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SENATE BILL NO. 998

Offered January 9, 2019

Prefiled July 16, 2018

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 2.2-3004, 15.2-1507, 15.2-1604, and 22.1-306 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding sections numbered 2.2-2901.1, 15.2-1500.1, and 22.1-295.2, relating to public employment; prohibited discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Patrons—Ebbin, Boysko, Deeds, Lewis and McClellan; Delegates: Carr, Kory, Levine, Price and Rasoul

Referred to Committee on General Laws and Technology

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 2.2-3004, 15.2-1507, 15.2-1604, and 22.1-306 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding sections numbered 2.2-2901.1, 15.2-1500.1, and 22.1-295.2 as follows:

§ 2.2-2901.1. Employment discrimination prohibited.

A. For the purposes of this section:

"Gender identity" means the gender-related identity, appearance, or other gender-related characteristics of an individual, with or without regard to the individual's designated sex at birth.

"Sexual orientation" means a person's actual or perceived heterosexuality, bisexuality, or homosexuality.

B. No state agency, institution, board, bureau, commission, council, or instrumentality of the Commonwealth shall discriminate in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or status as a veteran. This prohibition does not in any way permit or require the lowering of any job requirements, performance standards, or qualifications necessary to successfully perform the duties of the position.

§ 2.2-3004. Grievances qualifying for a grievance hearing; grievance hearing generally.

A. A grievance qualifying for a hearing shall involve a complaint or dispute by an employee relating to the following adverse employment actions in which the employee is personally involved, including but not limited to (i) formal disciplinary actions, including suspensions, demotions, transfers and assignments, and dismissals resulting from formal discipline or unsatisfactory job performance; (ii) the application of all written personnel policies, procedures, rules and regulations where it can be shown that policy was misapplied or unfairly applied; (iii) discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, political affiliation, age, disability, national origin, sex, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, marital status, sexual orientation as defined in § 2.2-2901.1, gender identity as defined in § 2.2-2901.1, or status as a veteran; (iv) arbitrary or capricious performance evaluations; (v) acts of retaliation as the result of the use of or participation in the grievance procedure or because the employee has complied with any law of the United States or of the Commonwealth, has reported any violation of such law to a governmental authority, has sought any change in law before the Congress of the United States or the General Assembly, or has reported an incidence of fraud, abuse, or gross mismanagement; and (vi) retaliation for exercising any right otherwise protected by law.

B. Management reserves the exclusive right to manage the affairs and operations of state government. Management shall exercise its powers with the highest degree of trust. In any employment matter that management precludes from proceeding to a grievance hearing, management's response, including any appropriate remedial actions, shall be prompt, complete, and fair.

C. Complaints relating solely to the following issues shall not proceed to a hearing: (i) establishment and revision of wages, salaries, position classifications, or general benefits; (ii) work activity accepted by the employee as a condition of employment or which may reasonably be expected to be a part of the job content; (iii) contents of ordinances, statutes or established personnel policies, procedures, and rules and regulations; (iv) methods, means, and personnel by which work activities are to be carried on; (v) termination, layoff, demotion, or suspension from duties because of lack of work, reduction in work force, or job abolition; (vi) hiring, promotion, transfer, assignment, and retention of employees within the agency; and (vii) relief of employees from duties of the agency in emergencies.

D. Except as provided in subsection A of § 2.2-3003, decisions regarding whether a grievance qualifies for a hearing shall be made in writing by the agency head or his designee within five workdays of the employee's request for a hearing. A copy of the decision shall be sent to the employee. The employee may appeal the denial of a hearing by the agency head to the Director of the Department of

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59 Human Resource Management (the Director). Upon receipt of an appeal, the agency shall transmit the  
60 entire grievance record to the Department of Human Resource Management within five workdays. The  
61 Director shall render a decision on whether the employee is entitled to a hearing upon the grievance  
62 record and other probative evidence.

