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Same Issues, Same Side in Court

How Jay Jones, Abigail Spanberger and Virginia Democrats line up with the groups Data Republican named

By Scott Mineo · Coraggio Consulting, LLC · 20 October 2026

Oct 15 JONES AND ELECT BULLETIN TO LOCAL ELECTION OFFICIALS Bulletin, p. 1	2 FEDERAL CASES WITH VIRGINIA AS PLAINTIFF AND NSL4A ON ITS SIDE CourtListener	21-19 HB640 SENATE FLOOR VOTE, ALL 21 YES VOTES DEMOCRATS LIS	5 VIRGINIA HOUSE DEMOCRATS ENDORSED BY NSL4A IN 2026 NSL4A endorsements
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The short version

On October 19, Data Republican posted two threads about a web of pro-democracy groups getting ready for the 2026 midterms. Virginia isn't in her videos. But I wanted to know how Virginia's own Democrats line up with what those groups are calling for.

Here is what the record shows. On October 15, Attorney General Jay Jones and the Department of Elections sent local election officials a bulletin on the same subjects as a toolkit from one of those groups, National Security Leaders for America. Virginia is a plaintiff in two federal cases where that group filed briefs on Virginia's side. Indivisible Virginia endorsed Jones and Gov. Abigail Spanberger. And HB640, the law that ended voter challenges at the polls, passed on straight party lines.

I'm not claiming anyone took orders. I'm showing you who is pushing what, and who in Richmond is doing it.

What Data Republican posted

Data Republican's first thread went up on the morning of October 19 ([Part 1](#)). She was careful in it. She wrote that "governors aren't participating in a pact to destroy the Constitution. Governors simply have agreed to push back on the Insurrection Act." She called the thing that ties these groups together "shared epistemology." In a reply she said Erica Chenoweth is "the closest thing to a ringleader but even then she's not really one" ([reply](#)).

Her second thread came that night ([Part 2](#)). In it she says a network called Renew to Thrive sits inside a "United Democracy Alliance" whose members include Indivisible and 50501. She says National Security Leaders for America "operationalized" that alliance, and that governors "play their role in the coup" by refusing troops.

Each thread has a video. In the second one, a speaker who appears to be Paul Zeitz calls the alliance "a huge coalition of the blocking movement" with "red lines" and a "situation room," "led under... National Security Leaders of America." He describes an "options memo... for governors" that went to Wisconsin, Utah and Washington. He also says, "this is not a concept for a secession."

Neither video mentions Virginia, Jones or any Virginia official. I listened for it.

Who the groups are

National Security Leaders for America (NSL4A). It's a 501(c)(4), a nonprofit allowed to do some political work, based in Washington and formed in 2021 ([ProPublica](#)). Its president is retired Rear Adm. Michael E. Smith, who earlier founded National Security Leaders for Biden ([archived leadership page](#)). Its 2024 IRS nonprofit tax filing, the

Form 990, reports \$363,504 in revenue and \$90,526 in political spending, for October 2024 bus tours in six other states ([IRS filing index](#)). Its super PAC took in and spent \$5,000 in 2024 and nothing in 2026, with no Virginia races ([FEC](#)).

The United Democracy Alliance. The only evidence it exists is the Zeitz audio. I found no website, filing, court record or news story about it. I found nothing to support the claims that it controls protests or that Chenoweth conceived it.

Indivisible. The national Indivisible Project reported \$12,565,196 in revenue for 2023 ([990](#)). It also runs a PAC ([FEC](#)). That it belongs to the alliance is Data Republican's claim alone.

Horizons Project and New Venture Fund. Horizons runs a "Big Tent Democracy Organizing" initiative ([Horizons](#)), and NSL4A's midterm toolkit was issued "under the aegis of the Horizons Project." InfluenceWatch reports that New Venture Fund has been Horizons' fiscal sponsor since 2022, meaning it holds the money and handles the paperwork. It also reports grants from Packard (\$500,000 in 2021) and Ford (\$600,000 in 2022) ([InfluenceWatch](#)).

Renew to Thrive. It calls itself a civic community, and its three-year plan includes "Block abuses of power" ([Renew to Thrive](#)). Zeitz announced its strategy on his own Substack ([Zeitz](#)).

Where Virginia lines up

The bulletin and the toolkit cover the same ground

NSL4A's midterm toolkit is dated "October 2026" ([toolkit PDF](#); [NSL4A page](#)). It tells city and county attorneys to line up plaintiffs and prepare emergency filings "with the State AG and partner litigators." It focuses on troops under the Insurrection Act and on seizure of voting machines.

Jones's office and the Department of Elections issued their bulletin on October 15 ([bulletin, p. 1](#)). It covers polling places "free from intimidation and interference" and the chain of custody for ballots and machines (p. 1). It says the Attorney General's office "can litigate complex legal cases on behalf of the Commonwealth in federal court and seek emergency relief" (p. 2). It walks officials through DOJ monitors (pp. 4-5), federal agents at a polling place (p. 7) and federal subpoenas and search warrants (pp. 8-10).

