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Dan Clark, motivational public speaker

Shoshana Bryen, Sr Dir, Jewish Policy Center

Sara O'Neil-Manion, retired Architect

Maurice Washington, SC businessman & leader



Stand Together Against Racism and Radicalism in the Services
E Pluribus Unum—Unity is America's Strength

February 18, 2026

President Donald J. Trump
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Mr. President:

We write to you regarding a matter that threatens the production of commissioned officers for the United States Armed Forces and the relationship between the Federal Government and one of our six federally recognized Senior Military Colleges. Legislative actions now advancing in the Commonwealth of Virginia pose material risks to military readiness, officer development, and federal interests protected under 10 U.S. Code § 2111a.

The legendary Virginia Military Institute (VMI) is a federally recognized Senior Military College operating under a unique statutory relationship with the Department of Defense. Its cadets participate in ROTC programs under federal authority, and its graduates commission into the Armed Forces at rates that exceed most civilian institutions. VMI has produced national heroes, including Generals George Marshall and George Patton, and our current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, among others.

Actions that materially alter VMI's governance or military framework, therefore, affect national defense interests — not merely state policy. In defiance of [10 U.S. Code § 2111a - Support for senior military colleges](#), the Virginia General Assembly is currently considering two bills, HB1374 and HB1377. Attachment 1 provides an analysis of the implications of these two bills. To be clear, the Virginia General Assembly's actions are a direct challenge to the authority of the Department of War and POTUS, not only to vital military officer training but also to the military readiness of the United States itself.

We believe that our Commander-in-Chief, our Secretary of War, and members of Congress should have a say on any state legislation that relates to the curriculum of VMI.

We respectfully request that:

1. The Department of War review whether VMI's proposed governance changes are consistent with the federal purposes of 10 U.S.C. § 2111a, and fully coordinate with the Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, scrutiny of potential violations of Executive Orders; Secretary of Defense Memorandum: Restoring America's Fighting Force (January 29, 2025); and Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard, 600 U.S. 181 (2023), currently at VMI and how these proposed Bills may significantly increase such violations;
2. The Secretary of War communicate to the Commonwealth of Virginia the federal interest in preserving the military integrity of Senior Military Colleges and demand that at least two Department of War representatives be full members of any task force, as well as Department of Education and Department of Justice representatives (as appropriate), if said Task Force will investigate any racial or gender issues; and
3. Congress consider whether additional statutory protections are warranted to prevent state-level political restructuring from impairing officer-production institutions, and whether the SecWar should implement a monitoring and reporting plan for VMI to ensure it is not coerced or forced to implement changes negatively impacting military readiness or legal compliance.

For comparison purposes, the link--<https://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t59c121.php>--provides information about the Citadel's Board of Visitors. As a true peer institution to VMI, the Citadel board is required, by law, to have eleven regular members who "shall be graduates of the college."

If we may be of further assistance, we can be reached at the STARRS corporate email at mission@STARRS.us.

Respectfully yours,



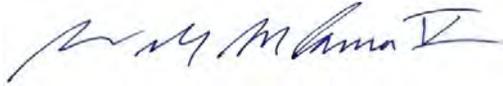
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Stand Together Against Racism and Radicalism in the Services, Inc.



Ronald J. Scott, Jr., Ph.D.
Colonel, USAF, Retired
President & CEO, STARRS



The Honorable Michael T. Rose, JD/MBA
Executive Vice President & General Counsel, STARRS



William M. Connor, V, Esq.
Colonel, USA, Retired
Chairman, Board of Advisors, STARRS
Member, Citadel Board of Advisors

Attachment: VMI Legislation Analysis and Implications

cc:

The Honorable Pete Hegseth, Secretary of Defense
General Dan Caine, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (VMI '90)
UN Ambassador Mike Waltz (VMI '96)
The Honorable Roger F. Wicker, Chairman, Senate Armed Services Committee
The Honorable Jack Reed, Ranking Member, Senate Armed Services Committee
The Honorable Mike Rogers, Chairman, House Armed Services Committee
The Honorable Adam Smith, Ranking Member, House Armed Services Committee
Congressman Rob Whittman (VA)
Congressman Pat Fallon (TX)
Colonel (USA, Ret) James P. Inman, VMI BOV President (inmanjp@vmi.edu)
Lieutenant General (USMC, Ret) David Furness, VMI Superintendent (VMI-Superintendent@vmi.edu)
Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division
Mr. Tom Neale, Chair, The Alumni Free Speech Alliance (tom74@comcast.net)

