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HOUSE BILL NO. 23

Offered January 8, 2020

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A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 2.2-3004, 15.2-1507, 15.2-1604, 22.1-306, 36-96.1 through 36-96.3, 36-96.4, 36-96.6, and 55.1-1310 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 prohibited discrimination in public employment and housing; sexual orientation or gender identity.

Patrons—Lindsey and Samirah; Senator: McClellan

Referred to Committee on General Laws

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 2.2-3004, 15.2-1507, 15.2-1604, 22.1-306, 36-96.1 through 36-96.3, 36-96.4, 36-96.6, and 55.1-1310 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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HB23

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

381 **§ 36-96.1. Declaration of policy.**

382 A. This chapter shall be known and referred to as the Virginia Fair Housing Law.

383 B. It is the policy of the Commonwealth of Virginia to provide for fair housing throughout the
 384 Commonwealth, to all its citizens, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, elderliness,
 385 familial status, *sexual orientation, gender identity*, or handicap, and to that end to prohibit discriminatory
 386 practices with respect to residential housing by any person or group of persons, in order that the peace,
 387 health, safety, prosperity, and general welfare of all the inhabitants of the Commonwealth may be
 388 protected and insured. This law shall be deemed an exercise of the police power of the Commonwealth
 389 of Virginia for the protection of the people of the Commonwealth.

390 **§ 36-96.1:1. Definitions.**

391 For the purposes of this chapter, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

392 "Aggrieved person" means any person who (i) claims to have been injured by a discriminatory
 393 housing practice or (ii) believes that such person will be injured by a discriminatory housing practice
 394 that is about to occur.

395 "Assistance animal" means an animal that works, provides assistance, or performs tasks for the
 396 benefit of a person with a disability, or provides emotional support that alleviates one or more identified
 397 symptoms or effects of a person's disability. Assistance animals perform many disability-related
 398 functions, including guiding individuals who are blind or have low vision, alerting individuals who are
 399 deaf or hard of hearing to sounds, providing protection or rescue assistance, pulling a wheelchair,
 400 fetching items, alerting persons to impending seizures, or providing emotional support to persons with
 401 disabilities who have a disability-related need for such support. An assistance animal is not required to
 402 be individually trained or certified. While dogs are the most common type of assistance animal, other
 403 animals can also be assistance animals. An assistance animal is not a pet.

404 "Complainant" means a person, including the Fair Housing Board, who files a complaint under
 405 § 36-96.9.

406 "Conciliation" means the attempted resolution of issues raised by a complainant, or by the
 407 investigation of such complaint, through informal negotiations involving the aggrieved person, the
 408 respondent, their respective authorized representatives and the Fair Housing Board.

409 "Conciliation agreement" means a written agreement setting forth the resolution of the issues in
 410 conciliation.

411 "Discriminatory housing practices" means an act that is unlawful under § 36-96.3, 36-96.4, 36-96.5,
 412 or 36-96.6.

413 "Dwelling" means any building, structure, or portion thereof, that is occupied as, or designated or
 414 intended for occupancy as, a residence by one or more families, and any vacant land that is offered for
 415 sale or lease for the construction or location thereon of any such building, structure, or portion thereof.

416 "Elderliness" means an individual who has attained his fifty-fifth birthday.

417 "Familial status" means one or more individuals who have not attained the age of 18 years being
 418 domiciled with (i) a parent or other person having legal custody of such individual or individuals or (ii)
 419 the designee of such parent or other person having custody with the written permission of such parent or
 420 other person. The term "familial status" also includes any person who is pregnant or is in the process of
 421 securing legal custody of any individual who has not attained the age of 18 years. For purposes of this
 422 section, "in the process of securing legal custody" means having filed an appropriate petition to obtain
 423 legal custody of such minor in a court of competent jurisdiction.

424 "Family" includes a single individual, whether male or female.

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

427 "Handicap" means, with respect to a person, (i) a physical or mental impairment that substantially

428 limits one or more of such person's major life activities; (ii) a record of having such an impairment; or
429 (iii) being regarded as having such an impairment. The term does not include current, illegal use of or
430 addiction to a controlled substance as defined in Virginia or federal law. For the purposes of this
431 chapter, the terms "handicap" and "disability" shall be interchangeable.

