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HOUSE BILL NO. 1617

Offered January 9, 2013

Prefiled January 6, 2013

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 1 of Title 23 a section numbered 23-9.2:12, relating to higher education; student organizations.*

Patrons—Gilbert, Cole, Marshall, R.G., Peace and Wilt

Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 1 of Title 23 a section numbered 23-9.2:12 as follows:

§ 23-9.2:12. Student organizations; recognition and rights.

A. No public institutions of higher education that grants recognition of and access to any student organization or group shall discriminate against or deny recognition, equal access, or fair opportunity to any student organization or group on the basis of the religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the organization or group's speech, including worship or other religious practice.

B. A religious or political student organization may determine that ordering the organization's internal affairs, selecting the organization's leaders and members, defining the organization's doctrines, and resolving the organization's disputes are in furtherance of the organization's religious or political mission and that only persons committed to that mission should conduct such activities.

C. No public institution of higher education shall deny recognition or any privilege or benefit to a student organization or group that exercises its rights pursuant to subsection B.

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