Attachment: HB1374 and HB1377 Analysis and Implications

Originally, **HB1374** proposed to dissolve the VMI Board of Visitors. The bill would transfer the governance, control, and oversight of VMI to the Board of Visitors of Virginia State University, a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) with no Senior Military College structure or experience and over 180 miles from the VMI Post.

What has changed: HB1374 was amended (Tab A) to remove the language regarding dissolving the VMI Board of Visitors and transferring its governance. The amended **HB1374** retains the VMI BOV rather than dissolving it, but reshapes the board's composition. The BOV is composed of 16 members appointed by the governor. **HB1374** proposes that **no more than 8** board members will be VMI alumni - it can be none. At least 6 will be non-alumni Virginia residents. **HB1374** also stipulates that no BOV member as of June 30, 2026, will be removed from the BOV to comply with this act, but allows their removal **for any other reason**, such as the results of the partisan study conducted under HB1377 (**below**).

Although amended, HB1374 still restructures the Board of Visitors in ways that risk politicizing long-term governance. By capping alumni representation at *no more than* eight (and potentially none) and altering appointment pathways to reduce the number of Virginia residents on the Board significantly, the bill incrementally shifts institutional control away from those steeped in VMI's military mission and toward members who may lack institutional continuity in officer development traditions. Over time, this engineered restructuring could realign VMI's strategic direction away from its core mission of disciplined officer preparation. In January, Governor Spanberger appointed 5 new BOV members after the Democratic Controlled committee blocked the normal appointments of former Gov. Youngkin over the past year so as to deliberately create the vacancies. She will appoint 6 new BOV members to serve effective July 1, making the 30 June removal clause meaningless.

Critically, this change does not address any demonstrated readiness deficiency, ROTC compliance failure, or commissioning shortfall. Instead, it introduces structural instability into the leadership of a federally recognized commissioning institution — creating uncertainty in military training standards, ROTC integration, and command culture continuity that were hallmarks of VMI for over 187 years. It is also out of line with peer Senior Military Colleges such as The Citadel (attachment 2)

HB1377 establishes the Virginia Military Institute Advisory Task Force. Its original mission was to determine if VMI should remain a state-sponsored institution. The Task Force was to evaluate VMI's costs, academic rigor, student welfare, and actions regarding past racial issues, and to submit a recommendation by November 30, 2026.

What has changed: HB1377 (Tab B) was amended to remove the language regarding VMI's state funding up front in the bill; it rebranded and concealed that language throughout the remainder of the bill, resulting in the Task Force's efforts becoming a replacement study for VMI's role in supporting the national defense and readiness. The goal of the bill is now to establish a task force to study and examine VMI's educational

and institutional practices and return on investment for both Virginia and the United States. The task force will evaluate academic quality, military training, governance, diversity efforts, quality of graduates from initial officer and advanced training, performance in the Armed Force, and “any other questions or concerns about VMI that may arise.” It will also look at how VMI has responded to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia’s 2021 flawed report on the institution. The task force will complete its meetings by November 30, 2026, and report back to the General Assembly and the governor by the start of the 2027 legislative session, recommending “any required legislation or budgetary changes.”

While the amendment removed explicit up-front language questioning VMI’s continued state-supported status, HB1377 still establishes an external task force empowered to scrutinize military training, governance, and institutional culture. This sustained legislative review signals that VMI’s military model remains politically contingent rather than mission-driven.

Such uncertainty undermines recruiting, donor confidence, faculty retention, and cadet morale. More importantly, it creates the perception within the Armed Forces that VMI’s military training framework is subject to ongoing political restructuring. No evidence has been presented that VMI’s commissioning output, academic rigor, or ROTC compliance has failed federal standards. Yet, this legislation implies systemic deficiency and risks eroding the Institute’s credibility within the Department of Defense.

HB1377 was sent to the Virginia Senate Feb. 6, 2026, and now awaits consideration.

