Written by **Raven Clabough** on January 21, 2022

Virginia Governor Appoints New Diversity Officer With Pro-life Role

Virginia's new Republican governor, Glenn Youngkin, expanded the focus of his chief diversity, opportunity, and inclusion officer to include restoring equal economic opportunity for all citizens, creating a climate that allows for diversity of thought, restoring constitutionally protected rights in the Commonwealth, and fighting for the unborn.

In Youngkin's 10th executive order, the governor appointed vice president of the Heritage Foundation's Feulner Institute, Angela Sailor, as replacement director of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), after dismissing the former chief, Janice Underwood, and her four staffers. He also elevated the role to a Cabinet-level position under the new title of "Commonwealth Chief Diversity, Opportunity, & Inclusion Officer."

Governor Glenn Youngkin (AP Images)

Duties for this position include promoting ideas, policies, and practices to "expand entrepreneurship and economic opportunities for disadvantaged Virginians," including those with disabilities; facilitating a community that brings different faiths together; promoting "free speech and civil discourse in civic life, including viewpoint diversity in higher education in coordination with the Secretary of Education"; being "responsive to the rights of parents in educational and curricular decision making" and ensuring "that the teaching of Virginia's and the United States' history is honest, objective, and complete...in coordination with the Secretary of Education"; promoting "ideas, policies, and practices to eliminate disparities in pre-natal care"; and serving as an "ambassador for unborn children."

"Angela Sailor's experience in government, nonprofits and the private sector will guide us as we ensure that the government is working for all Virginians across our diverse Commonwealth, especially when it comes to economic opportunity for all Virginians," Youngkin said in a press release announcing Sailor's appointment.

According to the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion was created in 2019 in response to a scandal involving Governor Ralph Northam wearing blackface. In an effort to save face (no pun intended), Northam established the office and pledged to spend the rest of his time in office fighting racial injustice.

In naming Janice Underwood to the role of director, Northam said at the time he was committed to making Virginia more "equitable and inclusive." He tasked Underwood with implementing a "measurable, strategic plan to address systemic inequities."

But Sailor's new title, as it will be referenced in Youngkin's Cabinet, replaces "equity" with "opportunity," and Youngkin has stated that he would back legislation to legally change the title of the office. The name change is indicative of the marked differences between Northam's left-leaning agenda and Youngkin's. Conservatives have historically favored policies that create equal opportunities for all, without placing emphasis on identity politics.

Sailor has criticized the replacement of "opportunity" with "equity," which she said is a "characteristic" of Critical Race Theory that seeks to achieve the "impossible goal" of guaranteed equal outcomes, which "will inevitably result in discriminatory practices," the Daily Signal reported.

Sailor has been an outspoken opponent of critical race theory, which she referred to during a January Heritage Foundation panel as a "complete rejection of the best ideas of the American founding" and "dangerous philosophical poisoning in the bloodstream."

"No one would argue that children shouldn't be thoroughly taught about the evils of racism, slavery, and segregation that happened in this country," she wrote in July in a piece titled "Schools Hiding Behind Diversity and Inclusion Rhetoric to Spew Critical Race Theory Vile." "But [Critical Race Theory] ignores the hundreds of thousands of lives that were sacrificed during the Civil War to end slavery, the long struggle of the civil rights movement to end segregation and win equality, and the reality that the nation has made great progress."

Predictably, the new title and refocused role for this position have invited criticism from the Left.

Virginia Delegate Elizabeth Guzman, D-Prince William, opined, "Exchanging the word 'equity' for 'opportunity' again dismisses the struggles of marginalized peoples who have not been granted the same opportunities due to systemic racism."

Guzman also criticized the "ambassador for unborn children" role, claiming that it "signals a forthcoming attack on reproductive health care."

The new "ambassador for unborn children" role is especially troublesome to Planned Parenthood Advocates of Virginia, who favored Governor Northam's advocacy of abortion and infanticide.

"Virginia now has a DEI officer encouraged to spout and defend anti-abortion legislation, some of the least inclusive and equitable policy on the books," the pro-abortion group responded on Twitter.

As noted by LifeNews, the pro-life ambassador role is not unprecedented, as South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem similarly created an unborn-child-advocate role in her administration almost immediately after taking office.

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