



**Candidate Questionnaire 2017**

**Instructions:** Please return questionnaire via email, fax, or mail:

Email: JamesParrish@EVAdvocates.org

Fax: 804-643-1554

Mail: 530 East Main St Suite 600  
Richmond, VA 23219

**Purpose:** Thank you for taking the time to fill out the Equality Virginia Advocates candidate questionnaire. The questionnaire will help our supporters, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community, and its allies know where candidates stand on issues important to them. Your returned questionnaire will also serve as part of the evaluation process for EVPAC's Board in regards to endorsements.

**Publication:** Your answers are "on the record" and will be circulated to all members of the EVPAC Board, and may be shared outside the organization and published to the EV Advocates website.

**Candidate and Campaign Information:**

Name: Alfonso Lopez

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Phone: (571) 243-8717

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Campaign Website: www.AlfonsoLopez.org

Campaign Manager: Paul Berry & Jason Stanford

Campaign Manager Phone/Email: (571) 336-2147/info@AlfonsoLopez.org

**Race and Election Information**

Office Sought: State Delegate - 49th District

City, County or District of office:

Select One:  Challenger  Incumbent  Open Seat

## Positions

- A. Equality Virginia asks all General Assembly members to sign a statement that they do not discriminate in their office based on sexual orientation or gender identity. If you are an incumbent, have you signed EV's nondiscrimination statement [check here]? If you are not, will you sign the nondiscrimination statement if elected? Please include other actions you and your office take to create an open and inclusive workplace for gay and transgender employees.**

Yes. I have signed EV's nondiscrimination statement and have worked for many years to ensure that LGBTQ Virginians receive the same protection in all aspects of their lives.

- B. Please describe your level of support for the following issues that are legislative priorities for Equality Virginia.**

- 1. Protecting public employees from discrimination based on their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.**

See Attached Document.

- 2. Protecting LGBT Virginians from discrimination in housing.**

See Attached Document.

- 3. Protecting LGBT Virginians from discrimination in public accommodations.**

See Attached Document.

- C. Please describe your level of support for the following issues that are important to EV and Virginia's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and allied community.**

- 1. Banning "conversion therapy" practiced on LGBT minors.**

See Attached Document.

- 2. Protecting all LGBT Virginians from discrimination in the workplace.**

See Attached Document.

**3. Removing the Marshall Newman Marriage Amendment from the Virginia Constitution.**

See Attached Document.

**4. Support for policies in Virginia's public schools protecting students, teachers, and staff from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.**

See Attached Document.

**5. Opposition to religious exemption bills that exceed the constitutional protection of freedom of religion and provide a license to discriminate against LGBT people.**

See Attached Document.

**D. Provide any additional information regarding your involvement in or support for the LGBT community.**

See Attached Document.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. If you have any questions, please contact Equality Virginia Advocates at 804-643-4816 or [JamesParrish@EVAadvocates.org](mailto:JamesParrish@EVAadvocates.org).

**B. Please describe your level of support for the following issues that are legislative priorities for Equality Virginia.**

**1. Protecting public employees from discrimination based on their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.**

Discrimination of any kind is wrong. I will not tolerate it in any circumstance or at any time.

While I commend Governor McAuliffe's efforts to prevent employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, I will continue working to make non-discrimination in state hiring the law of the Commonwealth. The Governor should not be given the ability/option to discriminate against an entire group of citizens.

If we want to keep Virginia a strong state for business, we need to bring Virginia's anti-discrimination employment policy into line with the vast majority of Fortune 500 companies. If businesses see that we discriminate against an entire group of our citizens, they will be less likely to relocate or open a business in Virginia. North Carolina should pose a cautionary tale.

As a member of the General Assembly, I have co-sponsored and fought for legislation to protect state employees from employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. While these bills were unsuccessful, I will continue to fight for their passage until they become the law of the Commonwealth.

**2. Protecting LGBT Virginians from discrimination in housing.**

Throughout my tenure as a member of the House of Delegates, I have been a strong advocate for banning discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, housing, and in other areas of our society. I have also sponsored legislation to include sexual orientation and gender identity in Virginia's fair housing law. I have sponsored and co-sponsored these types of bills for the past few years and will continue to do so until they become the law of the Commonwealth.

**3. Protecting LGBT Virginians from discrimination in public accommodations.**

I also support the protection of LGBTQ Virginians from discrimination in any and all public accommodations. Ugly types of legislation that would mask discrimination and bigotry have no place in Virginia. Moreover, they serve only to harm our Commonwealth's economy and give the Commonwealth a bad name.