While the current VMI Superintendent publicly stated “VMI has nothing to hide,” and we “do not fear a fair and balanced investigation,” we believe there is evidence that VMI is being pressured into agreement with the Bills under funding and other threats. Any inquiry conducted under the complete control of one party who, in HB1377, accuses VMI and former cadets of “committing treason against the United States Government” and at least one famous VMI alumnus and soldier of being a “traitor” cannot, by these pre-determinations, be objective.

In fact, under this pressure, VMI is already planning changes that appear to violate Executive Orders 14151 and 14173 further, the Secretary of Defense Memorandum: Restoring America’s Fighting Force, and *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*, 600 U.S. 181 (2023), its current Board stated it had not made changes to its DEI-based *Inclusive Excellence* program and the associated DEI principles it adopted for the school and re-affirmed in 2021. Concessions to current pressure include a return to the DEI progress reporting in response to the flawed 2021 study and changes to VMI’s storied history and culture. Changes to memorials, building names, and more are already in the works.

As one of only six Senior Military Colleges recognized by Congress, VMI produces officers at a per-capita rate that materially contributes to national defense. At a time when the Armed Forces face recruiting shortfalls, rising global threats, and increased

operational tempo, the Nation cannot afford instability within one of its primary officer-producing institutions.

Our concern is not partisan — it is structural and strategic. When a state legislature incrementally reshapes the governance and military character of a federally recognized Senior Military College, it risks transforming a time-tested officer development institution into a politically managed university model. Such a transformation would not enhance readiness or academic rigor; rather, it risks diluting the military discipline and command culture that distinguish VMI and make it valuable to the Nation.

Under 10 U.S.C. § 2111a, Congress expressly recognizes and supports Senior Military Colleges because of their importance to national defense. Legislative actions that materially alter governance structures or subject military training models to recurring political review risk interfering with the federal purposes underlying that statute.

The study establishes a dangerous precedent by empowering a partisan group from a State legislature to determine the values and standards of vital officer pipelines.

We believe that our Commander-in-Chief, our Secretary of War, and members of Congress should have a say on any state legislation that relates to VMI.

Additional issues with authoritative references are reported at the following links, and we respectfully highlight the Alumni Free Speech Alliance Resolution from a bipartisan group covering over 26 Colleges and Universities across the nation.

- ***Alumni Free Speech Appliance Calls for Federal Representation to Protect VMI***
<https://cadetnewspaper.com/news/1063/national-organization-calls-for-federal-representation-to-protect-vmi/>
- ***HB1377 – Final VMI Task Force Bill Advances***
<https://cadetnewspaper.com/news/1050/hb1377-final-vmi-task-force-bill-advances/>
- ***House Committee Narrows HB1374 — But the Bill Still Reshapes VMI's future.***
<https://cadetnewspaper.com/news/1065/house-committee-narrows-hb1374-but-the-bill-still-reshapes-vmis-future/>
- ***OPED: When a State Legislature Challenges the War Department***
<https://cadetnewspaper.com/news/1064/oped-when-a-state-legislature-challenges-the-war-department/>

AFSA VMI POC: Colonel Bob Morris, USA, Retired, VMI '79, 757-869-6770,
BobM@caihq.com

2026 SESSION

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HOUSE BILL NO. 1377
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the House Committee on Rules)
(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Helmer)
House Amendments in [] - February 4, 2026

A BILL to establish a task force to [determine whether examine higher education at] Virginia Military Institute [should continue to be a state sponsored institution of higher education] ; report.

Whereas, Virginia Military Institute (VMI), founded in 1839, is a public, four-year military college offering undergraduate bachelor of arts and bachelor of science degrees and the choice of 14 majors and 28 minor academic concentrations in engineering, sciences, and the humanities; and

Whereas, the mission of VMI is to produce educated and honorable men and women who are prepared for the varied work of civil life, are imbued with a love of learning, are confident in the functions and attitudes of leadership, possess a high sense of public service, are advocates of American democracy and the free enterprise system, and are ready as citizen-soldiers to defend the United States in times of national peril; and

