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HOUSE BILL NO. 773

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the Senate Committee on General Laws and Technology
on February 22, 2016)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Gilbert)

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 57-2.03, relating to religious freedom; solemnization of marriage.*

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 57-2.03 as follows:

§ 57-2.03. Religious freedom; solemnization of marriage.

A. *No person authorized to perform a marriage ceremony pursuant to Chapter 2 (§ 20-13 et seq.) of Title 20 shall be required to solemnize any marriage, and no religious organization, organization supervised or controlled by or operated in connection with a religious organization, individual employed by a religious organization while acting in the scope of his employment, or clergy member or minister shall be required to provide services, accommodations, facilities, goods, or privileges for a purpose related to the solemnization of any marriage if the action would cause the individual or organization to violate a sincerely held religious belief.*

B. *A refusal to solemnize a marriage or provide services, accommodations, facilities, goods, or privileges under subsection A shall not give rise to civil or criminal liability or any other action by the Commonwealth or a political subdivision to penalize or withhold benefits or privileges, including tax exemptions or governmental contracts, grants, or licenses, from any individual or organization listed in subsection A.*

2. That the provisions of this act are declaratory of existing law.