On a related note, it was just announced that the U.S. Supreme Court will be taking up the "Bakery Case". I am very hopeful that the Court will address this issue once and for all – and that their decision will – by extension – make it easier for the General Assembly to pass proper protections in the Virginia Code.

**C. Please describe your level of support for the following issues that are important to EV and Virginia's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and allied community.**

**1. Banning "conversion therapy" practiced on LGBT minors.**

I have consistently been a strong supporter of this legislation. These programs do nothing but shame and emotionally scar LGBTQ Virginians. They have no basis in science, or reality for that matter, and should be banned from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**2. Protecting all LGBT Virginians from discrimination in the workplace.**

As I mentioned above, I have been a strong supporter of protecting all LGBTQ Virginians from discrimination. As a co-sponsor of this legislation, I will continue to advocate for it until it becomes the law of the Commonwealth.

**3. Removing the Marshall Newman Marriage Amendment from the Virginia Constitution.**

I am proud to have co-sponsored legislation to repeal the Marshall-Newman Amendment and will continue to do so until it is gone from Virginia's constitution.

*I am proud to have fought the passage of the Marshall-Newman amendment in 2006 and will continue to fight for the repeal of the Marshall-Newman amendment. The push to pass the Marshall-Newman Amendment was a gratuitous and ugly effort. I am confident that it will eventually be repealed.*

Although the Supreme Court's ruling brought marriage equality to Virginia, discrimination against the LGBTQ community is still written into the Constitution of Virginia. As a supporter of marriage equality here in Virginia and everywhere, we need to repeal the Marshall-Newman Amendment in order to make everyone feel welcome in Virginia. Everyone should feel encouraged to be a part of what makes Virginia a great place to live, work and raise a family.

**4. Support for policies in Virginia's public schools protecting students, teachers, and staff from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.**

I support policies in Virginia's public schools that protect students, teachers, and staff from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Along those lines, there is still a lot more work to be done in order to protect LGBT students from bullying. According to a recent study by the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network, 85% of LGBT students reported some form of harassment based on sexual orientation and almost two-thirds of LGBT students did not feel safe at school. Schools should be a safe and nurturing environment where students are free to learn. Many LGBT students who report

harassment miss class and have a lower grade point average than those LGBT students who are not harassed. I support an explicit anti-bullying policy for sexual orientation and gender identity, which would provide recourse and protection for students so they can focus on getting a good education.

I support the extraordinary and positive "It Gets Better Project" – which provides support for LGBT students who are harassed. I also support the Trevor Project, which provides mental health support for LGBT youth with a nationwide 24-hour crisis intervention lifeline, online community, and advocacy/education programs.

Every student deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. So many students have suffered academically, emotionally and physically because of harassment. I applaud Arlington and Fairfax counties for recently codifying protection from discrimination based on gender identity.

**5. Opposition to religious exemption bills that exceed the constitutional protection of freedom of religion and provide a license to discriminate against LGBT people.**

I will strongly oppose any and all of these kinds of ugly, divisive, and wrongheaded pieces of legislation. In fact, in my position as the House Democratic Whip and as a Member, I regularly stand up and speak out in opposition to these types of bills.

**D. Provide any additional information regarding your involvement in or support for the LGBT community.**

I am proud to have received a 100% score for my voting record from Equality Virginia for every year that I have been a member of the House of Delegates.

In 2006, I helped fight efforts in the General Assembly to pass the Marshall-Newman Amendment (which curbed marriage equality in Virginia) as a Member of the Statewide Board of the Commonwealth Coalition. I also spent countless Sundays at the Columbia Pike Farmer's Market with Charley Conrad urging people to vote against the Marshall-Newman Amendment.

I also led the three-year effort to amend the Democratic Party of Virginia (DPVA) by-laws and create a pathway for new groups to be represented on the State Central Steering Committee. Working with Charley Conrad and Frank Leone, we were successful in getting the bylaws updated. As a result, representatives from the LGBTQ, Military & Veterans' Family, and Latino Caucuses were made full members of the DPVA Steering Committee.

I have attended and supported Equality Virginia events in Northern Virginia. Along with the other members of the Arlington General Assembly Delegation, I have regularly been a sponsor of Equality Virginia's annual Commonwealth Dinner.

At Vassar College I attended meetings of the LGBTQ community calling for the creation of Blegen House – a campus life resource center for the LGBTQ communities. Blegen House was eventually created in 1993.