Whereas, VMI has produced a number of graduates of character who have contributed to the Commonwealth and to the United States, including Army General George C. Marshall and civil rights martyr Jonathan M. Daniels; over 200 alumni officers have reached the rank of Flag Officer in the United States Armed Forces, and over 300 alumni have given their lives in military service to the United States; and

Whereas, notwithstanding its contributions to the Commonwealth and the United States, VMI has celebrated for over a century its role in committing treason against the United States government as a key instrument of Confederate forces in the Commonwealth, including celebrating the traitor Stonewall Jackson as a martyr, and annually celebrating the role of the VMI Corps of Cadets in violently attacking forces of the United States government at New Market in an effort to preserve the institution of slavery; and

~~[Whereas, the Commission to Survey the Educational System of Virginia in 1928 reported to the General Assembly that there was no educational service rendered at VMI that was not already duplicated or that could not be more advantageously duplicated at a lesser cost to the Commonwealth by other tax supported institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth; the Commission further recommended that taxpayer-provided assistance to VMI cease and that VMI be operated as a private institution; and]~~

Whereas, as of 2020, VMI provided statistical figures for the 2024 graduating class that included a matriculation rate of 18 percent of students who had an alumni relation or legacy classification; and

Whereas, a 2021 report commissioned by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) found (i) that racial and gender disparities in how cadets are treated persist at VMI; (ii) that VMI's culture creates and reinforces barriers to addressing such disparities; and (iii) that as a state-funded institution, VMI must be held accountable to taxpayers and the General Assembly; and

Whereas, VMI's Board of Visitors ended the tenure of Retired Major General Cedric Wins after the shortest tenure as Superintendent in VMI history following repeated efforts by the Retired Major General to end racism, discrimination, and sexual assault and harassment at VMI; further, the decision to not renew Retired Major General Cedric Wins' contract took place in the wake of efforts by the Administration of United States President Donald Trump to remove female and non-white Flag Officers, which efforts were deemed reckless by five former U.S. Secretaries of Defense; and

Whereas, as a state-sponsored public institution of higher education, VMI receives significant funding as provided by the General Assembly in the general appropriation act, and should therefore be proactive in evolving its academic programs and institutional priorities to provide the Commonwealth with a return on its public investment of funds by developing a thoughtful, well-informed, culturally competent, and skilled workforce capable of leadership, innovation, and excellence in emerging and advanced fields critical to the Commonwealth's economic and social well-being; now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. § 1. That a task force is hereby established to determine [whether VMI should continue to be a state-sponsored institution of higher education] VMI's responsiveness to the recommendations of the 2021 SCHEV report. The Task Force shall further explore other changes that should be made at VMI to distance itself from the Lost Cause and foster an inclusive environment as well as any other matter raised by the Task Force] .

§ 2. The task force shall consist of four members of the House of Delegates, at least one of whom shall have served in the military, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; two members of the Senate of Virginia, at least one of whom shall have served in the military, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; a representative of SCHEV; and four civilian members, two of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates, and two of whom shall be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules, and who shall collectively have subject matter expertise or experience in workforce development, oversight of student welfare at public institutions of higher education, and educational instruction at public

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60 institutions of higher education.

61 § 3. In conducting its work, the task force shall:

62 1. [~~Reevaluate the findings of the Commission to Survey the Educational System of Virginia in 1928 to (i)~~
63 ~~determine whether educational services rendered by VMI are duplicated at other institutions of higher~~
64 ~~education in the Commonwealth and (ii) evaluate the relative cost to the Commonwealth and taxpayers of~~
65 ~~those courses of study at VMI and as compared to other public and private institutions of higher education in~~
66 ~~the Commonwealth.~~

67 ~~2.] Determine (i) the extent by which VMI provides leaders to the Armed Forces of the United States at~~
68 ~~an advantageous cost or with advanced training and capability as compared to other institutions of higher~~
69 ~~education or other commissioning sources in the Commonwealth [~~and~~ ;] (ii) the feasibility of expanding~~
70 ~~programs at other public institutions of higher education to replace the role of VMI in providing taxpayer-~~
71 ~~funded commissioned officers to the Armed Forces of the United States; [~~and~~ (iii) the quality of graduates as~~
72 ~~reflected in graduation rates or other data from initial officer and advanced training and performance in the~~
73 ~~Armed Forces;]~~

