



## ***Old Dominion Association of Church Schools***

---

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
General Assembly Building  
Richmond, VA 23219

April 11, 2015

Dear Delegate \_\_\_\_\_ (or Senator \_\_\_\_\_),

As a member of \_\_\_\_\_ Church (or parent/teacher with \_\_\_\_\_ School), which is a member of the Old Dominion Association of Church Schools, I wish to express my grave concern about the governor's amendments to HB 1570. While the House of Delegates was deliberating on this bill during the recent legislative session, ODACS requested that provisions for further regulation of church-operated religious exempt child daycare centers be removed from the bill. The House honored the ODACS request, and the bill passed both chambers without opposition from ODACS.

However, the governor has sent the bill back to the General Assembly with changes that not only add regulation to church-operated religious exempt centers but do so in a way that regulates religious exempt centers more so than did the original version of the bill. The purpose for doing so is ostensibly to address safety concerns for children in unlicensed daycare settings. **However, we are convinced that children in religious exempt centers are much safer than are children in licensed centers.** Attached with this letter is a talking points memo that makes our case.

Furthermore, we are very concerned about new language that gives the federal government far-reaching control over Virginia's daycares. It has been apparent to us for several years now that the federal government seeks a large measure of control over all daycare centers. New language in HB 1570 cedes much control to the federal government, control that goes far beyond just safety issues. ODACS fears that such control could quickly become intrusive to our church-run daycare centers, negatively affecting our ministries and our families financially, and ultimately threatening us in areas of religious liberty and conscience. It could even finally render Virginia's religious exemption meaningless, forcing our churches either to accept what amounts to federal licensure or to close the doors of their daycare centers! It could also prevent churches from opening daycare centers in the future in communities where such a ministry is badly needed!

Delegate Bobby Orrock has listened to the ODACS concerns and promised to try to address them when HB 1570 comes back before the House of Delegates. We would greatly appreciate your helping him to address our concerns.

May God bless you for your service to the Commonwealth, and we thank you for considering our perspective.

Sincerely,