63 E. The hearing pursuant to § 2.2-3005 shall be held in the locality in which the employee is  
64 employed or in any other locality agreed to by the employee, employer, and hearing officer. The  
65 employee and the agency may be represented by legal counsel or a lay advocate, the provisions of §  
66 54.1-3904 notwithstanding. The employee and the agency may call witnesses to present testimony and  
67 be cross-examined.

68 **§ 15.2-1500.1. Employment discrimination prohibited.**

69 A. As used in this chapter:

70 "Gender identity" means the gender-related identity, appearance, or other gender-related  
71 characteristics of an individual, with or without regard to the individual's designated sex at birth.

72 "Sexual orientation" means a person's actual or perceived heterosexuality, bisexuality, or  
73 homosexuality.

74 B. No department, office, board, commission, agency, or instrumentality of local government shall  
75 discriminate in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy,  
76 childbirth or related medical conditions, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, gender  
77 identity, or status as a veteran. This prohibition does not in any way permit or require the lowering of  
78 any job requirements, performance standards, or qualifications necessary to successfully perform the  
79 duties of the position.

80 **§ 15.2-1507. Provision of grievance procedure; training programs.**

81 A. If a local governing body fails to adopt a grievance procedure required by § 15.2-1506 or fails to  
82 certify it as provided in this section, the local governing body shall be deemed to have adopted a  
83 grievance procedure which is consistent with the provisions of Chapter 30 (§ 2.2-3000 et seq.) of Title  
84 2.2 and any regulations adopted pursuant thereto for so long as the locality remains in noncompliance.  
85 The locality shall provide its employees with copies of the applicable grievance procedure upon request.  
86 The term "grievance" as used herein shall not be interpreted to mean negotiations of wages, salaries, or  
87 fringe benefits.

88 Each grievance procedure, and each amendment thereto, in order to comply with this section, shall  
89 be certified in writing to be in compliance by the city, town or county attorney, and the chief  
90 administrative officer of the locality, and such certification filed with the clerk of the circuit court  
91 having jurisdiction in the locality in which the procedure is to apply. Local government grievance  
92 procedures in effect as of July 1, 1991, shall remain in full force and effect for 90 days thereafter,  
93 unless certified and filed as provided above within a shorter time period.

94 Each grievance procedure shall include the following components and features:

95 1. Definition of grievance. A grievance shall be a complaint or dispute by an employee relating to  
96 his employment, including but not necessarily limited to (i) disciplinary actions, including dismissals,  
97 disciplinary demotions, and suspensions, provided that dismissals shall be grievable whenever resulting  
98 from formal discipline or unsatisfactory job performance; (ii) the application of personnel policies,  
99 procedures, rules, and regulations, including the application of policies involving matters referred to in  
100 clause (iii) of subdivision 2 (iii) below; (iii) discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion,  
101 political affiliation, age, disability, national origin, sex, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical  
102 conditions, sexual orientation, gender identity, or status as a veteran; and (iv) acts of retaliation as the  
103 result of the use of or participation in the grievance procedure or because the employee has complied  
104 with any law of the United States or of the Commonwealth, has reported any violation of such law to a  
105 governmental authority, has sought any change in law before the Congress of the United States or the  
106 General Assembly, or has reported an incidence of fraud, abuse, or gross mismanagement. For the  
107 purposes of clause (iv), there shall be a rebuttable presumption that increasing the penalty that is the  
108 subject of the grievance at any level of the grievance shall be an act of retaliation.

