



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

HOUSE OF DELEGATES

RICHMOND

Joseph D. Morrissey

P.O. Box 406
Richmond, VA 23218

SEVENTY-FOURTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
EDUCATION
HEALTH, WELFARE AND
INSTITUTIONS

March 10, 2010

The Honorable Robert F. McDonnell
Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia
P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, VA 23218

Re: Anti-Discrimination Policy Based on Sexual Orientation

Dear Governor McDonnell,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am contacting you regarding the above referenced matter which, I believe, requires your immediate attention.

As I know you are aware, on March 4, 2010, the Attorney General of the Commonwealth, Kenneth T. Cuccinelli II, sent a letter to the Presidents, Rectors and Visitors of Virginia Public Colleges and Universities regarding non discrimination policies at their respective institutions. In his letter, the Attorney General opined and advised that under both the law and the public policy of the Commonwealth of Virginia, a state college or university is prohibited from including "sexual orientation" "gender identity", "gender expression" or similar classification as a protected class in its non-discrimination policy.

Additionally, in the Attorney General's penultimate paragraph, he stated that any Virginia college or university that did prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation did so without proper authority and such a policy was invalid and should be rescinded.

Governor, the Attorney General's opinion has caused a firestorm of opposition in our state colleges and universities. Yesterday, I attended a forum held at Virginia Commonwealth University's Johnson Center where the Provost of Virginia Commonwealth University advised the assembled students, faculty and administrators that over 1,000 students had attended forums in the last

day or so and, in an overwhelming fashion, made it clear that they are in absolute opposition to the Attorney General's position. Indeed, I listened yesterday as professors and other academicians stated in unequivocal terms that prohibiting colleges and universities from promulgating discrimination policies based on sexual orientation would be harmful and destructive to higher education in the Commonwealth.

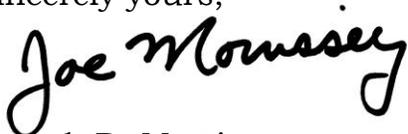
Yesterday, a house sub-committee cancelled their last scheduled meeting whereby the committee could have reconsidered Senate Bill 66 which would have codified "sexual orientation" as part of Virginia Anti-Discrimination Policy in the state's work force and institutions. Accordingly, there is no other avenue in which to pass an Anti-Discrimination Policy in both the state workforce and in our colleges and universities –save one. You and your office are the last recourse.

I respectfully urge you to send to the General Assembly, a Bill, which will codify "sexual orientation" as part of Virginia's Anti-Discrimination Policy in both the state workforce and at our state colleges and universities. If you send an Anti-Discrimination bill to the General Assembly requesting immediate action, action will be taken.

In conclusion, let me say the following. You have repeatedly stated in both pre and post election pronouncements that you will not tolerate discrimination – of any kind – in the Commonwealth. I believe you. However, the citizens of the Commonwealth need to see leadership on this crucial issue and by sending out a Bill forthwith to the General Assembly denouncing discrimination will give meanings to your previous pronouncements.

Thank you for your time and I/we look forward to voting on the legislation as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Morrissey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joseph D. Morrissey
Representative 74th District