

**ODACS Comment**

**Submitted by Dan Zacharias**

**Executive Director, Old Dominion Association of Church Schools**

**The Old Dominion Association of Church Schools supports the work of Governor Bob McDonnell and of the Commission on Government Reform and Restructuring to make our state government less costly and more efficient. We understand that Virginia faces significant budgetary challenges, as have our families, our churches, our schools, and even ODACS itself. Difficult and bold steps are certainly necessary in order to continue to keep Virginia's fiscal house in order.**

**One particular recommendation of the Commission, however, is of important concern to ODACS - the elimination of the Virginia Child Day Care Council. ODACS enjoys the honor of having a seat on the Council. We view the opportunity to serve on the Council as an important safeguard to the religious exemption from licensure under which our church-run day care centers operate. The freedom of churches to operate ministries without state licensure is one that many Virginians have struggled to win and to preserve, dating even back to colonial days. In the 1980's, ODACS was involved in the struggle to establish the religious exemption from licensure and to protect it from a costly and time-consuming legal challenge.**

**We ask that the Governor and the General Assembly give serious consideration to keeping the Child Day Care Council intact. ODACS is even willing to share the expense of representation on the Council in order to preserve our voice and our vote in the writing of day care regulations and in the preservation of our religious liberty through the religious exemption from licensure. Thank you for considering our position on this important matter.**