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SENATE BILL NO. 92

Offered January 12, 2000

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 17.1-803 and 17.1-805 of the Code of Virginia, relating to sentencing guideline midpoints; penalty.

Patron—Lambert

Referred to Committee for Courts of Justice

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That §§ 17.1-803 and 17.1-805 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 17.1-803. Powers and duties.

The Commission shall:

1. Develop, maintain and modify as may be deemed necessary, a proposed system of statewide discretionary sentencing guidelines for use in all felony cases which will take into account historical data, when available, concerning time actually served for various felony offenses committed prior to January 1, 1995, and sentences imposed for various felony offenses committed on or after January 1, 1995, and such other factors as may be deemed relevant to sentencing.

2. Prepare, periodically update, and distribute sentencing worksheets for the use of sentencing courts which, when used, will produce a recommended sentencing range for a felony offense in accordance with the discretionary sentencing guidelines established pursuant to subdivision 1.

3. Prepare, periodically update, and distribute a form for the use of sentencing courts which will assist such courts in recording the reason or reasons for any sentence imposed in a felony case which is greater or less than the sentence recommended by the discretionary sentencing guidelines.

4. Prepare guidelines for sentencing courts to use in determining appropriate candidates for alternative sanctions which may include, but not be limited to (i) fines and day fines, (ii) boot camp incarceration, (iii) local correctional facility incarceration, (iv) diversion center incarceration, (v) detention center incarceration, (vi) home incarceration/electronic monitoring, (vii) day or evening reporting, (viii) probation supervision, (ix) intensive probation supervision, and (x) performance of community service.

5. Develop an offender risk assessment instrument for use in all felony cases, based on a study of Virginia felons, that will be predictive of the relative risk that a felon will become a threat to public safety.

6. Apply the risk assessment instrument to offenders convicted of any felony that is not specified in (i) subdivision 1, 2 or 3 of subsection A of § 17.1-805 or (ii) subsection C of § 17.1-805 under the discretionary sentencing guidelines, and shall determine, on the basis of such assessment and with due regard for public safety needs, the feasibility of achieving the goal of placing twenty-five percent of such offenders in one of the alternative sanctions listed in subdivision 4. If the Commission so determines that achieving the twenty-five percent or a higher percentage goal is feasible, it shall incorporate such goal into the discretionary sentencing guidelines, to become effective on January 1, 1996. If the Commission so determines that achieving the goal is not feasible, the Commission shall report that determination to the General Assembly, the Governor and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia on or before December 1, 1995, and shall make such recommendations as it deems appropriate.

7. Monitor sentencing practices in felony cases throughout the Commonwealth, including the use of the discretionary sentencing guidelines, and maintain a database containing the information obtained.

8. Monitor felony sentence lengths, crime trends, correctional facility population trends and correctional resources and make recommendations regarding projected correctional facilities capacity requirements and related correctional resource needs.

9. Study felony statutes in the context of judge-sentencing and jury-sentencing patterns as they evolve after January 1, 1995, and make recommendations for the revision of general criminal offense statutes to provide more specific offense definitions and more narrowly prescribed ranges of punishment.

10. Report upon its work and recommendations annually on or before December 1 to the General Assembly, the Governor and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia.

11. Perform such other functions as may be otherwise required by law or as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this chapter.

§ 17.1-805. Discretionary sentencing guideline midpoints.

A. The Commission shall adopt an initial set of discretionary felony sentencing guidelines which shall become effective on January 1, 1995. The initial recommended sentencing range for each felony

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60 offense shall be determined first, by computing the actual time-served distribution for similarly situated
61 offenders, in terms of their conviction offense and prior criminal history, released from incarceration
62 during the base period of calendar years 1988 through 1992, increased by 13.4 percent, and second, by
63 eliminating from this range the upper and lower quartiles. The midpoint of each initial recommended
64 sentencing range shall be the median time served for the middle two quartiles and subject to the
65 following additional enhancements:

66 1. The midpoint of the initial recommended sentencing range for first degree murder, second degree
67 murder, rape in violation of § 18.2-61, forcible sodomy, object sexual penetration, and aggravated sexual
68 battery, shall be further increased by (i) 125 percent in cases in which the defendant has no previous
69 conviction of a violent felony offense, (ii) 300 percent in cases in which the defendant has previously
70 been convicted of a violent felony offense punishable by a maximum punishment of less than forty
71 years, or (iii) 500 percent in cases in which the defendant has previously been convicted of a violent
72 felony offense punishable by a maximum punishment of forty years or more, except that the
73 recommended sentence for a defendant convicted of first degree murder who has previously been
74 convicted of a violent felony offense punishable by a maximum term of imprisonment of forty years or
75 more shall be imprisonment for life;

76 2. The midpoint of the initial recommended sentencing range for voluntary manslaughter, robbery,
77 aggravated malicious wounding, malicious wounding, and any burglary of a dwelling house or statutory
78 burglary of a dwelling house or any burglary committed while armed with a deadly weapon or any
79 statutory burglary committed while armed with a deadly weapon shall be further increased by (i) 100
80 percent in cases in which the defendant has no previous conviction of a violent felony offense, (ii) 300
81 percent in cases in which the defendant has previously been convicted of a violent felony offense
82 punishable by a maximum term of imprisonment of less than forty years, or (iii) 500 percent in cases
83 in which the defendant has previously been convicted of a violent felony offense punishable by a
84 maximum term of imprisonment of forty years or more;

