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HOUSE BILL NO. 2567

Offered January 9, 2019

Prefiled January 9, 2019

A BILL to amend and reenact § 23.1-401.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to public institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth; free exercise of religion on campus.

Patron—LaRock

Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 23.1-401.1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:****§ 23.1-401.1. Constitutionally protected speech; free exercise of religion; policies, materials, and reports; report.**

A. Except as otherwise permitted by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, no public institution of higher education shall (i) abridge the constitutional freedom of any individual, including enrolled students, faculty and other employees, and invited guests, to speak on campus or (ii) prohibit the free exercise of religion by any such individual on campus.

B. Each public institution of higher education shall establish and include in its student handbook, on its website, and in its student orientation programs policies regarding speech that is constitutionally protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and the process to report incidents of disruption of such constitutionally protected speech.

C. Each public institution of higher education shall develop materials on the policies established pursuant to subsection B and notify any employee who is responsible for the discipline or education of enrolled students of such materials.

D. Each public institution of higher education shall develop, post on its website in a searchable, publicly accessible, and conspicuous manner, and submit to the Governor and the Chairmen of the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Health no later than December 1 of each year a report on the institution's compliance with the provisions of this section that includes:

1. A copy of the institution's policies as described in subsection B and materials on such policies as described in subsection C;

2. Certification that the institution has complied with subsection C; and

3. A copy of any complaint filed in a court of law since December 1 of the preceding year to initiate a lawsuit against the institution or an employee of the institution in his official capacity for an alleged violation of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

E. Each public institution of higher education shall submit to the Governor and the Chairmen of the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Health a copy of any complaint filed in a court of law to initiate a lawsuit against the institution or an employee of the institution in his official capacity for an alleged violation of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution no later than 30 days after such complaint is served.

INTRODUCED

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