109 2. Local government responsibilities. Local governments shall retain the exclusive right to manage  
110 the affairs and operations of government. Accordingly, the following complaints are nongrievable: (i)  
111 establishment and revision of wages or salaries, position classification, or general benefits; (ii) work  
112 activity accepted by the employee as a condition of employment or work activity which that may  
113 reasonably be expected to be a part of the job content; (iii) the contents of ordinances, statutes, or  
114 established personnel policies, procedures, rules, and regulations; (iv) failure to promote except where  
115 the employee can show that established promotional policies or procedures were not followed or applied  
116 fairly; (v) the methods, means, and personnel by which work activities are to be carried on; (vi) except  
117 where such action affects an employee who has been reinstated within the previous six months as the  
118 result of the final determination of a grievance, termination, layoff, demotion, or suspension from duties  
119 because of lack of work, reduction in work force, or job abolition; (vii) the hiring, promotion, transfer,  
120 assignment, and retention of employees within the local government; and (viii) the relief of employees

121 from duties of the local government in emergencies. In any grievance brought under the exception to  
122 clause (vi) of this subdivision, the action shall be upheld upon a showing by the local government that:  
123 (i) (a) there was a valid business reason for the action and (ii) (b) the employee was notified of the  
124 reason in writing prior to the effective date of the action.

125 3. Coverage of personnel.

126 a. Unless otherwise provided by law, all nonprobationary local government permanent full-time and  
127 part-time employees are eligible to file grievances with the following exceptions:

128 (1) Appointees of elected groups or individuals;

129 (2) Officials and employees who by charter or other law serve at the will or pleasure of an  
130 appointing authority;

131 (3) Deputies and executive assistants to the chief administrative officer of a locality;

132 (4) Agency heads or chief executive officers of government operations;

133 (5) Employees whose terms of employment are limited by law;

134 (6) Temporary, limited term and seasonal employees;

135 (7) Law-enforcement officers as defined in Chapter 5 (§ 9.1-500 et seq.) of Title 9.1 whose  
136 grievance is subject to the provisions of Chapter 5 (§ 9.1-500 et seq.) of Title 9.1 and who have elected  
137 to proceed pursuant to those provisions in the resolution of their grievance, or any other employee  
138 electing to proceed pursuant to any other existing procedure in the resolution of his grievance.

139 b. Notwithstanding the exceptions set forth in subdivision 3 a above, local governments, at their sole  
140 discretion, may voluntarily include employees in any of the excepted categories within the coverage of  
141 their grievance procedures.

142 c. The chief administrative officer of each local government, or his designee, shall determine the  
143 officers and employees excluded from the grievance procedure, and shall be responsible for maintaining  
144 an up-to-date list of the affected positions.

145 4. Grievance procedure availability and coverage for employees of community services boards,  
146 redevelopment and housing authorities, and regional housing authorities. Employees of community  
147 services boards, redevelopment and housing authorities created pursuant to § 36-4, and regional housing  
148 authorities created pursuant to § 36-40 shall be included in (i) a local governing body's grievance  
149 procedure or personnel system, if agreed to by the department, board, or authority and the locality or (ii)  
150 a grievance procedure established and administered by the department, board or authority which is  
151 consistent with the provisions of Chapter 30 (§ 2.2-3000 et seq.) of Title 2.2 and any regulations  
152 promulgated pursuant thereto. If a department, board or authority fails to establish a grievance procedure  
153 pursuant to clause (i) or (ii), it shall be deemed to have adopted a grievance procedure which is  
154 consistent with the provisions of Chapter 30 (§ 2.2-3000 et seq.) of Title 2.2 and any regulations  
155 adopted pursuant thereto for so long as it remains in noncompliance.

156 5. General requirements for procedures.

157 a. Each grievance procedure shall include not more than four steps for airing complaints at  
158 successively higher levels of local government management, and a final step providing for a panel  
159 hearing or a hearing before an administrative hearing officer upon the agreement of both parties.

160 b. Grievance procedures shall prescribe reasonable and specific time limitations for the grievant to  
161 submit an initial complaint and to appeal each decision through the steps of the grievance procedure.

162 c. Nothing contained in this section shall prohibit a local government from granting its employees  
163 rights greater than those contained herein, provided such grant does not exceed or violate the general  
164 law or public policy of the Commonwealth.

165 6. Time periods.

166 a. It is intended that speedy attention to employee grievances be promoted, consistent with the ability  
167 of the parties to prepare for a fair consideration of the issues of concern.

