"A locality **may** establish a law-enforcement civilian review board."*
- We strongly believe that this law needs to be amended to include the following revisions:
 - The word "may" should be replaced with the word "**shall**."
 - The law must also be amended to reflect our belief that, considering the numerous tragic killings of African Americans by police across the country, including the brutal public murder of George Floyd and many others, it should be mandatory that Virginia municipalities with a minimum population of 100,000 residents **must** be required to form a Civilian Review Board that will serve as an oversight authority of the police.
- With these proposed amendments to the current Virginia Civilian Review Board Law, the new "Donovon's Law" will read as follows:
 - *"A Virginia locality with a population of a 100,000 or more residents **shall** establish a law-enforcement civilian review board."*
 - We also believe that the new law should maintain the current language that also mandates that Civilian Review Boards *"shall reflect the demographic diversity of the locality,"* meaning that the board's racial breakdown should largely mirror that of its city.
 - Unlike current citizen police boards that have little control, these Civilian Review Boards would have actual investigative powers, including the authority to ask Circuit Court judges to subpoena records and witnesses needed for such investigations.
- One of the current law's original Co-sponsors, State Senator Ghazala Hashmi of Chesterfield, said it best when she stated that such Civilian Review Boards *"give communities a structured process to address issues of policing concern,"* and these boards also *"increase transparency and collaboration between local police departments and the communities they serve."*

WE THE PEOPLE demand more transparency and oversight of the police during these current tumultuous and traumatizing times for people of color who are being killed by the police almost weekly throughout America.

Please join us in this effort by contacting the Governor's Office, your State Senator and your State Delegate and tell them that you support The Campaign for Donovan's Law because you demand transparency, the truth and nothing but the truth.

For More Information on how you can help us in this effort to make a positive change, please contact:

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