432 "Lending institution" includes any bank, savings institution, credit union, insurance company or
433 mortgage lender.

434 "Major life activities" means, but shall not be limited to, any the following functions: caring for
435 oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

436 "Person" means one or more individuals, whether male or female, corporations, partnerships,
437 associations, labor organizations, fair housing organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations,
438 governmental entities, legal representatives, mutual companies, joint stock companies, trusts,
439 unincorporated organizations, trustees, trustees in bankruptcy, receivers and fiduciaries.

440 "Physical or mental impairment" means, but shall not be limited to, any of the following: (i) any
441 physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of
442 the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including
443 speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive; genito-urinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; or
444 endocrine or (ii) any mental or psychological disorder, such as an intellectual or developmental
445 disability, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, or specific learning disability. "Physical
446 or mental impairment" includes such diseases and conditions as orthopedic, visual, speech, and hearing
447 impairments; cerebral palsy; autism; epilepsy; muscular dystrophy; multiple sclerosis; cancer; heart
448 disease; diabetes; human immunodeficiency virus infection; intellectual and developmental disabilities;
449 emotional illness; drug addiction other than addiction caused by current, illegal use of a controlled
450 substance; and alcoholism.

451 "Respondent" means any person or other entity alleged to have violated the provisions of this
452 chapter, as stated in a complaint filed under the provisions of this chapter and any other person joined
453 pursuant to the provisions of § 36-96.9.

454 "Restrictive covenant" means any specification in any instrument affecting title to real property that
455 purports to limit the use, occupancy, transfer, rental, or lease of any dwelling because of race, color,
456 religion, national origin, sex, elderliness, familial status, *sexual orientation*, *gender identity*, or handicap.

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

459 "To rent" means to lease, to sublease, to let, or otherwise to grant for consideration the right to
460 occupy premises not owned by the occupant.

461 § 36-96.2. Exemptions.

462 A. Except as provided in subdivision A 3 of § 36-96.3 and subsections A, B, and C of § 36-96.6,
463 this chapter shall not apply to any single-family house sold or rented by an owner, provided that such
464 private individual does not own more than three single-family houses at any one time. In the case of the
465 sale of any single-family house by a private individual-owner not residing in the house at the time of
466 the sale or who was not the most recent resident of the house prior to sale, the exemption granted shall
467 apply only with respect to one such sale within any 24-month period; provided that such bona fide
468 private individual owner does not own any interest in, nor is there owned or reserved on his behalf,
469 under any express or voluntary agreement, title to or any right to all or a portion of the proceeds from
470 the sale or rental of, more than three such single-family houses at any one time. The sale or rental of
471 any such single-family house shall be exempt from the application of this chapter only if the house is
472 sold or rented (i) without the use in any manner of the sales or rental facilities or the sales or rental
473 services of any real estate broker, agent, salesperson, or of the facilities or the services of any person in
474 the business of selling or renting dwellings, or of any employee, independent contractor, or agent of any
475 broker, agent, salesperson, or person and (ii) without the publication, posting, or mailing, after notice, of
476 any advertisement or written notice in violation of this chapter. However, nothing herein shall prohibit
477 the use of attorneys, escrow agents, abstractors, title companies, and other professional assistance as
478 necessary to perfect or transfer the title. This exemption shall not apply to or inure to the benefit of any
479 licensee of the Real Estate Board or regulant of the Fair Housing Board, regardless of whether the
480 licensee is acting in his personal or professional capacity.

481 B. Except for subdivision A 3 of § 36-96.3, this chapter shall not apply to rooms or units in
482 dwellings containing living quarters occupied or intended to be occupied by no more than four families
483 living independently of each other, if the owner actually maintains and occupies one of such living
484 quarters as his residence.