168 b. The time for submitting an initial complaint shall not be less than 20 calendar days after the event  
169 giving rise to the grievance, but local governments may, at their option, allow a longer time period.

170 c. Limits for steps after initial presentation of grievance shall be the same or greater for the grievant  
171 than the time which is allowed for local government response in each comparable situation.

172 d. Time frames may be extended by mutual agreement of the local government and the grievant.

173 7. Compliance.

174 a. After the initial filing of a written grievance, failure of either party to comply with all substantial  
175 procedural requirements of the grievance procedure, including the panel or administrative hearing,  
176 without just cause shall result in a decision in favor of the other party on any grievable issue, provided  
177 the party not in compliance fails to correct the noncompliance within five workdays of receipt of written  
178 notification by the other party of the compliance violation. Such written notification by the grievant shall  
179 be made to the chief administrative officer, or his designee.

180 b. The chief administrative officer, or his designee, at his option, may require a clear written  
181 explanation of the basis for just cause extensions or exceptions. The chief administrative officer, or his

182 designee, shall determine compliance issues. Compliance determinations made by the chief  
183 administrative officer shall be subject to judicial review by filing petition with the circuit court within  
184 30 days of the compliance determination.

185 8. Management steps.

186 a. The first step shall provide for an informal, initial processing of employee complaints by the  
187 immediate supervisor through a nonwritten, discussion format.

188 b. Management steps shall provide for a review with higher levels of local government authority  
189 following the employee's reduction to writing of the grievance and the relief requested on forms  
190 supplied by the local government. Personal face-to-face meetings are required at all of these steps.

191 c. With the exception of the final management step, the only persons who may normally be present  
192 in the management step meetings are the grievant, the appropriate local government official at the level  
193 at which the grievance is being heard, and appropriate witnesses for each side. Witnesses shall be  
194 present only while actually providing testimony. At the final management step, the grievant, at his  
195 option, may have present a representative of his choice. If the grievant is represented by legal counsel,  
196 local government likewise has the option of being represented by counsel.

197 9. Qualification for panel or administrative hearing.

198 a. Decisions regarding grievability and access to the procedure shall be made by the chief  
199 administrative officer of the local government, or his designee, at any time prior to the panel hearing, at  
200 the request of the local government or grievant, within 10 calendar days of the request. No city, town,  
201 or county attorney, or attorney for the Commonwealth, shall be authorized to decide the question of  
202 grievability. A copy of the ruling shall be sent to the grievant. Decisions of the chief administrative  
203 officer of the local government, or his designee, may be appealed to the circuit court having jurisdiction  
204 in the locality in which the grievant is employed for a hearing on the issue of whether the grievance  
205 qualifies for a panel hearing. Proceedings for review of the decision of the chief administrative officer or  
206 his designee shall be instituted by the grievant by filing a notice of appeal with the chief administrative  
207 officer within 10 calendar days from the date of receipt of the decision and giving a copy thereof to all  
208 other parties. Within 10 calendar days thereafter, the chief administrative officer or his designee shall  
209 transmit to the clerk of the court to which the appeal is taken: a copy of the decision of the chief  
210 administrative officer, a copy of the notice of appeal, and the exhibits. A list of the evidence furnished  
211 to the court shall also be furnished to the grievant. The failure of the chief administrative officer or his  
212 designee to transmit the record shall not prejudice the rights of the grievant. The court, on motion of the  
213 grievant, may issue a writ of certiorari requiring the chief administrative officer to transmit the record on  
214 or before a certain date.

215 b. Within 30 days of receipt of such records by the clerk, the court, sitting without a jury, shall hear  
216 the appeal on the record transmitted by the chief administrative officer or his designee and such  
217 additional evidence as may be necessary to resolve any controversy as to the correctness of the record.  
218 The court, in its discretion, may receive such other evidence as the ends of justice require. The court  
219 may affirm the decision of the chief administrative officer or his designee, or may reverse or modify the  
220 decision. The decision of the court shall be rendered no later than the fifteenth day from the date of the  
221 conclusion of the hearing. The decision of the court is final and is not appealable.

