

SENATE BILL NO. 1184

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the Senate Committee on the Judiciary

on _____)

(Patron Prior to Substitute--Senator Reeves)

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 2.2-3900, 2.2-3902, 8.01-49.1, 18.2-57, and 18.2-121 of the Code of Virginia, relating to hate crimes and discrimination; antisemitism; penalties.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 2.2-3900, 2.2-3902, 8.01-49.1, 18.2-57, and 18.2-121 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 2.2-3900. Short title; declaration of policy.

A. This chapter shall be known and cited as the Virginia Human Rights Act.

B. It is the policy of the Commonwealth to:

1. Safeguard all individuals within the Commonwealth from unlawful discrimination because of race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin, sex, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, military status, or disability in places of public accommodation, including educational institutions and in real estate transactions;

2. Safeguard all individuals within the Commonwealth from unlawful discrimination in employment because of race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin, sex, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or military status;

3. Preserve the public safety, health, and general welfare;

4. Further the interests, rights, and privileges of individuals within the Commonwealth; and

5. Protect citizens of the Commonwealth against unfounded charges of unlawful discrimination.

§ 2.2-3902. Construction of chapter; other programs to aid persons with disabilities, minors, and the elderly.

The provisions of this chapter shall be construed liberally for the accomplishment of its policies.

27 Conduct that violates any Virginia or federal statute or regulation governing discrimination on the
28 basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth
29 or related medical conditions including lactation, age, military status, disability, or ethnic or national
30 origin is an unlawful discriminatory practice under this chapter.

31 Nothing in this chapter shall prohibit or alter any program, service, facility, school, or privilege
32 that is afforded, oriented, or restricted to a person because of disability or age from continuing to habilitate,
33 rehabilitate, or accommodate that person.

34 In addition, nothing in this chapter shall be construed to affect any governmental program, law or
35 activity differentiating between persons on the basis of age over the age of 18 years (i) where the
36 differentiation is reasonably necessary to normal operation or the activity is based upon reasonable factors
37 other than age or (ii) where the program, law or activity constitutes a legitimate exercise of powers of the
38 Commonwealth for the general health, safety and welfare of the population at large.

39 Complaints filed with the Office of Civil Rights of the Department of Law (the Office) in
40 accordance with § 2.2-520 alleging unlawful discriminatory practice under a Virginia statute that is
41 enforced by a Virginia agency shall be referred to that agency. The Office may investigate complaints
42 alleging an unlawful discriminatory practice under a federal statute or regulation and attempt to resolve it
43 through conciliation. Unsolved complaints shall thereafter be referred to the federal agency with
44 jurisdiction over the complaint. Upon such referral, the Office shall have no further jurisdiction over the
45 complaint. The Office shall have no jurisdiction over any complaint filed under a local ordinance adopted
46 pursuant to § 15.2-965.

47 **§ 8.01-49.1. Liability for defamatory material on the Internet.**

48 A. No provider or user of an interactive computer service on the Internet shall be treated as the
49 publisher or speaker of any information provided to it by another information content provider. No
50 provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be liable for (i) any action voluntarily taken by it
51 in good faith to restrict access to, or availability of, material that the provider or user considers to be
52 obscene, lewd, lascivious, excessively violent, harassing, or intended to incite hatred on the basis of race,
53 religious conviction, gender, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, color, or ethnic or national

54 origin, whether or not such material is constitutionally protected, or (ii) any action taken to enable, or
55 make available to information content providers or others, the technical means to restrict access to
56 information provided by another information content provider.

57 B. As used in this section:

58 "Disability" means a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of a
59 person's major life activities.

60 "Information content provider" means any person or entity that is responsible, in whole or in part,
61 for the creation or development of information provided through the Internet or any other interactive
62 computer service.

63 "Interactive computer service" means any information service, system, or access software provider
64 that provides or enables computer access by multiple users to a computer server, including specifically a
65 service or system that provides access to the Internet and such systems operated or services offered by
66 libraries or educational institutions.

