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HOUSE BILL NO. 267
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the House Committee for Courts of Justice
on _____)
(Patron Prior to Substitute--Delegate Watts)

A BILL to amend and reenact § 18.2-57 of the Code of Virginia, relating to assault or assault and battery against law-enforcement officer; arrest and prosecution of individual experiencing a mental health emergency.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 18.2-57 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 18.2-57. Assault and battery; penalty.

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

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

C. In addition, if any person commits an assault or an assault and battery against another knowing or having reason to know that such other person is a judge, a magistrate, a law-enforcement officer as defined in subsection G, a correctional officer as defined in § 53.1-1, a person directly involved in the care, treatment, or supervision of inmates in the custody of the Department of Corrections or an employee of a local or regional correctional facility directly involved in the care, treatment, or supervision of inmates in the custody of the facility, a person directly involved in the care, treatment, or supervision of persons

27 in the custody of or under the supervision of the Department of Juvenile Justice, an employee or other
28 individual who provides control, care, or treatment of sexually violent predators committed to the custody
29 of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, a firefighter as defined in § 65.2-
30 102, or a volunteer firefighter or any emergency medical services personnel member who is employed by
31 or is a volunteer of an emergency medical services agency or as a member of a bona fide volunteer fire
32 department or volunteer emergency medical services agency, regardless of whether a resolution has been
33 adopted by the governing body of a political subdivision recognizing such firefighters or emergency
34 medical services personnel as employees, engaged in the performance of his public duties anywhere in
35 the Commonwealth, such person is guilty of a Class 6 felony, and, upon conviction, the sentence of such
36 person shall include a mandatory minimum term of confinement of six months.

37 It is an affirmative defense to prosecution of an individual for assault or assault and battery against
38 a law-enforcement officer, as defined in subsection G, or a correctional officer, as defined in § 53.1-1, if
39 at the time of the assault or assault and battery the law-enforcement officer or correctional officer was
40 responding to a request for service and (i) the individual had (a) a mental illness as defined in § 19.2-271.6
41 or (b) an intellectual disability or developmental disability as those terms are defined in § 37.2-100, such
42 as autism spectrum disorder as defined in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual
43 of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association or (ii) the individual met the criteria for the
44 issuance of an emergency custody order pursuant to § 37.2-808, and the assault or assault and battery was
45 caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the person's illness, disorder, or disability.

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

49 D. In addition, if any person commits a battery against another knowing or having reason to know
50 that such other person is a full-time or part-time employee of any public or private elementary or secondary
51 school and is engaged in the performance of his duties as such, he is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor and
52 the sentence of such person upon conviction shall include a sentence of 15 days in jail, two days of which
53 shall be a mandatory minimum term of confinement. However, if the offense is committed by use of a

54 firearm or other weapon prohibited on school property pursuant to § 18.2-308.1, the person shall serve a
55 mandatory minimum sentence of confinement of six months.

56 E. In addition, any person who commits a battery against another knowing or having reason to
57 know that such individual is a health care provider as defined in § 8.01-581.1 who is engaged in the
58 performance of his duties in a hospital or in an emergency room on the premises of any clinic or other
59 facility rendering emergency medical care is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. The sentence of such
60 person, upon conviction, shall include a term of confinement of 15 days in jail, two days of which shall
61 be a mandatory minimum term of confinement.

62 F. In addition, any person who commits an assault or an assault and battery against another
63 knowing or having reason to know that such individual is an operator of a vehicle operated by a public
64 transportation service as defined in § 18.2-160.2 who is engaged in the performance of his duties is guilty
65 of a Class 1 misdemeanor. The sentence of such person, upon conviction, shall also prohibit such person
66 from entering or riding in any vehicle operated by the public transportation service that employed such
67 operator for a period of not less than six months as a term and condition of such sentence.

68 G. As used in this section:

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

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

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

78 "Law-enforcement officer" means any full-time or part-time employee of a police department or
79 sheriff's office that is part of or administered by the Commonwealth or any political subdivision thereof
80 who is responsible for the prevention or detection of crime and the enforcement of the penal, traffic or

81 highway laws of the Commonwealth, any conservation officer of the Department of Conservation and
82 Recreation commissioned pursuant to § 10.1-115, any special agent of the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage
83 Control Authority, conservation police officers appointed pursuant to § 29.1-200, full-time sworn
84 members of the enforcement division of the Department of Motor Vehicles appointed pursuant to § 46.2-
85 217, and any employee with internal investigations authority designated by the Department of Corrections
86 pursuant to subdivision 11 of § 53.1-10, and such officer also includes jail officers in local and regional
87 correctional facilities, all deputy sheriffs, whether assigned to law-enforcement duties, court services or
88 local jail responsibilities, auxiliary police officers appointed or provided for pursuant to §§ 15.2-1731 and
89 15.2-1733, auxiliary deputy sheriffs appointed pursuant to § 15.2-1603, police officers of the Metropolitan
90 Washington Airports Authority pursuant to § 5.1-158, and fire marshals appointed pursuant to § 27-30
91 when such fire marshals have police powers as set out in §§ 27-34.2 and 27-34.2:1.

92 "Mental health emergency" means as a result of mental illness (i) there exists a substantial
93 likelihood that a person will, in the near future, cause serious physical harm to himself or others as
94 evidenced by recent behavior causing, attempting, or threatening harm and other relevant information, if
95 any, or (ii) the person is severely disoriented or lacks the capacity to recognize reality.

96 "Mental illness" means a disorder of thought, mood, emotion, perception, or orientation that
97 significantly impairs judgment, behavior, capacity to recognize reality, or ability to address basic life
98 necessities and requires care and treatment for the health, safety, or recovery of the individual experiencing
99 such disorder or for the safety of others.

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

101 H. "Simple assault" or "assault and battery" shall not be construed to include the use of, by any
102 school security officer or full-time or part-time employee of any public or private elementary or secondary
103 school while acting in the course and scope of his official capacity, any of the following: (i) incidental,
104 minor or reasonable physical contact or other actions designed to maintain order and control; (ii)
105 reasonable and necessary force to quell a disturbance or remove a student from the scene of a disturbance
106 that threatens physical injury to persons or damage to property; (iii) reasonable and necessary force to
107 prevent a student from inflicting physical harm on himself; (iv) reasonable and necessary force for self-

108 defense or the defense of others; or (v) reasonable and necessary force to obtain possession of weapons or
109 other dangerous objects or controlled substances or associated paraphernalia that are upon the person of
110 the student or within his control.

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

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