222 10. Final hearings.

223 a. Qualifying grievances shall advance to either a panel hearing or a hearing before an administrative  
224 hearing officer, as set forth in the locality's grievance procedure, as described below:

225 (1) If the grievance procedure adopted by the local governing body provides that the final step shall  
226 be an impartial panel hearing, the panel may, with the exception of those local governments covered by  
227 subdivision a (2) of this subsection, consist of one member appointed by the grievant, one member  
228 appointed by the agency head and a third member selected by the first two. In the event that agreement  
229 cannot be reached as to the final panel member, the chief judge of the circuit court of the jurisdiction  
230 wherein the dispute arose shall select the third panel member. The panel shall not be composed of any  
231 persons having direct involvement with the grievance being heard by the panel, or with the complaint or  
232 dispute giving rise to the grievance. Managers who are in a direct line of supervision of a grievant,  
233 persons residing in the same household as the grievant and the following relatives of a participant in the  
234 grievance process or a participant's spouse are prohibited from serving as panel members: spouse, parent,  
235 child, descendants of a child, sibling, niece, nephew and first cousin. No attorney having direct  
236 involvement with the subject matter of the grievance, nor a partner, associate, employee or co-employee  
237 of the attorney shall serve as a panel member.

238 (2) If the grievance procedure adopted by the local governing body provides for the final step to be  
239 an impartial panel hearing, local governments may retain the panel composition method previously  
240 approved by the Department of Human Resource Management and in effect as of the enactment of this  
241 statute. Modifications to the panel composition method shall be permitted with regard to the size of the  
242 panel and the terms of office for panel members, so long as the basic integrity and independence of  
243 panels are maintained. As used in this section, the term "panel" shall include all bodies designated and

244 authorized to make final and binding decisions.

245 (3) When a local government elects to use an administrative hearing officer rather than a  
246 three-person panel for the final step in the grievance procedure, the administrative hearing officer shall  
247 be appointed by the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia. The appointment shall be  
248 made from the list of administrative hearing officers maintained by the Executive Secretary pursuant to  
249 § 2.2-4024 and shall be made from the appropriate geographical region on a rotating basis. In the  
250 alternative, the local government may request the appointment of an administrative hearing officer from  
251 the Department of Human Resource Management. If a local government elects to use an administrative  
252 hearing officer, it shall bear the expense of such officer's services.

253 (4) When the local government uses a panel in the final step of the procedure, there shall be a  
254 chairperson of the panel and, when panels are composed of three persons (one each selected by the  
255 respective parties and the third from an impartial source), the third member shall be the chairperson.

256 (5) Both the grievant and the respondent may call upon appropriate witnesses and be represented by  
257 legal counsel or other representatives at the hearing. Such representatives may examine, cross-examine,  
258 question and present evidence on behalf of the grievant or respondent before the panel or hearing officer  
259 without being in violation of the provisions of § 54.1-3904.

260 (6) The decision of the panel or hearing officer shall be final and binding and shall be consistent  
261 with provisions of law and written policy.

262 (7) The question of whether the relief granted by a panel or hearing officer is consistent with written  
263 policy shall be determined by the chief administrative officer of the local government, or his designee,  
264 unless such person has a direct personal involvement with the event or events giving rise to the  
265 grievance, in which case the decision shall be made by the attorney for the Commonwealth of the  
266 jurisdiction in which the grievance is pending.

267 b. Rules for panel and administrative hearings.

