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HOUSE BILL NO. 773**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE**

(Proposed by the Senate Committee on General Laws and Technology
on February 22, 2016)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Gilbert)

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 57-2.03, relating to religious freedom; solemnization of marriage.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 57-2.03 as follows:

§ 57-2.03. Religious freedom; solemnization of marriage.

A. No person authorized to perform a marriage ceremony pursuant to Chapter 2 (§ 20-13 et seq.) of Title 20 shall be required to solemnize any marriage, and no religious organization, organization supervised or controlled by or operated in connection with a religious organization, individual employed by a religious organization while acting in the scope of his employment, or clergy member or minister shall be required to provide services, accommodations, facilities, goods, or privileges for a purpose related to the solemnization of any marriage if the action would cause the individual or organization to violate a sincerely held religious belief.

B. A refusal to solemnize a marriage or provide services, accommodations, facilities, goods, or privileges under subsection A shall not give rise to civil or criminal liability or any other action by the Commonwealth or a political subdivision to penalize or withhold benefits or privileges, including tax exemptions or governmental contracts, grants, or licenses, from any individual or organization listed in subsection A.

2. That the provisions of this act are declaratory of existing law.