

1995 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 602

Offered January 23, 1995

Expressing the support of the General Assembly for Virginia's Statute for Religious Freedom and for the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, and requesting the Attorney General to withdraw his challenges to the Act.

Patrons—Plum, Almand, Armstrong, Ball, Behm, Christian, Cohen, Connally, Cooper, Copeland, Cranwell, Crittenden, Croshaw, Cunningham, Darner, Davies, DeBoer, Diamonstein, Grayson, Hall, Heilig, Hull, Jones, J.C., Keating, Mayer, Melvin, Moss, Puller, Robinson, Scott, Shuler, Van Landingham, Van Yahres and Woodrum; Senators: Calhoun, Colgan, Gartlan, Holland, E.M., Houck, Howell, Lambert, Saslaw and Waddell

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, Virginia is the home of the Statute for Religious Freedom, and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom was the model for the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States and the expressions of religious freedom in countries throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress in 1993 reaffirmed that the exercise of religion is an inalienable right requiring that the government show that it uses the least restrictive means to achieve a compelling government interest that might affect the free exercise of religion; and

WHEREAS, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 (RFRA) was supported by one of the largest and most diverse coalitions of religious and civil liberties organizations ever assembled and approved overwhelmingly by Congress (97-3 in the Senate; unanimous in the House of Representatives); and

WHEREAS, the Attorney General of Virginia, the Honorable James S. Gilmore, III, had argued before the United States Court of Appeals in Richmond in December, 1994, in the case styled *Cochran v. Morris*, challenging the constitutionality of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly reaffirm its support of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and request that the Attorney General withdraw any legal and constitutional challenges to the Religious Freedom Restoration Act; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to the Attorney General so that he may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia.

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