268 Unless otherwise provided by law, local governments shall adopt rules for the conduct of panel or  
269 administrative hearings as a part of their grievance procedures, or shall adopt separate rules for such  
270 hearings. Rules which are promulgated shall include, but need not be limited to the following  
271 provisions:

272 (1) That neither the panels nor the hearing officer have authority to formulate policies or procedures  
273 or to alter existing policies or procedures;

274 (2) That panels and the hearing officer have the discretion to determine the propriety of attendance at  
275 the hearing of persons not having a direct interest in the hearing, and, at the request of either party, the  
276 hearing shall be private;

277 (3) That the local government provide the panel or hearing officer with copies of the grievance  
278 record prior to the hearing, and provide the grievant with a list of the documents furnished to the panel  
279 or hearing officer, and the grievant and his attorney, at least 10 days prior to the scheduled hearing,  
280 shall be allowed access to and copies of all relevant files intended to be used in the grievance  
281 proceeding;

282 (4) That panels and hearing officers have the authority to determine the admissibility of evidence  
283 without regard to the burden of proof, or the order of presentation of evidence, so long as a full and  
284 equal opportunity is afforded to all parties for the presentation of their evidence;

285 (5) That all evidence be presented in the presence of the panel or hearing officer and the parties,  
286 except by mutual consent of the parties;

287 (6) That documents, exhibits and lists of witnesses be exchanged between the parties or hearing  
288 officer in advance of the hearing;

289 (7) That the majority decision of the panel or the decision of the hearing officer, acting within the  
290 scope of its or his authority, be final, subject to existing policies, procedures and law;

291 (8) That the panel or hearing officer's decision be provided within a specified time to all parties; and

292 (9) Such other provisions as may facilitate fair and expeditious hearings, with the understanding that  
293 the hearings are not intended to be conducted like proceedings in courts, and that rules of evidence do  
294 not necessarily apply.

295 11. Implementation of final hearing decisions.

296 Either party may petition the circuit court having jurisdiction in the locality in which the grievant is  
297 employed for an order requiring implementation of the hearing decision.

298 B. Notwithstanding the contrary provisions of this section, a final hearing decision rendered under  
299 the provisions of this section which would result in the reinstatement of any employee of a sheriff's  
300 office, who has been terminated for cause may be reviewed by the circuit court for the locality upon the  
301 petition of the locality. The review of the circuit court shall be limited to the question of whether the  
302 decision of the panel or hearing officer was consistent with provisions of law and written policy.

303 § 15.2-1604. Appointment of deputies and employment of employees; discriminatory practices  
304 by certain officers; civil penalty.

305 A. It shall be an unlawful employment practice for a constitutional officer:

306 1. To fail or refuse to appoint or hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate  
 307 against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions or privileges of appointment  
 308 or employment, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex ~~or~~, national origin, *pregnancy,*  
 309 *childbirth or related medical conditions, sexual orientation as defined in § 15.2-1500.1, gender identity*  
 310 *as defined in § 15.2-1500.1, or status as a veteran;* or

311 2. To limit, segregate, or classify his appointees, employees or applicants for appointment or  
 312 employment in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment  
 313 opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee, because of the individual's race,  
 314 color, religion, sex ~~or~~, national origin, *pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, sexual*  
 315 *orientation as defined in § 15.2-1500.1, gender identity as defined in § 15.2-1500.1, or status as a*  
 316 *veteran.*

317 B. Nothing in this section shall be construed to make it an unlawful employment practice for a  
 318 constitutional officer to hire or appoint an individual on the basis of his sex or national origin in those  
 319 instances where sex or national origin is a bona fide occupational qualification reasonably necessary to  
 320 the normal operation of that particular office. The provisions of this section shall not apply to  
 321 policy-making positions, confidential or personal staff positions, or undercover positions.

322 C. With regard to notices and advertisements:

323 1. Every constitutional officer shall, prior to hiring any employee, advertise such employment  
 324 position in a newspaper having general circulation or a state or local government job placement service  
 325 in such constitutional officer's locality except where the vacancy is to be used (i) as a placement  
 326 opportunity for appointees or employees affected by layoff, (ii) as a transfer opportunity or demotion for  
 327 an incumbent, (iii) to fill positions that have been advertised within the past 120 days, (iv) to fill  
 328 positions to be filled by appointees or employees returning from leave with or without pay, (v) to fill  
 329 temporary positions, temporary employees being those employees hired to work on special projects that  
 330 have durations of three months or less, or (vi) to fill policy-making positions, confidential or personal  
 331 staff positions, or special, sensitive law-enforcement positions normally regarded as undercover work.