85 3. The midpoint of the initial recommended sentencing range for manufacturing, selling, giving or
86 distributing, or possessing with the intent to manufacture, sell, give or distribute a Schedule I or II
87 controlled substance shall be increased by (i) 200 percent in cases in which the defendant has previously
88 been convicted of a violent felony offense punishable by a maximum punishment of less than forty
89 years or (ii) 400 percent in cases in which the defendant has previously been convicted of a violent
90 felony offense punishable by a maximum term of imprisonment of forty years or more; and

91 4. *The midpoint of the sentencing range for possession of a Schedule I or II controlled substance*
92 *shall be increased to (i) eight months for cases in which the defendant has previously been convicted*
93 *one or two times of a felony involving the possession or sale of a Schedule I or II controlled substance*
94 *and (ii) twelve months for cases in which the defendant has previously been convicted three or more*
95 *times of a felony involving the possession or sale of a Schedule I or II controlled substance. The*
96 *sentencing guidelines for cases in (i) of this subdivision 4 shall also provide for either detention*
97 *center/boot camp incarceration or incarceration corresponding to the midpoint and range.*

98 5. The midpoint of the ~~initial~~ recommended sentencing range for felony offenses not specified in
99 subdivision 1, 2~~or~~, 3 or 4 shall be increased by 100 percent in cases in which the defendant has
100 previously been convicted of a violent felony offense punishable by a maximum punishment of less than
101 forty years, and by 300 percent in cases in which the defendant has previously been convicted of a
102 violent felony offense punishable by a maximum term of imprisonment of forty years or more.

103 B. For purposes of this chapter, previous convictions shall include prior adult convictions and
104 juvenile convictions and adjudications of delinquency based on an offense which would have been at the
105 time of conviction a felony if committed by an adult under the laws of any state, the District of
106 Columbia, the United States or its territories.

107 C. For purposes of this chapter, violent felony offenses shall include any violation of §§ 18.2-31,
108 18.2-32, 18.2-32.1, 18.2-33, or § 18.2-35; any violation of subsection B of § 18.2-36.1; any violation of
109 § 18.2-40 or § 18.2-41; any Class 5 felony violation of § 18.2-47; any felony violation of §§ 18.2-48,
110 18.2-48.1 or § 18.2-49; any violation of §§ 18.2-51, 18.2-51.1, 18.2-51.2, 18.2-51.3, 18.2-51.4, 18.2-52,
111 18.2-52.1, 18.2-53, 18.2-53.1, 18.2-54.1, 18.2-54.2 or § 18.2-55; any felony violation of § 18.2-57.2; any
112 violation of § 18.2-58 or § 18.2-58.1; any felony violation of § 18.2-60.1 or § 18.2-60.3; any violation of
113 §§ 18.2-61, 18.2-64.1, 18.2-67.1, 18.2-67.2, 18.2-67.2:1, 18.2-67.3, 18.2-67.5, or § 18.2-67.5:1 involving
114 a third conviction of either sexual battery in violation of § 18.2-67.4 or attempted sexual battery in
115 violation of subsection C of § 18.2-67.5; any Class 4 felony violation of § 18.2-63; any violation of
116 subsection A of § 18.2-77; any Class 3 felony violation of § 18.2-79; any Class 3 felony violation of
117 § 18.2-80; any violation of §§ 18.2-89, 18.2-90, 18.2-91, 18.2-92 or § 18.2-93; any felony violation of
118 § 18.2-152.7; any Class 4 felony violation of § 18.2-153; any Class 4 felony violation of § 18.2-154; any
119 Class 4 felony violation of § 18.2-155; any felony violation of § 18.2-162; any violation of § 18.2-279
120 involving an occupied dwelling; any violation of subsection B of § 18.2-280; any violation of
121 §§ 18.2-281, 18.2-286.1, 18.2-289 or § 18.2-290; any felony violation of subsection A of § 18.2-282; any

122 violation of subsection A of § 18.2-300; any felony violation of §§ 18.2-308.1 and 18.2-308.2; any
123 violation of § 18.2-308.2:1, or subsection M or N of § 18.2-308.2:2; any violation of § 18.2-308.3 or
124 § 18.2-312; any violation of subdivision (2) or (3) of § 18.2-355; any violation of § 18.2-358; any
125 violation of subsection B of § 18.2-361; any violation of subsection B of § 18.2-366; any violation of
126 §§ 18.2-368, 18.2-370 or § 18.2-370.1; any violation of subsection A of § 18.2-371.1; any felony
127 violation of § 18.2-369 resulting in serious bodily injury or disease; any violation of § 18.2-374.1; any
128 felony violation of § 18.2-374.1:1; any violation of § 18.2-374.3; any second or subsequent offense
129 under §§ 18.2-379 and 18.2-381; any felony violation of § 18.2-405 or § 18.2-406; any violation of
130 §§ 18.2-408, 18.2-413, 18.2-414 or § 18.2-433.2; any felony violation of §§ 18.2-460, 18.2-474.1 or
131 § 18.2-477.1; any violation of §§ 18.2-477, 18.2-478, 18.2-480 or § 18.2-485; any violation of
132 § 53.1-203; or any conspiracy or attempt to commit any offense specified in this subsection, and any
133 substantially similar offense under the laws of any state, the District of Columbia, the United States or
134 its territories.
135 **2. That the provisions of this act may result in a net increase in periods of imprisonment in state**
136 **correctional facilities. Pursuant to § 30-19.1:4, the estimated amount of the necessary appropriation**
137 **is \$0 in FY 2010.**