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HOUSE BILL NO. 253

Offered January 14, 2004

Prefiled January 8, 2004

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 16.1-69.40:1 and 46.2-878.2 of the Code of Virginia, relating to prepayable fines for local speeding offenses.

Patrons—McQuigg, Frederick, Lingamfelter and Parrish; Senators: Colgan and Puller

Referred to Committee for Courts of Justice

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 16.1-69.40:1 and 46.2-878.2 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 16.1-69.40:1. Traffic infractions within authority of traffic violations clerk; schedule of fines; prepayment of local ordinances.

A. The Supreme Court shall by rule, which may from time to time be amended, supplemented or repealed, but which shall be uniform in its application throughout the Commonwealth, designate the traffic infractions for which a pretrial waiver of appearance, plea of guilty and fine payment may be accepted. Such designated infractions shall include violations of §§ 46.2-878.2 and 46.2-1242 or any parallel local ordinances. Notwithstanding any rule of the Supreme Court, a person charged with a traffic offense that is listed as prepayable in the Uniform Fine Schedule may prepay his fines and costs without court appearance whether or not he was involved in an accident. *Notwithstanding any rule of the Supreme Court, the prepayable fine amount for a violation of § 46.2-878.2 shall be \$200.*

Such infractions shall not include:

(a) Indictable offenses;

(b) [Repealed.]

(c) Operation of a motor vehicle while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or a narcotic or habit-producing drug, or permitting another person, who is under the influence of intoxicating liquor or a narcotic or habit-producing drug, to operate a motor vehicle owned by the defendant or in his custody or control;

(d) Reckless driving;

(e) Leaving the scene of an accident;

(f) Driving while under suspension or revocation of driver's license;

(g) Driving without being licensed to drive.

(h) [Repealed.]

B. An appearance may be made in person or in writing by mail to a clerk of court or in person before a magistrate, prior to any date fixed for trial in court. Any person so appearing may enter a waiver of trial and a plea of guilty and pay the fine and any civil penalties established for the offense charged, with costs. He shall, prior to the plea, waiver, and payment, be informed of his right to stand trial, that his signature to a plea of guilty will have the same force and effect as a judgment of court, and that the record of conviction will be sent to the Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles or the appropriate offices of the State where he received his license to drive.

C. The Supreme Court, upon the recommendation of the Committee on District Courts, shall establish a schedule, within the limits prescribed by law, of the amounts of fines and any civil penalties to be imposed, designating each infraction specifically. The schedule, which may from time to time be amended, supplemented or repealed, shall be uniform in its application throughout the Commonwealth. Such schedule shall not be construed or interpreted so as to limit the discretion of any trial judge trying individual cases at the time fixed for trial. The rule of the Supreme Court establishing the schedule shall be prominently posted in the place where the fines are paid. Fines and costs shall be paid in accordance with the provisions of this Code or any rules or regulations promulgated thereunder.

D. Fines imposed under local traffic infraction ordinances which do not parallel provisions of state law and fulfill the criteria set out in subsection A of this section may be prepayable in the manner set forth in subsection B if such ordinances appear in a schedule entered by order of the local circuit courts. The judges of each circuit may establish a schedule of the fines, within the limits prescribed by local ordinances, to be imposed for prepayment of local ordinances designating each offense specifically. Upon the entry of such order it shall be forwarded within 10 days to the Supreme Court of Virginia by the clerk of the local circuit court. The schedule, which from time to time may be amended, supplemented or repealed, shall be uniform in its application throughout the circuit. Such schedule shall not be construed or interpreted so as to limit the discretion of any trial judge trying individual cases at

59 the time fixed for trial. This schedule shall be prominently posted in the place where fines are paid.
60 Fines and costs shall be paid in accordance with the provisions of this Code or any rules or regulations
61 promulgated thereunder.

62 § 46.2-878.2. Maximum speed limits in certain residence districts of counties, cities, and towns;
63 penalty.

64 Operation of any motor vehicle in excess of a maximum speed limit established for a highway in a
65 residence district of a county, city, or town, when indicated by appropriately placed signs displaying the
66 maximum speed limit and the penalty for violations, shall be unlawful and constitute a traffic infraction
67 punishable by a fine of not more than \$200, in addition to other penalties provided by law.
68 *Notwithstanding any rule of the Supreme Court, such fine shall be prepayable in the amount of \$200.*

69 The Commonwealth Transportation Board or any local governing body having jurisdiction over
70 highways shall develop criteria for the overall applicability for the installation of signs. Such criteria
71 shall not exclude highways, functionally classified as minor arterials, serving areas that either (i) were
72 built as residential developments or (ii) have grown to resemble residential developments, provided, in
73 either case, (i) such highways are experiencing documented speeding problems and (ii) the local
74 governing body requests the application of this section to such highway.