

HOUSE BILL NO. 734

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the House Committee on General Laws

on _____)

(Patron Prior to Substitute--Delegate Bell)

A BILL to amend and reenact § 2.2-3706.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; disclosure of certain criminal records.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 2.2-3706.1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 2.2-3706.1. Disclosure of law-enforcement records; criminal incident information and certain criminal investigative files; limitations.

A. For purposes of this section:

"Criminal investigative files" means any documents and information, including complaints, court orders, memoranda, notes, diagrams, maps, photographs, correspondence, reports, witness statements, and evidence, relating to a criminal investigation or prosecution, other than criminal incident information subject to disclosure in accordance with subsection B.

"Immediate family" means the decedent's personal representative or, if no personal representative has qualified, the decedent's next of kin in order of intestate succession as set forth in § 64.2-200.

"Ongoing" refers to a case in which the prosecution has not been finally adjudicated, the investigation continues to gather evidence for a possible future criminal case, and such case would be jeopardized by the premature release of evidence.

B. All public bodies engaged in criminal law-enforcement activities shall provide ~~the following~~ records and information when requested in accordance with the provisions of this chapter:

~~1. Criminal~~ regarding criminal incident information relating to felony offenses contained in any report, notes, electronic communication, or other document, including filings through an incident-based reporting system, which shall include:

27 ~~a-1.~~ A general description of the criminal activity reported;

28 ~~b-2.~~ The date and time the alleged crime was committed;

29 ~~c-3.~~ The general location where the alleged crime was committed;

30 ~~d-4.~~ The identity of the investigating officer or other point of contact; and

31 ~~e-5.~~ A description of any injuries suffered or property damaged or stolen; ~~and~~

32 ~~f.~~ Any diagrams related to the alleged crime or the location where the alleged crime was

33 committed, except that any diagrams described in subdivision 14 of § 2.2-3705.2 and information therein

34 shall be excluded from mandatory disclosure, but may be disclosed by the custodian in his discretion,

35 except where such disclosure is prohibited by law.

36 A verbal response as agreed to by the requester and the public body is sufficient to satisfy the

37 requirements of this ~~subdivision 1;~~ and subsection.

38 ~~2. Criminal investigative files, defined as any documents and information, including complaints,~~

39 ~~court orders, memoranda, notes, initial incident reports, filings through any incident based reporting~~

40 ~~system, diagrams, maps, photographs, correspondence, reports, witness statements, or evidence, relating~~

41 ~~to a criminal investigation or proceeding that is not ongoing.~~

42 C. Criminal investigative files relating to an ongoing criminal investigation or proceeding are

43 excluded from the mandatory disclosure provisions of this chapter, but may be disclosed by the custodian

44 in his discretion except as provided in subsection E or where such disclosure is prohibited by law.

45 D. Criminal investigative files relating to a criminal investigation or proceeding that is not ongoing

46 are excluded from the mandatory disclosure provisions of this chapter, but may be disclosed by the

47 custodian, in his discretion, except as provided in subsection E; however such records shall be disclosed,

48 by request, to (i) the victim; (ii) members of the victim's immediate family, if the victim is deceased; (iii)

49 the parent or guardian of the victim, if the victim is a minor and the parent or guardian is not a person of

50 interest or a suspect in the criminal investigation or proceeding; and (iv) an attorney representing a

51 petitioner in a petition for a writ of actual innocence pursuant to Chapter 19.2 (§ 19.2-327.2 et seq.) of

52 Title 19.2. An attorney who is in receipt of criminal investigative files pursuant to clause (iv) shall not

53 release such criminal investigative files or any information contained therein to anyone except his agent

54 and shall return the criminal investigative files to the public body that is the custodian of such records
55 within 30 days of a final determination of any writ of actual innocence or, if no such writ was filed, within
56 six months of the attorney's receipt of the records.

57 E. The provisions of ~~subsection B~~ subsections C and D relating to discretionary disclosure by the
58 custodian shall not apply if the release of such information:

- 59 1. Would interfere with a particular ongoing criminal investigation or proceeding in a particularly
60 identifiable manner;
- 61 2. Would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication;
- 62 3. Would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;
- 63 4. Would disclose (i) the identity of a confidential source or (ii) in the case of a record compiled
64 by a law-enforcement agency in the course of a criminal investigation, information furnished only by a
65 confidential source;
- 66 5. Would disclose law-enforcement investigative techniques and procedures, if such disclosure
67 could reasonably be expected to risk circumvention of the law; or
- 68 6. Would endanger the life or physical safety of any individual.

69 Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to authorize the withholding of those portions of such
70 information that are unlikely to cause any effect listed herein.

71 ~~D.~~ F. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections C and D, no criminal investigative file or
72 portion thereof shall be disclosed to any requester pursuant to this section except (i) the victim, (ii)
73 members of the victim's immediate family, if the victim is deceased, (iii) the parent or guardian of the
74 victim, if the victim is a minor and the parent or guardian is not a person of interest or a suspect in the
75 criminal investigation or proceeding, or (iv) an attorney representing a petitioner in a petition for a writ of
76 actual innocence pursuant to Chapter 19.2 (§ 19.2-327.2 et seq.) of Chapter 19.2, unless the public body
77 has made reasonable efforts to notify any such individual of the request for such information. Upon
78 notification of the request, any individual listed in clause (i), (ii), or (iii) may file in an appropriate court
79 a petition for an injunction to prevent the disclosure of the records or other physical evidence. The period
80 within which the public body shall respond pursuant to § 2.2-3704 shall be tolled for 14 days to allow for

81 any such person to file a petition for an injunction. If the public body receives actual notice of the filing
82 of a petition within the 14-day period, the time within which the public body shall respond shall be further
83 tolled for the period of time that elapses between the public body's receipt of such actual notice and any
84 resulting disposition by the court.

85 In making its determination, a court shall consider the following:

- 86 1. If disclosure of the public records would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;
- 87 2. If disclosure of the public records would endanger the life or physical safety of any individual;
- 88 3. If disclosure of the public records would subject the victim, members of the victim's immediate
89 family, or the parent or guardian of the victim to severe mental or emotional distress;
- 90 4. Who the requester is and for what purpose the public records are requested; and
- 91 5. Any other factor or information deemed by the court to be relevant.

92 If the court grants an injunction, the public body shall be prohibited from disclosing the public
93 records.

94 G. No photographic, audio, video, or other record depicting a victim or allowing for a victim to be
95 readily identified shall be released pursuant to subsection C or D to anyone except (i) the victim; (ii)
96 members of the victim's immediate family, if the victim is deceased; or (iii) the victim's parent or guardian,
97 if the victim is a minor and the parent or guardian is not a person of interest or a suspect in the criminal
98 investigation or proceeding.

99 H. Nothing in this section shall prohibit the disclosure of current anonymized, aggregate location
100 and demographic data collected pursuant to § 52-30.2 or similar data documenting law-enforcement
101 officer encounters with members of the public.

102 ~~No photographic, audio, video, or other record depicting a victim or allowing for a victim to be~~
103 ~~readily identified, except for transcripts of recorded interviews between a victim and law enforcement,~~
104 ~~shall be released pursuant to subdivision B-2 to anyone except (i) the victim; (ii) members of the immediate~~
105 ~~family of the victim, if the victim is deceased; or (iii) the parent or guardian of the victim, if the victim is~~
106 ~~a minor.~~