485 C. Nothing in this chapter shall prohibit a religious organization, association or society, or any
486 nonprofit institution or organization operated, supervised, or controlled by or in conjunction with a
487 religious organization, association or society, from limiting the sale, rental, or occupancy of dwellings
488 that it owns or operates for other than a commercial purpose to persons of the same religion, or from
489 giving preferences to such persons, unless membership in such religion is restricted on account of race,

490 color, national origin, sex, elderliness, familial status, *sexual orientation*, *gender identity*, or handicap.
 491 Nor shall anything in this chapter apply to a private membership club not in fact open to the public,
 492 which as an incident to its primary purpose or purposes provides lodging which it owns or operates for
 493 other than a commercial purpose, from limiting the rental or occupancy of such lodgings to its members
 494 or from giving preference to its members. Nor, where matters of personal privacy are involved, shall
 495 anything in this chapter be construed to prohibit any private, state-owned or state-supported educational
 496 institution, hospital, nursing home, religious or correctional institution, from requiring that persons of
 497 both sexes not occupy any single-family residence or room or unit of dwellings or other buildings, or
 498 restrooms in such room or unit in dwellings or other buildings, which it owns or operates.

499 D. Nothing in this chapter prohibits conduct against a person because such person has been convicted
 500 by any court of competent jurisdiction of the illegal manufacture or distribution of a controlled
 501 substance as defined in federal law.

502 E. It shall not be unlawful under this chapter for any owner to deny or limit the rental of housing to
 503 persons who pose a clear and present threat of substantial harm to others or to the dwelling itself.

504 F. A rental application may require disclosure by the applicant of any criminal convictions and the
 505 owner or managing agent may require as a condition of acceptance of the rental application that
 506 applicant consent in writing to a criminal record check to verify the disclosures made by applicant in the
 507 rental application. The owner or managing agent may collect from the applicant moneys to reimburse
 508 the owner or managing agent for the exact amount of the out-of-pocket costs for such criminal record
 509 checks. Nothing in this chapter shall require an owner or managing agent to rent a dwelling to an
 510 individual who, based on a prior record of criminal convictions involving harm to persons or property,
 511 would constitute a clear and present threat to the health or safety of other individuals.

512 G. Nothing in this chapter limits the applicability of any reasonable local, state or federal restriction
 513 regarding the maximum number of occupants permitted to occupy a dwelling. Owners or managing
 514 agents of dwellings may develop and implement reasonable occupancy and safety standards based on
 515 factors such as the number and size of sleeping areas or bedrooms and overall size of a dwelling unit so
 516 long as the standards do not violate local, state or federal restrictions. Nothing in this chapter prohibits
 517 the rental application or similar document from requiring information concerning the number, ages, sex
 518 and familial relationship of the applicants and the dwelling's intended occupants.

519 **§ 36-96.3. Unlawful discriminatory housing practices.**

520 A. It shall be an unlawful discriminatory housing practice for any person:

521 1. To refuse to sell or rent after the making of a bona fide offer or to refuse to negotiate for the sale
 522 or rental of, or otherwise make unavailable or deny, a dwelling to any person because of race, color,
 523 religion, national origin, sex, elderliness, or familial status, *sexual orientation*, or *gender identity*;

524 2. To discriminate against any person in the terms, conditions, or privileges of sale or rental of a
 525 dwelling, or in the provision of services or facilities in the connection therewith to any person because
 526 of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, elderliness, or familial status, *sexual orientation*, or *gender*
 527 *identity*;

528 3. To make, print, or publish, or cause to be made, printed, or published any notice, statement, or
 529 advertisement, with respect to the sale or rental of a dwelling that indicates any preference, limitation, or
 530 discrimination or an intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination based on race,
 531 color, religion, national origin, sex, elderliness, familial status, *sexual orientation*, *gender identity*, or
 532 handicap. The use of words or symbols associated with a particular religion, national origin, sex, or race
 533 shall be prima facie evidence of an illegal preference under this chapter which shall not be overcome by
 534 a general disclaimer. However, reference alone to places of worship including, but not limited to,
 535 churches, synagogues, temples, or mosques in any such notice, statement, or advertisement shall not be
 536 prima facie evidence of an illegal preference;

537 4. To represent to any person because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, elderliness,
 538 familial status, *sexual orientation*, *gender identity*, or handicap that any dwelling is not available for
 539 inspection, sale, or rental when such dwelling is in fact so available;

540 5. To deny any person access to membership in or participation in any multiple listing service, real
 541 estate brokers' organization, or other service, organization or facility relating to the business of selling or
 542 renting dwellings, or to discriminate against such person in the terms or conditions of such access,
 543 membership, or participation because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, elderliness, familial
 544 status, *sexual orientation*, *gender identity*, or handicap;

