

FROM PASTOR MARK HOPKINS, SHENANDOAH BAPTIST CHURCH, ROANOKE, VA:

I arrived back from Richmond last night around midnight. Leaders and members from our ministry have spent the past two days in Richmond fighting for the religious liberty of thousands of ministries around our state. The new legislature in VA has passed multiple anti-discrimination bills that violate the Biblical and orthodox convictions of Christians in matters of sexuality, gender, and marriage.

The major bill in question is HB 1663 which stipulates that a religious organization is allowed to hire employees of the same religion, but it does NOT permit a religious organization to hold its employees to a standard of conduct consistent with its Biblical convictions, values, and core religious tenets.

The bill also makes churches, Christian schools, religious camps, and religious corporations “a place of public accommodation,” thus treating them the same as a for-profit business.

This opens every religious entity in the state to un-needed lawsuits and litigation as well as possible penalties from the Attorney General office if a religious organization holds to Biblical views of sexuality, gender, and marriage. The first offense is a penalty of \$50,000. The second offense is a penalty of \$100,000. And a religious entity could be liable for damages of up to \$350,000.

We have fought hard with the Family Foundation of Virginia, Association of Christian Schools International, the Virginia Assembly of Independent Baptist, and the Southern Baptists Conservatives of Virginia this past week in Richmond. We have met personally with legislatures, opposed the bill in committee meetings, and have gotten the word out so that finally, thousands in the state are starting to call their senators.

The problem is the bill is about to pass and we literally have from now to Monday to put final pressure on our senators to amend this bill so that religious corporations are not considered “places of public accommodation” (and treated the same as for-profit businesses). We also need the bill amended to ensure that we can maintain our Biblical values in the conduct of our employees. Pressure for these amendments is mounting but the Family Foundation told me last night we **DESPERATELY NEED YOU TO CALL TODAY!**

**FIVE MINUTES OF ACTION COULD MAKE A MAJOR DIFFERENCE FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY!**

**Click on this link OR COPY and PASTE in into your browser to find your senator:**

**<https://whosmy.virginiasenate.gov/>**

**AT BARE MINIMUM SEND AN EMAIL.**

**BUT FAR BETTER, call and let anyone who answers your call know who you are, where you live, and your concerns about HB 1663 that I explained above.**

Christian lobbyists have spent days and weeks fighting these attacks on religious liberty and making a stand for God’s truth in the government arena. We can take 10 minutes and act. Thank you so much for doing so.

Your grateful servant,  
Pastor Mark Hopkins

Here are links to important Christian organizations that you can choose to receive emails from or follow on Facebook that we are working with:

<http://www.familyfoundation.org/2020bills>  
<https://vaib.org/>  
<https://www.acsi.org/legal-legislative-and-advocacy>  
<https://www.facebook.com/VAIB.ORG/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/tffva/>

## R. Creigh Deeds

Democrat, District 25

### Legislation Sponsored

Chief Patron

Chief Co-Patron

Co-Patron

### Committees

Privileges and Elections (Chair)

Commerce and Labor

Finance and Appropriations

Judiciary

Rules

### Biography

Born in Richmond, Virginia on January 4, 1958; educated at Concord College (B.A., 1980); Wake Forest University School of Law (J.D., 1984); Attorney; married Siobhan Deeds; Presbyterian; member: Millboro Presbyterian Church; Member of the House: 1992-2001; Member of the Senate: 2001-

### District 25 Description

Albemarle County (Part), Alleghany County (All), Bath County (All), Buena Vista City (All), Charlottesville City (All), Covington City (All), Nelson County (All), Highland County (All), Rockbridge County (All), Lexington City (All),

### Studies and Commissions

*Groups that discuss and research specific subject matter in regards to legislation or public projects.*

[Criminal Justice Diversion](#)

[Joint Commission on Transportation Accountability](#)

[Mental Health Services in the Twenty-First Century.. Joint](#)

[Subcommittee to Study](#)

[Service System Structure and Financing](#)

[Small Business Commission](#)

[Western Virginia Public Education Consortium](#)



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### Senate Connect