67 "Internet" means the international computer network of interoperable packet-switched data
68 networks.

69 **§ 18.2-57. Assault and battery; penalty.**

70 A. Any person who commits a simple assault or assault and battery is guilty of a Class 1
71 misdemeanor, and if the person intentionally selects the person against whom a simple assault is
72 committed because of his race, religious conviction, gender, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation,
73 color, or ethnic or national origin, the penalty upon conviction shall include a term of confinement of at
74 least six months.

75 B. However, if a person intentionally selects the person against whom an assault and battery
76 resulting in bodily injury is committed because of his race, religious conviction, gender, disability, gender
77 identity, sexual orientation, color, or ethnic or national origin, the person is guilty of a Class 6 felony, and
78 the penalty upon conviction shall include a term of confinement of at least six months.

79 C. In addition, if any person commits an assault or an assault and battery against another knowing
80 or having reason to know that such other person is a judge, a magistrate, a law-enforcement officer as

81 defined in subsection F, a correctional officer as defined in § 53.1-1, a person directly involved in the care,
82 treatment, or supervision of inmates in the custody of the Department of Corrections or an employee of a
83 local or regional correctional facility directly involved in the care, treatment, or supervision of inmates in
84 the custody of the facility, a person directly involved in the care, treatment, or supervision of persons in
85 the custody of or under the supervision of the Department of Juvenile Justice, an employee or other
86 individual who provides control, care, or treatment of sexually violent predators committed to the custody
87 of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, a firefighter as defined in § 65.2-
88 102, or a volunteer firefighter or any emergency medical services personnel member who is employed by
89 or is a volunteer of an emergency medical services agency or as a member of a bona fide volunteer fire
90 department or volunteer emergency medical services agency, regardless of whether a resolution has been
91 adopted by the governing body of a political subdivision recognizing such firefighters or emergency
92 medical services personnel as employees, engaged in the performance of his public duties anywhere in
93 the Commonwealth, such person is guilty of a Class 6 felony, and, upon conviction, the sentence of such
94 person shall include a mandatory minimum term of confinement of six months.

95 Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to affect the right of any person charged with a
96 violation of this section from asserting and presenting evidence in support of any defenses to the charge
97 that may be available under common law.

98 D. In addition, if any person commits a battery against another knowing or having reason to know
99 that such other person is a full-time or part-time employee of any public or private elementary or secondary
100 school and is engaged in the performance of his duties as such, he is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor and
101 the sentence of such person upon conviction shall include a sentence of 15 days in jail, two days of which
102 shall be a mandatory minimum term of confinement. However, if the offense is committed by use of a
103 firearm or other weapon prohibited on school property pursuant to § 18.2-308.1, the person shall serve a
104 mandatory minimum sentence of confinement of six months.

105 E. In addition, any person who commits a battery against another knowing or having reason to
106 know that such individual is a health care provider as defined in § 8.01-581.1 who is engaged in the
107 performance of his duties in a hospital or in an emergency room on the premises of any clinic or other

108 facility rendering emergency medical care is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. The sentence of such
109 person, upon conviction, shall include a term of confinement of 15 days in jail, two days of which shall
110 be a mandatory minimum term of confinement.

111 F. As used in this section:

112 "Disability" means a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of a
113 person's major life activities.

114 "Hospital" means a public or private institution licensed pursuant to Chapter 5 (§ 32.1-123 et seq.)
115 of Title 32.1 or Article 2 (§ 37.2-403 et seq.) of Chapter 4 of Title 37.2.

116 "Judge" means any justice or judge of a court of record of the Commonwealth including a judge
117 designated under § 17.1-105, a judge under temporary recall under § 17.1-106, or a judge pro tempore
118 under § 17.1-109, any member of the State Corporation Commission, or of the Virginia Workers'
119 Compensation Commission, and any judge of a district court of the Commonwealth or any substitute judge
120 of such district court.

