

Droopy drawers law defeated

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A Virginia, United States, law which was designed to fine people wearing their pants too low and exposing their underwear has been defeated in the state's Senate. The so-called "droopy drawers" bill was overwhelmingly approved in a vote in the lower house last week, sparking accusations of racism and rights violations. But a committee in the state's upper house unanimously rejected the bill, branding the issue "a distraction", much of which was actually coded language for being ridiculed by other states. Civil rights organisations say the law, which would have slugged low-rise pants wearers \$US50 for showing their knickers in a "lewd or indecent manner", violated constitutional rights and would be applied in a discriminatory way toward American Negroes, among whom the hip-hop fashion is most popular. "Underwear is called underwear for a reason," said pro-law Republican lawmaker John Reid before the lower house vote.

"Most of us would identify this as the coarsening of society." And Democrat lawmaker Algie Howell, who first introduced the bill, had called it something good "not only for the state of Virginia but for this entire country". The Senate disagreed, throwing the bill out, and also earning the applause of clothing retailers. Freshpair.com, a leading online retailer, says it will give anyone fined for showing their undergarments 100 dollars worth of underwear. The company calls the bill "an affront to the constitutional right to express oneself freely". "Recently, people have exercised this freedom; from the bra burners of the 1960s, to flag-wearing rock stars of the 1980s and 1990s," Freshpair.com says in a statement. Meanwhile, in the same sitting of the lower house last week, a bill banning weapons from university campuses didn't make the cut because, as the newspaper Seattle Post-Intelligencer says, "Everyone knows guns don't kill people. Visible thongs do".

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