

City of Falls Church Charter Amendment (01-12-2023)

HB1697

City of Falls Church is committed to increasing diversity and inclusion in all our policies and programs. This includes participation in the citizen boards and commissions. To achieve this goal an amendment to the City's Charter, Section 4.14 is required. Council approved, by unanimous vote, a resolution requesting this amendment. The City respectfully requests the CC&T Committee report out this amendment. We appreciate the positive consideration by the CC&T Charter subcommittee.

To meet the status of "qualified voter" set in the City Charter, board and commission members are not required to be registered to vote, but must meet the requirements to do so. In particular, they must be a citizen of the United States. There are many citizens in the community who are affected by the decisions of the City's advisory boards and commissions (i.e. transportation, environment, housing, human services, urban forestry and arts) and there is consensus among the community that those persons should be able to participate equally in the commission system.

Due to our proximity to Washington DC federal government agencies, universities and international businesses many residents are state department employees and military personnel as well as targeted business employees and graduate students in the US on VISAs but do not change primary permanent residence to the City. Therefore, these residents do not have City of Falls Church voter qualifications but have invaluable knowledge and expertise to impart.

The proposed language would remove "qualified voter of the city," while retaining 18-years of age and residency within the city.

If you have questions please contact Cindy Mester at cmester@fallschurchva.gov or 571-641-5586 (711 TTY)