121 "Law-enforcement officer" means any full-time or part-time employee of a police department or
122 sheriff's office that is part of or administered by the Commonwealth or any political subdivision thereof
123 who is responsible for the prevention or detection of crime and the enforcement of the penal, traffic or
124 highway laws of the Commonwealth, any conservation officer of the Department of Conservation and
125 Recreation commissioned pursuant to § 10.1-115, any special agent of the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage
126 Control Authority, conservation police officers appointed pursuant to § 29.1-200, full-time sworn
127 members of the enforcement division of the Department of Motor Vehicles appointed pursuant to § 46.2-
128 217, and any employee with internal investigations authority designated by the Department of Corrections
129 pursuant to subdivision 11 of § 53.1-10, and such officer also includes jail officers in local and regional
130 correctional facilities, all deputy sheriffs, whether assigned to law-enforcement duties, court services or
131 local jail responsibilities, auxiliary police officers appointed or provided for pursuant to §§ 15.2-1731 and
132 15.2-1733, auxiliary deputy sheriffs appointed pursuant to § 15.2-1603, police officers of the Metropolitan
133 Washington Airports Authority pursuant to § 5.1-158, and fire marshals appointed pursuant to § 27-30
134 when such fire marshals have police powers as set out in §§ 27-34.2 and 27-34.2:1.

135 "School security officer" means the same as that term is defined in § 9.1-101.

136 G. "Simple assault" or "assault and battery" shall not be construed to include the use of, by any
137 school security officer or full-time or part-time employee of any public or private elementary or secondary
138 school while acting in the course and scope of his official capacity, any of the following: (i) incidental,
139 minor or reasonable physical contact or other actions designed to maintain order and control; (ii)
140 reasonable and necessary force to quell a disturbance or remove a student from the scene of a disturbance
141 that threatens physical injury to persons or damage to property; (iii) reasonable and necessary force to
142 prevent a student from inflicting physical harm on himself; (iv) reasonable and necessary force for self-
143 defense or the defense of others; or (v) reasonable and necessary force to obtain possession of weapons or
144 other dangerous objects or controlled substances or associated paraphernalia that are upon the person of
145 the student or within his control.

146 In determining whether a person was acting within the exceptions provided in this subsection, due
147 deference shall be given to reasonable judgments that were made by a school security officer or full-time
148 or part-time employee of any public or private elementary or secondary school at the time of the event.

149 **§ 18.2-121. Entering property of another for purpose of damaging it, etc.**

150 A. As used in this section, "disability" means a physical or mental impairment that substantially
151 limits one or more of a person's major life activities.

152 B. It is unlawful for any person to enter the land, dwelling, outhouse, or any other building of
153 another for the purpose of damaging such property or any of the contents thereof or in any manner to
154 interfere with the rights of the owner, user, or occupant thereof to use such property free from interference.

155 Any person violating the provisions of this section is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. However,
156 if a person intentionally selects the property entered because of the race, religious conviction, color,
157 gender, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or ethnic or national origin of the owner, user, or
158 occupant of the property, the person is guilty of a Class 6 felony, and the penalty upon conviction shall
159 include a term of confinement of at least six months.

160 **2. That the provisions of this act may result in a net increase in periods of imprisonment or**
161 **commitment. Pursuant to § 30-19.1:4 of the Code of Virginia, the estimated amount of the necessary**

162 appropriation is _____ for periods of imprisonment in state adult correctional facilities;
163 therefore, Chapter 2 of the Acts of Assembly of 2022, Special Session I, requires the Virginia
164 Criminal Sentencing Commission to assign a minimum fiscal impact of \$50,000. Pursuant to § 30-
165 19.1:4 of the Code of Virginia, the estimated amount of the necessary appropriation is _____ for
166 periods of commitment to the custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice.

167 3. That the provisions of this act shall not be construed to diminish or infringe upon any right
168 protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or the Constitution of the
169 Commonwealth of Virginia.

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