74 [~~3~~ 2]. Evaluate (i) the rigor of current academic curriculum offerings at VMI as compared to other
75 public institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth, (ii) the extent at which current academic
76 offerings at VMI meet the defense and non-defense needs of the Commonwealth, and (iii) whether additional
77 academic program offerings should be approved by SCHEV and provided to students enrolled at VMI, should
78 VMI remain a state-funded institution of higher education;

79 [~~4~~ 3]. Thoroughly audit any actions taken by the leadership of VMI following the release of the 2021
80 special investigative report to SCHEV to determine if VMI (i) has initiated any substantial changes to its
81 policies, values, and preventative, investigative, and disciplinary procedures to reduce acts within its student
82 body that could be perceived or classified as racist, sexist, or misogynistic or as an act of sexual harassment
83 or sexual assault; (ii) has actively made efforts to distance itself from the lost-cause narrative or other
84 celebrations or promotions of the Confederacy in the American Civil War; [~~and~~ (iii) has been able to
85 successfully make progress on these efforts and remaining gaps to achieve progress; and (iv)] possesses the
86 capacity as an institution to end celebration of the Confederacy;

87 [~~5~~ 4]. Analyze admissions data for each year of incoming students beginning in 2021 to determine if
88 VMI has been successful in recruiting and admitting a more diverse body of students and if admissions
89 priorities have shifted away from a focus on students with legacy status or other alumni relatives; and

90 [~~6~~ 5]. Based on these analyses and evaluations, provide a recommendation as to [~~whether VMI should~~
91 ~~continue to receive public funds~~ any actions that should be undertaken by VMI] as a state-sponsored
92 institution of higher education [~~and include any additional recommendations for actions VMI should take in~~
93 ~~the future to address any remaining concerns, should it remain a state-sponsored public institution~~ as well as
94 any required legislation or budgetary changes to ensure VMI meets the higher education needs of the
95 Commonwealth] .

96 § 4. The task force shall be authorized to explore any other questions or concerns about VMI that may
97 arise and shall include any such questions or concerns, and the resulting investigations, analyses, and
98 recommendations resulting from or addressing such questions or concerns, in its final report.

99 § 5. Unless otherwise prohibited by law, [~~current and former members of~~] the Board of Visitors of VMI
100 and all [~~current and former~~] leadership, administrators, and educators of VMI shall make available all
101 documents or records [~~, including working papers or related unofficial communications,] requested by the
102 task force. The task force shall be permitted to conduct interviews of enrolled [~~or former~~] students and any
103 individuals [~~currently or previously~~] providing education instruction, serving in an administrative role,
104 serving in a leadership role, serving on the Board of Visitors for VMI, or any individual otherwise employed
105 at VMI, and such individual shall make himself available for interview upon request of the task force.~~

106 § 6. The task force shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2026, and shall submit to the Governor
107 and the General Assembly an executive summary and a report of its findings and recommendations for
108 publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as
109 provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative
110 documents and reports no later than the first day of the 2027 Regular Session of the General Assembly and
111 shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.



OFFERED FOR CONSIDERATION

2/11/2026

1 HOUSE BILL NO. 1374
2 AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
3 (Proposed by the House Committee on Education
4 on _____)
5 (Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Feggans)

6 *A BILL to amend and reenact § 23.1-2501 of the Code of Virginia, relating to Virginia Military Institute:*
7 *board of visitors; membership.*

8 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

9 **1. That § 23.1-2501 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

10 **§ 23.1-2501. Membership.**

11 *A. As used in this section:*

12 *"Senior rank" means a rank at or above the grade of (i) E-7 for enlisted personnel or (ii) O-5 for*
13 *commissioned officers.*

14 *"United States military experience" means active duty, reserve, or National Guard service at a senior*
15 *rank in any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States from which the individual retired or was*
16 *honorably discharged.*

17 *B. The board shall consist of 17 members, of whom 16 shall be appointed by the Governor and one shall*
18 *be the Adjutant General, who shall serve as an ex officio nonvoting member. Of the 16 members appointed*
19 *by the Governor, (i) ~~no more than eight~~ shall be alumni of the Institute, ~~of whom eight shall be residents~~*
20 *of the Commonwealth and ~~four shall be nonresidents,~~ and (ii) ~~four~~ at least six shall be nonalumni residents of*
21 *the Commonwealth, and (iii) at least five shall have United States military experience.*

