



The Process of Passing Virginia’s Independence for Children Law

On March 26, 2023, Governor Youngkin signed SB 1367, which passed the Virginia legislature unanimously in a whirlwind legislative session, thanks to an extremely effective Let Grow-led coalition that brought legislative policy experts together across the political spectrum. Sen. Jill Vogel led the effort, along with Sens. Jennifer Boysko and Jennifer McClennan (now Congresswoman McLennan). Let Grow retained former Democratic House member Debra Rodman, who worked closely with Will Estrada (Parental Rights Foundation) and Valerie L’Herrou (Virginia Center on Poverty) in educating the legislators in Richmond about the bill. Critical to the effort was the powerful testimony of two children Elsa Hackel (age 11) and Ana Field (age 9) and their mothers Evelyn Hackel and Emily Field, who recounted personal experiences being stopped and interrogated by authorities simply for walking home or playing outside. Thanks to the many parents who shared their experiences and reached out to legislators to seek support for the bill, and a very strong coalition of national and local advocates that Let Grow coordinated starting in 2022, Virginia now has one of the nation’s strongest laws protecting childhood independence.

For more information see:

[Elsa and Ana’s testimony on Jan. 15, 2023:](#)

Column, Sens. Jill Vogel and Jennifer Boysko, [Letting Kids Play Outside isn’t Neglect, Richmond Times-Dispatch](#) (Jan. 28, 2023).

L. Skenazy , [CPS: Mom Can’t Let Her 3 Kids—Ages 6, 8, and 9—Play Outside By Themselves](#) (Reason, 12/8/2022).

[Virginia Makes it Legal For Parents to Let Their Kids Play Outside](#) (FoxNews March 30, 2023)