545 6. To include in any transfer, sale, rental, or lease of housing; any restrictive covenant that
 546 discriminates because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, elderliness, familial status, *sexual*
 547 *orientation*, *gender identity*, or handicap or for any person to honor or exercise; or attempt to honor or
 548 exercise any such discriminatory covenant pertaining to housing;

549 7. To induce or attempt to induce to sell or rent any dwelling by representations regarding the entry
 550 or prospective entry into the neighborhood of a person or persons of a particular race, color, religion,

551 national origin, sex, elderliness, familial status, *sexual orientation*, *gender identity*, or handicap;

552 8. To refuse to sell or rent, or refuse to negotiate for the sale or rental of, or otherwise discriminate
553 or make unavailable or deny a dwelling because of a handicap of (i) the buyer or renter; (ii) a person
554 residing in or intending to reside in that dwelling after it is so sold, rented, or made available; or (iii)
555 any person associated with the buyer or renter; *or*

556 9. To discriminate against any person in the terms, conditions, or privileges of sale or rental of a
557 dwelling, or in the provision of services or facilities in connection therewith because of a handicap of (i)
558 that person; (ii) a person residing in or intending to reside in that dwelling after it was so sold, rented,
559 or made available; or (iii) any person associated with that buyer or renter.

560 B. For the purposes of this section, discrimination includes: (i) a refusal to permit, at the expense of
561 the handicapped person, reasonable modifications of existing premises occupied or to be occupied by
562 any person if such modifications may be necessary to afford such person full enjoyment of the premises;
563 except that, in the case of a rental, the landlord may, where it is reasonable to do so, condition
564 permission for a modification on the renter's agreeing to restore the interior of the premises to the
565 condition that existed before the modification, reasonable wear and tear excepted; (ii) a refusal to make
566 reasonable accommodations in rules, practices, policies, or services when such accommodations may be
567 necessary to afford such person equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling; or (iii) in connection
568 with the design and construction of covered multi-family dwellings for first occupancy after March 13,
569 1991, a failure to design and construct dwellings in such a manner that:

570 1. The public use and common use areas of the dwellings are readily accessible to and usable by
571 handicapped persons;

572 2. All the doors designed to allow passage into and within all premises are sufficiently wide to allow
573 passage by handicapped persons in wheelchairs; and

574 3. All premises within covered multi-family dwelling units contain an accessible route into and
575 through the dwelling; light switches, electrical outlets, thermostats, and other environmental controls are
576 in accessible locations; there are reinforcements in the bathroom walls to allow later installation of grab
577 bars; and there are usable kitchens and bathrooms such that an individual in a wheelchair can maneuver
578 about the space. As used in this subdivision, the term "covered multi-family dwellings" means buildings
579 consisting of four or more units if such buildings have one or more elevators and ground floor units in
580 other buildings consisting of four or more units.

581 C. Compliance with the appropriate requirements of the American National Standards for Building
582 and Facilities (commonly cited as "ANSI A117.1") or with any other standards adopted as part of
583 regulations promulgated by HUD providing accessibility and usability for physically handicapped people
584 shall be deemed to satisfy the requirements of subdivision B 3.

585 D. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to invalidate or limit any Virginia law or regulation
586 which requires dwellings to be designed and constructed in a manner that affords handicapped persons
587 greater access than is required by this chapter.

588 **§ 36-96.4. Discrimination in residential real estate-related transactions; unlawful practices by**
589 **lenders, insurers, appraisers, etc.; deposit of state funds in such institutions.**

590 A. It shall be unlawful for any person or other entity, including any lending institution, whose
591 business includes engaging in residential real estate-related transactions, to discriminate against any
592 person in making available such a transaction, or in the terms or conditions of such a transaction, or in
593 the manner of providing such a transaction, because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex,
594 elderliness, familial status, *sexual orientation*, *gender identity*, or handicap. It shall not be unlawful,
595 however, for any person or other entity whose business includes engaging in residential real estate
596 transactions to require any applicant to qualify financially for the loan or loans for which such person is
597 making application.

