

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2004 SESSION

CHAPTER 562

An Act to amend and reenact § 58.1-9 of the Code of Virginia, relating to electronic filing requirements for tax preparers; penalty.

[H 1159]

Approved April 12, 2004

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 58.1-9 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 58.1-9. Filing of tax returns or payment of taxes by mail or otherwise; penalty.

A. When remittance of a tax return or a tax payment is made by mail, receipt of such return or payment by the person with whom such return is required to be filed or to whom such payment is required to be made, in a sealed envelope bearing a postmark on or before midnight of the day such return is required to be filed or such payment made without penalty or interest, shall constitute filing and payment as if such return had been filed or such payment made before the close of business on the last day on which such return may be filed or such tax may be paid without penalty or interest.

B. When remittance of a tax payment is made by electronic funds transfer, receipt of funds available for withdrawal, in a bank account designated to receive such payments by the person to whom such payment is required to be made, on or before midnight of the day such payment is required to be made without penalty or interest, shall constitute payment as if such payment had been made before the close of business on the last day on which such tax may be paid without penalty or interest.

C. Notwithstanding any provision of law, the Tax Commissioner may allow the electronic filing of any state tax return, statement or document. For purposes of this subsection, the Tax Commissioner may determine alternative methods for the signing, subscribing or verifying of a state tax return, statement or document that shall have the same validity and consequences as the actual signing by the taxpayer. The Tax Commissioner may prescribe methods of execution, recording, reproduction and certification of electronically filed information pursuant § 59.1-496.

D. If an income tax return preparer prepared 200 or more individual income tax returns for a taxable year that began on January 1, 2003, or 100 or more individual income tax returns for a taxable year that began on or after January 1, 2004, then for every taxable year thereafter, all individual income tax returns for taxable years prepared by that income tax return preparer shall be filed using electronic means or software that produces a two dimensional barcode using 2D technology reflecting information contained in the return in a standard format as prescribed by the Tax Commissioner. This subsection shall not apply to an individual income tax return for a taxpayer who has indicated that he does not want his individual income tax return filed using electronic means or 2D technology.

The Tax Commissioner shall have the authority to waive the requirement to file by electronic means or using 2D technology upon finding that the requirement would cause an undue hardship. The income tax return preparer otherwise required to file individual income tax returns using electronic means or 2D technology must request in writing the waiver from the Tax Commissioner and clearly demonstrate the nature of the undue hardship. The Tax Commissioner shall respond to the income tax return preparer within 45 days after receiving the request for waiver.

For purposes of this subsection, "income tax return preparer" means a person who prepares, or employs one or more individuals to prepare, an income tax return for compensation. Preparation of a substantial portion of an individual income tax return shall be deemed preparation of the entire individual income tax return for purposes of this section.

For purposes of this subsection, "income tax return preparer" shall not include volunteers who prepare tax returns for the elderly or poor as part of a nonprofit organization's program.