

**RESOLUTION REGARDING THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO  
VIRGINIA'S BILL OF RIGHTS,  
BALLOT QUESTION #1**

WHEREAS, Arlington County is a richly diverse community, and it is in the public interest of the County to assure that each citizen is treated fairly and provided equal protection of the laws and equal opportunity to participate in the benefits, rights and privileges of community life; and,

WHEREAS, Arlington County is committed to protecting the rights of all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, or marital status; and,

WHEREAS, the Virginia General Assembly has voted to approve an Amendment to the Bill of Rights to the Virginia Constitution reading, "That only a union between one man and one woman may be a marriage valid in or recognized by this Commonwealth and its political subdivisions. This Commonwealth and its political subdivisions shall not create or recognize a legal status for relationships of unmarried individuals that intends to approximate the design, qualities, significance, or effects of marriage. Nor shall this Commonwealth or its political subdivisions create or recognize another union, partnership, or other legal status to which is assigned the rights, benefits, obligations, qualities, or effects of marriage;" and,

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment has become mislabeled in shorthand as the "Marriage Amendment" when it is only the first sentence of the ballot language which directly addresses the definition of marriage, while the remaining ballot language encompasses civil unions and domestic partnerships; and,

WHEREAS, the language of the proposed amendment goes far beyond the constitutional proposals enacted in any other state, makes significant and substantial changes in current Virginia law by extending the prohibition on relationship recognition to all "unmarried individuals" and may have other unintended and unpredictable legal consequences; and,

WHEREAS, over 130 Virginia attorneys and legal scholars – including two former Attorneys General – Governor Tim Kaine and the League of Women Voters, among many others, have expressed serious concern about the unintended consequences of the broad language of the proposed amendment; and,

WHEREAS, this proposed amendment would, in effect, create a Constitutional bar to any legal recognition of unmarried relationships for both same- and different-sex couples, including a permanent prohibition on the ability of County government and the School system to offer benefits – such as health insurance - to unmarried employees that would be equal to those offered to married employees; and,

WHEREAS, the economic health of Arlington and Virginia depends upon attracting and retaining educated workers and new businesses, and this proposed amendment could have the effect of discouraging high-value workers and businesses from locating in our state and community thus putting us at a competitive disadvantage relative to DC, Maryland and many other states where no such impediments now exist; and,

NOW THEREFORE Be it resolved, that the County Board of Arlington, Virginia opposes the proposed amendment to Virginia's Bill of Rights and encourages Arlington citizens to vote "NO" on Ballot Question #1 on November 7<sup>th</sup>; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Board Clerk shall distribute copies of this resolution to media outlets and elected officials as directed by the County Board.