About timing. The bulletin is dated October 15. NSL4A posted the toolkit on its Substack on October 19, and the PDF itself just says "October 2026." So the record doesn't show which came first. What it shows is the same subjects and some of the same words, like "interference" and "chain of custody."

The bulletin cites three news events as the reasons for it: DOJ monitors in Wyoming, an ICE action at a San Antonio voting site, and the FBI raid on Fulton County's elections warehouse (p. 1, notes 1-3). It doesn't cite NSL4A or any advocacy group.

Jones built out the machinery too. He set up a Federal Accountability Unit on August 26, with "elections" in its portfolio ([OAG release](#)), and a Voter Protection Section on October 13 ([OAG release](#)).

Same side in court

The record shows Virginia is a plaintiff in two federal cases where NSL4A filed a friend-of-the-court brief. That's a brief from an outside group that isn't a party, arguing for one side. The first case is California v. U.S. Postal Service in Massachusetts federal court, which lists the "Commonwealth of Virginia" among the plaintiffs ([complaint filing](#); [NSL4A brief](#)). The second is its appeal in the First Circuit, where Virginia is on the caption ([caption](#); [docket](#)).

Being on the same side isn't a joint filing. The group filed its own brief. Jones also joined a 21-state lawsuit against the March 31 elections executive order ([OAG release](#)), and a 24-state comment letter against the Postal Service mail-ballot rule ([OAG release](#)).

Spanberger's pen

The Division of Legislative Services reports that the governor amended HB286 and SB337, which bar calling out the National Guard to intimidate voters, and substituted a work group on Guard safeguards ([DLS, Governor's amendments 2026](#)).

A news report says she signed HB1441 and SB783 on April 22, barring immigration enforcement within 500 yards of a polling place while the polls are open ([Ballotpedia](#); [NCSL](#)). I haven't verified the 500-yard language in the bill text itself. The state's own legislative summary describes something different.

The same Ballotpedia report says her May 20 executive order directs the Department of Elections to issue guidance on federal immigration arrests at polling places.

She also joined a letter on Medicaid that Governors Safeguarding Democracy promoted ([GSD LinkedIn](#)). And in June she joined the Reproductive Freedom Alliance, which is backed by GovAct, the same group behind Governors Safeguarding Democracy ([WHRO](#)). Whether she's a member of Governors Safeguarding Democracy itself, I don't know. It doesn't publish a member list.

The endorsements

Indivisible Virginia endorsed Jay Jones, Abigail Spanberger and Ghazala Hashmi in November 2025 ([Blue Voter Guide](#)).

NSL4A endorsed five Virginia Democrats for the U.S. House in 2026: Elaine Luria, Shannon Taylor, Tom Perriello, Macy and Joy Powers. It says the endorsements are "not coordinated with any candidate." Jones isn't on its list ([NSL4A endorsements](#)).

On money, the record shows one small Indivisible tie in Virginia. In 2018, Indivisible Charlottesville reported small independent spending for Tim Kaine and Leslie Cockburn and against Corey Stewart. The largest single item was \$1,853.41 ([FEC](#)).

HB640

HB640 is the law the bulletin points to when it says "nobody can challenge the voting qualifications of any voter at the polling location" ([bulletin, p. 3](#)). Del. Paul Krizek carried it, with Del. Karen Keys-Gamarra as chief co-patron. It ends challenges at the polls and at the registrar's office. Now a challenge to someone's registration has to go to circuit court ([LIS sponsors](#); [ELECT summary](#)).

The governor's amendments actually loosened it. They removed a ban on filing a challenge within 60 days of an election, and made the 15-day notice rule "subject to a contrary court order" ([DLS](#)). It became Chapter 1064 on July 1, 2026.

Every recorded vote went along party lines ([LIS votes](#); [LIS history](#)):

Date	Where	Tally	Democrats	Republicans
Jan 28	House subcommittee	6-2	6 yes	2 no
Jan 30	House Privileges and Elections	15-7	15 yes	7 no
Feb 3	House floor	63-35	61 yes, 1 not voting	35 no
Mar 3	Senate Privileges and Elections	8-7	8 yes	7 no
Mar 10	Senate floor	21-19	21 yes	19 no
Apr 22	House, governor's amendments	64-36	63 yes	36 no
Apr 22	Senate, governor's amendments	21-18	21 yes	18 no, 1 not voting

A few House votes couldn't be matched to a party in the state's member list, so the party columns don't always add up to the tally. HB640 is a legislature and governor action. It isn't something Jones directed.

The alignment table

Here is each thing in Data Republican's material, next to what Virginia did.

