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March 6, 2020

The Honorable Ralph Northam
Governor of Virginia
Richmond, VA 23218

RE: Virginia Values Act, SB 868

Dear Governor Northam,

As a Virginian and Co-Director of State Policy for Family Equality, a national organization that advocates for LGBTQ families and those who wish to form them, I urge you to sign the bipartisan Virginia Values Act (SB 868) into law as a clean bill without amendments.

Family Equality is a community of parents, children, grandparents, and grandchildren that reaches across the nation, including Virginia, and we have raised our voice in support of fairness for all families for forty years. We strongly support this bill, as passed, because it provides critical protections for the over 300,000 LGBTQ Virginians who face harassment at work, in housing, in credit, and in public places. This bill received strong support from leaders of both parties and leading Virginia businesses, as is, and for good reason – our Commonwealth is at its strongest when all Virginians are free to work hard, earn a decent living, have a place to live, and go about our daily activities without fear of discrimination because of who we are or whom we love. As the Trump Administration has turned its back on the LGBTQ community, it is more important than ever for comprehensive state protections that fully ban discrimination once and for all in Virginia.

Thank you for being an ally to the LGBTQ community and showing strong leadership on LGBTQ equality thus far. This is an historic legislative session for Virginia, and we overwhelmingly elected a pro-equality legislature in the Commonwealth to pass reforms such as this one. As this legislation would make Virginia the first state in the South to protect LGBTQ people from discrimination, we urge you to set the highest standard possible for LGBTQ equality and pass this bill without any amendments that would undercut the efficacy of its vital civil rights protections.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Rohmiller".

Mary Rohmiller, Esq.
Co-Director of State Policy
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