22 ~~B- C.~~ *The alumni association of the Institute may submit to the Governor a list of not more than three*
23 *nominees for each vacancy on the board, whether the vacancy occurs by expiration of a term or otherwise.*
24 *The Governor may appoint a member from the list of nominees.*

25 **2. That the provisions of this act shall apply to all members appointed to the Virginia Military Institute**
26 **Board of Visitors on or after July 1, 2026, and all such appointments shall be made in conformance**
27 **with the requirements set forth in § 23.1-2501 of the Code of Virginia, as amended by this act.**
28 **However, no member who serves on the Virginia Military Institute Board of Visitors as of June 30,**
29 **2026, shall be removed from such Board solely to effectuate compliance with the requirements of this**
30 **act.**



RESOLUTION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ALUMNI FREE SPEECH ALLIANCE (AFSA)

Calling for Immediate Federal Intervention to Address State Encroachment, Governance Failures, and Command Integrity Risks at the Virginia Military Institute and future risks to all Virginia State Colleges and Universities.

WHEREAS, the Alumni Free Speech Alliance (AFSA) is a non-partisan, non-profit organization committed to safeguarding constitutional norms in higher education and promoting transparent, impartial, and lawful governance by boards of visitors and trustees, particularly where public institutions intersect with federal authority;

WHEREAS, the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) is a federally recognized Senior Military College (SMC) whose core function includes the education and commissioning of officers for the United States Armed Forces pursuant to Title 10 of the United States Code, placing it within the national defense architecture rather than ordinary civilian higher education;

WHEREAS, under the Constitution and federal law, primary authority over the standards, readiness, and institutional integrity of officer-producing military programs resides with the Department of War, and not with state legislatures acting unilaterally to restructure military governance;

WHEREAS, Article VI of the United States Constitution establishes the Supremacy Clause, under which federal authority over the raising and support of Armies, the commissioning of officers, and national defense functions may not be impaired by unilateral state restructuring of institutions integral to the federal military officer pipeline;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Title 10 of the United States Code, Senior Military Colleges occupy a federally recognized role in the training and commissioning of officers for the Armed Forces of the United States, creating federal reliance interests in the institutional stability, governance integrity, and commissioning capacity of such institutions;

WHEREAS, House Bill 1377 directs evaluation of whether VMI should continue as a state-sponsored institution and whether its officer-producing role could be replaced by other institutions, thereby directly implicating federal military readiness, commissioning pipelines, and national defense planning;

WHEREAS, VMI receives federal funding and participates in federal programs, including but not limited to Title IV student financial aid, Reserve Officers' Training Corps agreements, and

potentially Department of War and other federal grants, creating contractual and regulatory relationships subject to federal oversight;

WHEREAS, legislative actions compelling institutional disclosures, audits, and restructuring may raise concerns under the First Amendment, the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and 42 U.S.C. §1983;

WHEREAS, any restructuring that materially affects the commissioning, governance, or operational independence of a federally recognized Senior Military College may trigger federal preemption, contract impairment concerns, and national security review obligations;

WHEREAS, as amended by the House Committee, House Bill 1374 no longer dissolves the Virginia Military Institute's independent Board of Visitors but instead restructures its statutory composition by eliminating the long-standing alumni majority, capping alumni representation at no more than eight of the 16 appointed members, and removing the requirement that a majority of alumni members be residents of the Commonwealth, thereby materially reducing guaranteed representation of Virginia-based alumni who understand and have direct knowledge of the VMI experience, it's ethos and founding principles essential to the effective governance of the Institute its continued mission producing citizen-soldiers in;

WHEREAS, as amended by the House Committee, House Bill 1374 deliberately reduces the requirement for VMI Board members to be citizens of Virginia and could result in no VMI alumni appointed to the board;

WHEREAS, the amended bill further requires that at least six members be non-alumni Virginia residents and at least five members possess senior-rank United States military experience, shifting the statutory balance of the Board away from alumni-led institutional stewardship toward a composition more directly shaped by gubernatorial discretion and external appointment criteria and ideology;