598 B. As used in this section, the term "residential real estate-related transaction" means any of the
599 following:

600 1. The making or purchasing of loans or providing other financial assistance (i) for purchasing,
601 constructing, improving, repairing, or maintaining a dwelling or (ii) secured by residential real estate; or

602 2. The selling, brokering, insuring or appraising of residential real property. However, nothing in this
603 chapter shall prohibit a person engaged in the business of furnishing appraisals of real property to take
604 into consideration factors other than race, color, religion, national origin, sex, elderliness, familial status,
605 *sexual orientation*, *gender identity*, or handicap.

606 C. It shall be unlawful for any state, county, city, or municipal treasurer or governmental official
607 whose responsibility it is to account for, to invest, or manage public funds to deposit or cause to be
608 deposited any public funds in any lending institution provided for herein which is found to be
609 committing discriminatory practices, where such findings were upheld by any court of competent
610 jurisdiction. Upon such a court's judicial enforcement of any order to restrain a practice of such lending
611 institution or for said institution to cease or desist in a discriminatory practice, the appropriate fiscal
612 officer or treasurer of the Commonwealth or any political subdivision thereof which has funds deposited

613 in any lending institution which is practicing discrimination, as set forth herein, shall take immediate
614 steps to have the said funds withdrawn and redeposited in another lending institution. If for reasons of
615 sound economic management, this action will result in a financial loss to the Commonwealth or any of
616 its political subdivisions, the action may be deferred for a period not longer than one year. If the lending
617 institution in question has corrected its discriminatory practices, any prohibition set forth in this section
618 shall not apply.

619 **§ 36-96.6. Certain restrictive covenants void; instruments containing such covenants.**

620 A. Any restrictive covenant and any related reversionary interest, purporting to restrict occupancy or
621 ownership of property on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, elderliness, familial
622 status, *sexual orientation*, *gender identity*, or handicap, whether heretofore or hereafter included in an
623 instrument affecting the title to real or leasehold property, are declared to be void and contrary to the
624 public policy of the Commonwealth.

625 B. Any person who is asked to accept a document affecting title to real or leasehold property may
626 decline to accept the same if it includes such a covenant or reversionary interest until the covenant or
627 reversionary interest has been removed from the document. Refusal to accept delivery of an instrument
628 for this reason shall not be deemed a breach of a contract to purchase, lease, mortgage, or otherwise
629 deal with such property.

630 C. No person shall solicit or accept compensation of any kind for the release or removal of any
631 covenant or reversionary interest described in subsection A. Any person violating this subsection shall be
632 liable to any person injured thereby in an amount equal to the greater of three times the compensation
633 solicited or received, or \$500, plus reasonable ~~attorneys'~~ *attorney* fees and costs incurred.

634 D. A family care home, foster home, or group home in which individuals with physical handicaps,
635 mental illness, intellectual disability, or developmental disability reside, with one or more resident
636 counselors or other staff persons, shall be considered for all purposes residential occupancy by a single
637 family when construing any restrictive covenant which purports to restrict occupancy or ownership of
638 real or leasehold property to members of a single family or to residential use or structure.

639 **§ 55.1-1310. Sale or lease of manufactured home by manufactured home owner.**

640 A. *As used in this section:*

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

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

645 B. No landlord shall unreasonably refuse or restrict the sale or rental of a manufactured home located
646 in his manufactured home park by a tenant. No landlord shall prohibit the manufactured home owner
647 from placing a "for sale" sign on or in the owner's home except that the size, placement, and character
648 of all signs are subject to the rules and regulations of the manufactured home park. Prior to selling or
649 leasing the manufactured home, the tenant shall give notice to the landlord, including the name of the
650 prospective vendee or lessee if the prospective vendee or lessee intends to occupy the manufactured
651 home in that manufactured home park. The landlord shall have the burden of proving that his refusal or
652 restriction regarding the sale or rental of a manufactured home was reasonable. The refusal or restriction
653 of the sale or rental of a manufactured home exclusively or predominantly based on the age of the home
654 shall be considered unreasonable. Any refusal or restriction based on race, color, religion, national
655 origin, familial status, elderliness, handicap, *sexual orientation*, *gender identity*, or sex shall be
656 conclusively presumed to be unreasonable.