

OPEN LETTER AND STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

Dear Governor Northam and members of the General Assembly:

We, the undersigned religious organizations and ministries, urge you to refuse to enforce the so-called Virginia Values Act in a way that would force Virginians of faith to violate their consciences. Applying this new law against faith-based entities is antithetical to the foundational belief in religious freedom that the Commonwealth was built upon.

Everyone should be free to live and work according to their beliefs without fear of unjust government punishment—regardless of whether those beliefs are religious. Our government should protect, not threaten, this freedom.

Each one of us operates as an organization with core beliefs that knit our staff and volunteers together. These same convictions drive us to serve our communities with a particular mission. We are proud to live by the words of Section 16 of the Virginia Constitution's Declaration of Rights, which declares: “it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love, and charity toward each other.”

The Act threatens to undermine the very mission that holds us together. It would force us to violate our central purpose by stripping us of our right to hire employees who agree with and live by our mission and core beliefs. That Act also prohibits us from using our facilities and ministering to the community in accordance with those beliefs. In doing so, it penalizes people of faith for trying to adhere to our own values.

The Commonwealth of Virginia should not be interfering with our ability to accomplish our charitable missions through shared religious beliefs—let alone targeting our views with hostility. The Virginia Constitution guarantees that such religious beliefs “can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force.” But if the Commonwealth insists on forcing us to choose between bankruptcy and our beliefs, our communities will suffer as we shutter our doors.

Freedom will suffer, too, if the “Virginia Values Act” is used as a weapon against our organizations and our values. Tolerance and respect for good-faith differences are essential in a diverse society. We urge you to extend the same freedom to us that all Virginians are entitled to.

ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL
Washington, DC

BLUE RIDGE ASPHALT MAINTENANCE, INC.
Staunton, VA

CHEMSTAR CHEMICAL SERVICES, LLC
Staunton, VA

CHURCH ON THE HILL
Fishersville, VA

CHURCH ON THE HILL
Fishersville, VA

CONNECT CHURCH
Charlottesville, VA

CORNERSTONE CHURCH
Staunton, VA

CORNERSTONE CHURCH OF BROADWAY
Broadway, VA

CORNERSTONE CHURCH OF HARRISONBURG
Harrisonburg, VA

CORNERSTONE LIFE ACADEMY
Fredericksburg, VA

COVENANT CHRISTIAN ACADEMY OF WARRENTON, VA
Warrenton, VA

CROSSLIFE CHURCH
Charlottesville, VA

DENTFREE LLC
Charlottesville, VA

FAITH CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
Hurt, VA

GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
Stuarts Draft, VA

GREEN HORNET CAR WASH, INC.
Staunton, VA

GREENBRIER CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
Chesapeake, VA

GREENVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH
Greenville, VA

GROVE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
Richmond, VA

HARVESTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Springfield, VA

HERITAGE ACADEMY
Chatham, VA

HF LEGACY LLC
Swoope, VA

HUNTER CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
Manakin-Sabot, VA

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Alexandria, VA

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN SCHOOL
Alexandria, VA

KEYSTONE BAPTIST CHURCH & MINISTRIES
Berryville, VA

OCEAN VIEW CHRISTIAN ACADEMY & PRESCHOOL
Norfolk, VA

PATRICK HENRY COLLEGE
Purcellville, VA

PREGNANCY SUPPORT CENTER OF SOUTHSIDE VIRGINIA
Farmville, VA

PROVIDENCE CLASSICAL SCHOOL
Williamsburg, VA

PROVIDENCE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Charlottesville, VA

REGENTS SCHOOL OF CHARLOTTESVILLE
Charlottesville, VA

REJOICING LIFE CHURCH
Stuarts Draft, VA

ROANOKE VALLEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
Roanoke, VA

STAUNTON GRACE COVENANT CHURCH
Staunton, VA

STAUNTON STAYS, LLC
Staunton, VA

THE AVENUE CAR WASH, INC.
Staunton, VA

TRINITY TURF, INC.
Mt. Crawford, VA

VALLEY CAR WASH MAINTENANCE, LLC
Staunton, VA

VIRGINIA FRAME BUILDERS & SUPPLY, INC.
Fishersville, VA

WAYNESBORO FREE METHODIST
Waynesboro, VA

WESTWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH
Waynesboro, VA

WISE COUNTY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
Wise, VA