332 2. No constitutional officer shall print or publish or cause to be printed or published any notice or  
 333 advertisement relating to employment by such constitutional officer indicating any preference, limitation,  
 334 specification, or discrimination, based on sex or national origin, except that such notice or advertisement  
 335 may indicate a preference, limitation, specification, or discrimination based on sex or national origin  
 336 when sex or national origin is a bona fide occupational qualification for employment.

337 D. Complaints regarding violations of subsection A may be made to the Division of Human Rights  
 338 of the Department of Law. The Division shall have the authority to exercise its powers as outlined in  
 339 Article 4 (§ 2.2-520 et seq.) of Chapter 5 of Title 2.2.

340 E. Any constitutional officer who willfully violates the provisions of subsection C shall be subject to  
 341 a civil penalty not to exceed \$2,000.

342 **§ 22.1-295.2. Employment discrimination prohibited.**

343 A. For the purposes of this section:

344 "*Gender identity*" means the gender-related identity, appearance, or other gender-related  
 345 characteristics of an individual, with or without regard to the individual's designated sex at birth.

346 "*Sexual orientation*" means a person's actual or perceived heterosexuality, bisexuality, or  
 347 homosexuality.

348 B. No school board or any agent or employee thereof shall discriminate in employment on the basis  
 349 of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, age,  
 350 marital status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or status as a veteran. This prohibition  
 351 does not in any way permit or require the lowering of any job requirements, performance standards, or  
 352 qualifications necessary to successfully perform the duties of the position.

353 **§ 22.1-306. Definitions.**

354 As used in this article:

355 "Business day" means any day that the relevant school board office is open.

356 "Day" means calendar days unless a different meaning is clearly expressed in this article. Whenever  
 357 the last day for performing an act required by this article falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday,  
 358 the act may be performed on the next day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday.

359 "Dismissal" means the dismissal of any teacher during the term of such teacher's contract.

360 "Grievance" means a complaint or dispute by a teacher relating to his employment, including but not  
 361 necessarily limited to: (i) disciplinary action including dismissal; (ii) the application or interpretation of:  
 362 (a) personnel policies, (b) procedures, (c) rules and regulations, (d) ordinances, and (e) statutes; (iii) acts  
 363 of reprisal against a teacher for filing or processing a grievance, participating as a witness in any step,  
 364 meeting or hearing relating to a grievance, or serving as a member of a fact-finding panel; and (iv)  
 365 complaints of discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, *religion*, political affiliation, ~~handicap~~  
 366 *disability*, age, national origin, ~~or~~ sex, *pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, marital*

367 *status, sexual orientation as defined in § 22.1-295.2, gender identity as defined in § 22.1-295.2, or*  
368 *status as a veteran.* Each school board shall have the exclusive right to manage the affairs and  
369 operations of the school division. Accordingly, the term "grievance" shall not include a complaint or  
370 dispute by a teacher relating to (1) establishment and revision of wages or salaries, position  
371 classifications, or general benefits;; (2) suspension of a teacher or nonrenewal of the contract of a  
372 teacher who has not achieved continuing contract status;; (3) the establishment or contents of ordinances,  
373 statutes, or personnel policies, procedures, rules, and regulations;; (4) failure to promote;; (5) discharge,  
374 layoff, or suspension from duties because of decrease in enrollment, decrease in enrollment or abolition  
375 of a particular subject, or insufficient funding;; (6) hiring, transfer, assignment, and retention of teachers  
376 within the school division;; (7) suspension from duties in emergencies;; (8) the methods, means, and  
377 personnel by which the school division's operations are to be carried on;; or (9) coaching or  
378 extracurricular activity sponsorship.

379 While these management rights are reserved to the school board, failure to apply, where applicable,  
380 the rules, regulations, policies, or procedures as written or established by the school board is grievable.