

January **Date**, 2024

Dear Delegate **Name** OR Dear Senator **Name**,

I ask that you support HB 222 and SB 76, companion bills that would make it much easier for churches to start daycares and preschools with a Religious Exemption from Licensure. The bills move Virginia's Religious Exemption from Child Care Licensure to the same Code section that includes Sunday school classes, Vacation Bible School, and church nurseries. The change would free churches from bureaucratic red tape, providing expanded opportunity for young children all over the Commonwealth.

Additionally, the bills would free our churches from VDOE overreach that has been increasing over the past year and a half. The most egregious example happened in August at Bethel Baptist Church in Hampton, when a VDOE licensing inspector, overreaching her legal authority, threatened to shut down the summer day camp that the church was operating for elementary age children. I believe that our church-run preschools and daycares should be able to operate as freely of government intervention as are our Sunday schools, Vacation Bible Schools, and church nurseries!

My church, **name of church**, and our Christian school, **name of school**, are part of the Old Dominion Association of Church Schools, which is supporting these bills.

Thank you for your service to the Commonwealth, and thank you for considering my perspective.

Sincerely,

Signature