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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 261

Offered January 9, 2013

Prefiled December 3, 2012

Proposing an amendment to Section 12 of Article I of the Constitution of Virginia, relating to freedom of speech and of the press; right peaceably to assembly, and to petition.

Patron—Carrico

Referred to Committee on Privileges and Elections

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, a majority of the members elected to each house agreeing, That the following amendment to the Constitution of Virginia be, and the same hereby is, proposed and referred to the General Assembly at its first regular session held after the next general election of members of the House of Delegates for its concurrence in conformity with the provisions of Section 1 of Article XII of the Constitution of Virginia, namely:

Amend Section 12 of Article I of the Constitution of Virginia as follows:

ARTICLE I

BILL OF RIGHTS

Section 12. Freedom of speech and of the press; right peaceably to assemble, and to petition.

That the freedoms of speech and of the press are among the great bulwarks of liberty, and can never be restrained except by despotic governments; that any citizen may freely speak, write, and publish his sentiments on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that right; that the General Assembly shall not pass any law abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, nor the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for the redress of grievances.

To secure further the people's freedom of speech and right to acknowledge God according to the dictates of conscience, neither the Commonwealth nor its political subdivisions shall pass any law abridging the people's right to pray and to recognize their religious beliefs, heritage, and traditions on public property, including public school property; however, the Commonwealth and its political subdivisions, including public school divisions, shall not compose prayers, nor require any person to join in prayers or other religious activity.

INTRODUCED

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