



Statement by Bishop Burbidge and Bishop Knestout on Actions by House Privileges and Elections Committee

November 13, 2024

Today, the House Privileges and Elections Committee took the unusual step of fast-tracking three proposals to amend Virginia’s constitution. The committee voted to advance an extreme “right to abortion” amendment, an amendment to repeal the one-man/one-woman marriage provision, and an amendment to restore voting rights. These actions send the measures to the House floor for votes at or near the beginning of the 2025 General Assembly session.

Adding a “right” to abortion in Virginia’s constitution would enshrine a fundamental tragedy, not a fundamental right. Alarming, this proposed policy appears to allow virtually unlimited abortion at any stage of pregnancy. We are especially concerned that this measure could quite possibly endanger Virginia’s parental consent law and its prohibition against partial-birth abortion, and may very well foreclose the possibility of any future measure to protect babies from abortion. Rather than further expanding our Commonwealth’s already very permissive abortion laws, we urge all lawmakers to work instead for policies that affirm the life and dignity of every mother and every child.

We also oppose the effort to remove the constitutional provision regarding marriage that Virginia voters approved in 2006. We affirm the dignity of every person, and we affirm too that marriage is exclusively the union of one man and one woman. Marriage was created by God with an original design and purpose that each of us is called to preserve and that predates any nation, religion or law.

We continue our consistent support of the initiative to ensure that all people who have completed their sentences will have their voting rights restored. This is currently the policy in the vast majority of states. Moreover, it reflects the teaching of faithful citizenship that each person should participate fully in the political process.

The process to amend Virginia’s constitution is multi-year and involves numerous steps. We must all be vigilant about the actions that are taking place now and those we anticipate may occur in the future. Though the election season has ended, our deep engagement in decisions that go to the heart of who we are and what we value must continue with determination and zeal.

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