What the groups call for	The matching Virginia action	How strong the match is
Local attorneys prepare emergency filings "with the State AG" (NSL4A toolkit)	Jones's bulletin says his office can "seek emergency relief" in federal court and gives an election-officials line, Oct 15 (bulletin, p. 2); Voter Protection Section, Oct 13 (OAG)	Shown in the record, as the same subject. No record ties any filing to the toolkit.
Keep polling places free of interference; no protests at the polls (toolkit)	Bulletin on DOJ monitors and federal agents, Oct 15 (pp. 4-7); HB1441/SB783 500-yard rule, signed Apr 22 (Ballotpedia)	Bulletin: shown in the record. The 500-yard rule: reported, not verified in bill text.
Protect voting machines from seizure (toolkit)	Bulletin on chain of custody, subpoenas and warrants (pp. 1, 8-10)	Shown in the record, as the same subject.
Prepare local officials (toolkit, aimed at city and county attorneys)	Bulletin addressed to registrars, electoral boards, local government attorneys and clerks (p. 1)	Shown in the record.
Court fights against federal election actions (NSL4A briefs)	Virginia is a plaintiff in California v. USPS and its First Circuit appeal (filing ; caption)	Shown in the record. Same side, separate filings.
NSL4A's other briefs: Newsom, Illinois, Kelly, League of Women Voters	None. Virginia isn't a party in the record.	No Virginia match.
State AGs prepare injunctions against troop deployments (NSL4A, Sept 14)	Federal Accountability Unit, Aug 26 (OAG); no troop case found	The call is reported (The Fulcrum). No Virginia troop filing found.
Governors push back on troops; "options memo" to governors (Zeitz audio)	Not sent to Virginia in the audio. Spanberger amended HB286/SB337 on the Guard (DLS)	Not supported. Virginia isn't named. Spanberger's membership in the governors' group is unknown.
Indivisible as an alliance member	Indivisible Virginia endorsed Jones, Spanberger and Hashmi, Nov 2025 (Blue Voter Guide)	Endorsement shown in the record. The alliance membership is Data Republican's claim.
An "extra-constitutional" or "illegitimacy" agenda (videos, criteria image)	The bulletin rests on Virginia statute and tells officials not to obstruct agents or bar entry under a warrant (pp. 7, 10)	Not supported. The record shows the opposite.

What the record does not show

I found no money from any of these groups to Jones, Spanberger or any Virginia campaign committee. State campaign finance files from January 2025 through October 2026 show no contributions from these organizations ([ELECT](#)). I found no coordination, no direction and no shared staff between these groups and Jones or Spanberger. The bulletin also tells local officials to hold their ground without blocking anyone. On agents at a polling place: "action should not be taken to physically obstruct the federal agent" (p. 7). On search warrants: "Do not attempt to argue, delay, or interfere with the officer(s). Do not bar entry, conceal records, or relocate materials" and "do not withhold access while waiting for counsel" (p. 10). Same issues and the same side in court aren't the same thing as taking orders. That's my whole case: who is pushing what, and who in Richmond is doing it.

How the claims hold up

Question	What I found
Do the toolkit and the bulletin cover the same issues?	Yes, the record shows it. Interference at the polls, chain of custody, local counsel and law enforcement.
Are NSL4A and Virginia on the same side in court?	Yes, the record shows it, through NSL4A's friend-of-the-court briefs in two cases where Virginia is a plaintiff.

Question	What I found
Did these groups direct or coordinate what Jones did?	I found nothing to support it, in federal or state campaign finance, IRS filings, court records, news or the bulletin text.
Is Mike Anderson's description of the bulletin accurate?	Partly.

Anderson, who posted the bulletin's first page, said it tells officials to "deny ordinary DOJ monitors," "ask federal agents to leave," document badge numbers and weapons, and consider challenging federal subpoenas ([Anderson](#)). Most of that matches the text. Consent to DOJ monitors is "in the sole discretion" of the local board and registrar (p. 5). The documentation list is on p. 7, and "whether to move to quash" a subpoena is on p. 9. On "ask federal agents to leave," the text asks them to wait outside the 40-foot line and forbids physical obstruction (p. 7). What he left out is the bulletin's instructions not to obstruct agents, not to bar entry and not to withhold access under a warrant (pp. 7, 10).

What I still don't know

- Whether the state hosts its own copy of the bulletin. I read the copy that circulated through Anderson's link ([flipbook](#)). I couldn't find it on the elections or Attorney General websites.
- Who the first speaker in the Part 1 video is. A Substack names people on the call ([Doug Ross](#)), but its attribution doesn't match the audio.
- Whether Spanberger is a member of Governors Safeguarding Democracy. There's no public member list.
- Whether NSL4A's president is Michael A. Smith or Michael E. Smith. The tax filing and the website differ.
- Whether HB1441's text has the 500-yard rule.
- What the Campaign Legal Center's July 14 guidance letter to Virginia says ([CLC](#)). I couldn't read it.
- Who is in the United Democracy Alliance. Data Republican promised a list ([post](#)). It hadn't come out as of October 20.
- What's in the "thousands of docs" she says she scraped ([post](#)). They aren't public.