WHEREAS, although the amended bill preserves VMI's separate legal status and Board of Visitors, the restructuring of board composition represents a significant alteration of the Institute's historic governance framework, raising concerns about diminished alumni influence, reduced continuity of Commonwealth-based representation, and potential long-term impacts on institutional stability, tradition, and strategic direction from ideological and political agendas that may not be in the best interest of The Institute's production of citizen-soldiers and the nation;

WHEREAS, House Bill 1374 contains no requirement for consultation or coordination with the Department of War, the military departments, or federal commissioning authorities, despite its direct impact on an officer-producing institution relied upon by the Armed Forces;

WHEREAS, House Bill 1377 simultaneously advances a narrative that the removal of Superintendent Maj. Gen. Cedric Wins followed his efforts to address institutional misconduct, using that narrative to justify extraordinary legislative intervention into VMI's governance;

WHEREAS, House Bill 1377 conspicuously excludes any inquiry into whether unconstitutional retaliation, suppression of protected expression, or governance failures by VMI leadership or governing authorities materially contributed to the leadership dispute it cites;

WHEREAS, the combined effect of HB1377 and HB1374 is to assert sweeping state control over a federally significant military institution while selectively insulating constitutional compliance and retaliatory governance practices from examination;

WHEREAS, such selective legislative framing undermines the credibility of state oversight, threatens federal reliance interests, and necessitates independent federal review;

WHEREAS, the Department of Justice Office for Civil Rights and the Department of Education Office for Civil Rights possess statutory authority to investigate whether VMI's policies and practices violate federal civil rights obligations applicable to public institutions;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Alumni Free Speech Alliance:

1. **Affirms** that state legislation restructuring or subordinating a federally recognized Senior Military College must yield to federal authority and may not impair the Department of War's prerogatives over military standards, command integrity, and officer development.
2. **Finds** that HB1374 represents an unprecedented and impermissible intrusion into the governance of an officer-producing institution upon which the United States Armed Forces rely.
3. **Determines** that the leadership disputes cited in HB1377 cannot be responsibly evaluated without examining whether unconstitutional retaliation and governance failures were contributing factors deliberately excluded from state review.
4. **Calls upon** the Secretary of War to immediately assess whether HB1374 and related legislative actions constitute encroachments on federal military authority or threaten the integrity of VMI's federal mission as a Senior Military College.
5. **Requests** that the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Civil Rights investigate whether retaliatory or unconstitutional governance practices at VMI have violated federally protected rights.
6. **Requests** that the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights evaluate whether VMI remains in compliance with federal civil rights obligations applicable to public institutions of higher education receiving federal support.
7. **Reaffirms** that boards of visitors and institutional leaders at military colleges bear a heightened duty to uphold constitutional norms and federal authority, and that failures of governance may not be shielded through selective legislative narratives.
8. **Calls upon** the United States Department of War to review whether HB1374, HB1377, or related legislative actions materially impair VMI's status as a Senior Military College under Title 10 or disrupt federal officer procurement and commissioning pipelines;
9. **Requests** that the United States Department of Justice evaluate whether the legislative measures and related governance actions raise concerns under the Supremacy Clause, the

First Amendment, the Equal Protection Clause, Title VI, Title IX, or other federal civil rights statutes;

10. **Requests** that the appropriate federal agencies review all existing federal funding streams, ROTC agreements, research grants, training contracts, and regulatory relationships with VMI to determine whether pending state legislative actions impair federal contractual rights or conditions of funding;
11. **Calls** for a formal federal assessment of whether replacement of VMI's commissioning role, as contemplated in HB1377, would compromise national defense readiness or undermine Congress's Article I authority to raise and support the Armed Forces;
12. **Directs** AFSA leadership to transmit this Resolution to the Department of War, the Department of Justice, the Department of Education, the Governor of Virginia, the Virginia General Assembly, and the VMI Board of Visitors, and to make it publicly available in furtherance of AFSA's mission.

Adopted by the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Alumni Free Speech Alliance on February 11, 2026.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Neale

Thomas M. Neale
Chair
The Alumni Free Speech Alliance
<https://joinafsa.org/>