



December 14, 2025

Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Boulevard  
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chair Karantonis and Members of the Board,

I am writing to ask that you support Arlington County Civic Federation (ACCF) in its strong advocacy for legislation and actions to support equity in the Commonwealth for our Arlington voters. Additionally, we are asking you, our elected leaders, to support the recruitment of a task force to examine Arlington's form of government (FoG) as contemplated in your November meeting. ACCF stands ready to assist with this effort as we did a century ago.

First, the County Manager form of government is unique to Arlington, and our section of the Virginia Code does not grant Arlington voters and leaders the authority to determine the procedures of our governance already available to our peer jurisdictions across the Commonwealth. In order to correct this inequity, we need to focus on adoption of legislation such as that to be introduced by Delegate Patrick Hope (the successor to HD2768 from 2025). This bill will give Arlington the same authority to consider our government options as is enjoyed by other jurisdictions in Virginia. We do not support the idea that legislation like the Hope bill should be postponed until there is study and community consensus on potential changes to our FoG. We are no less capable of considering our options for governance than our neighbors and we should establish this as our baseline regardless of whether any changes are undertaken.

You as our leaders, and our voters need to be clear that our ability to evaluate our options is a two-step process. The authority from the Commonwealth to consider and enact options should be the first step as a commitment to advocacy for self-governance by the voters and our elected boards. What an appropriate action as we begin the celebration of 250 years of independence.

Second, with this commitment, we need a thoughtful approach to evaluating the current structure, the strengths and weaknesses, and potential areas for improvement. That is the purpose of a community study or task force. ACCF has adopted several resolutions that focus on advocacy for authentic public engagement that is designed for developing and sharing transparent, accessible, and relevant information, as well as discussions designed for collaborative problem-solving for complex issues.

Initiating this task force is a reasonable mechanism which can consider improvement in the structure of our FoG to enable more equitable and proportional representation of groups within the community. Concerns for equitable and proportional representation of groups within the community were behind the work of ACCF's TiGER committee on FoG, and we hope that the task force will take advantage of TiGER's findings and the substantial written record. **The TiGER report remains ACCF's position on FoG.** We are concerned that the scope of work for the task force should not be so broad as to inhibit focus on its primary task, examining our FoG and considering ways to improve it.

The Board report supporting this group describes a wide span of hoped-for members and groups which it hopes to represent. While we strongly favor recruiting a variety of points of view, a caution is that the time expected from this group as described will be very demanding. We noted in the TiGER report "Substantial time requirements for participation limit the number of people able to participate."

We are glad to see a robust community discussion on this topic since the last hearing. This effort can only be successful with widespread community participation. The concern that the task force will consume bandwidth which the Board needs to devote to the complicated state and local policy environment ignores the time frame in which intense Board involvement would be needed – it will actually be when the task force report is delivered rather than now. Once the task force is established, they should be able to work independently of Board involvement. The Board Report which accompanied the original resolution to establish the task force gave a clear definition of the problem, as do the substantial record of concern described by the CivFed TiGER, the League of Women Voters, and the NAACP.

In sum, we are asking that the Board communicate its backing for immediate passage of the Hope bill to our legislative delegation and pass a motion setting up the task force.

Thank you for your consideration.

*NJ Giacobbe, Jr.*

Nicholas J. Giacobbe, Jr.  
President

CC: Arlington Legislative Delegation to Richmond