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**HOUSE BILL NO. 324**

Offered January 14, 2004

Prefiled January 12, 2004

*A BILL to amend and reenact § 18.2-254 of the Code of Virginia, relating to escape from a drug treatment facility.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patron—Griffith

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Referred to Committee for Courts of Justice

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:****1. That § 18.2-254 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 18.2-254. Commitment of convicted person for treatment for drug or alcohol abuse.

A. Whenever any person who has not previously been convicted of any offense under this article or under any statute of the United States or of any state relating to narcotic drugs, marijuana, stimulant, depressant, or hallucinogenic drugs, or has not previously had a proceeding against him for violation of such an offense dismissed as provided in § 18.2-251, is found guilty of violating any law concerning the use, in any manner, of drugs, controlled substances, narcotics, marijuana, noxious chemical substances and like substances, the judge or court shall require such person to undergo a substance abuse screening pursuant to § 18.2-251.01 and to submit to such periodic substance abuse testing, to include alcohol testing, as may be directed by the court. The cost of such testing ordered by the court shall be paid by the Commonwealth and taxed as a part of the costs of the criminal proceedings. The judge or court shall also order the person to undergo such treatment or education for substance abuse, if available, as the judge or court deems appropriate based upon consideration of the substance abuse assessment. The treatment or education shall be provided by a program licensed by the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services or by a similar program available through the Department of Corrections if the court imposes a sentence of one year or more or, if the court imposes a sentence of ~~twelve~~ 12 months or less, by a similar program available through a local or regional jail, a community-based corrections program established pursuant to § 9.1-174, or an ASAP program certified by the Commission on VASAP.

B. The court trying the case of any person alleged to have committed any offense designated by this article or by the Drug Control Act (§ 54.1-3400 et seq.) or in any other criminal case in which the commission of the offense was motivated by, or closely related to, the use of drugs and determined by the court, pursuant to a substance abuse screening and assessment to be in need of treatment for the use of drugs may commit, based upon a consideration of the substance abuse assessment, such person, upon his conviction, to any facility for the treatment of persons for the intemperate use of narcotic or other controlled substances, licensed by the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services, if space is available in such facility, for a period of time not in excess of the maximum term of imprisonment specified as the penalty for conviction of such offense or, if sentence was determined by a jury, not in excess of the term of imprisonment as set by such jury. Confinement under such commitment shall be, in all regards, treated as confinement in a penal institution and the person so committed may be convicted of escape if he leaves the place of commitment without authority. *A charge of escape may be prosecuted in either the jurisdiction where the treatment facility is located or the jurisdiction where the person was sentenced to commitment.* The court may revoke such commitment, at any time, and transfer the person to an appropriate state or local correctional facility. Upon presentation of a certified statement from the director of the treatment facility to the effect that the confined person has successfully responded to treatment, the court may release such confined person prior to the termination of the period of time for which such person was confined and may suspend the remainder of the term upon such conditions as the court may prescribe.

C. The court trying a case in which commission of the offense was related to the defendant's habitual abuse of alcohol and in which the court determines, pursuant to a substance abuse screening and assessment, that such defendant is an alcoholic as defined in § 37.1-1 and in need of treatment, may commit, based upon a consideration of the substance abuse assessment, such person, upon his conviction, to any facility for the treatment of alcoholics licensed by the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services, if space is available in such facility, for a period of time not in excess of the maximum term of imprisonment specified as the penalty for conviction. Confinement under such commitment shall be, in all regards, treated as confinement in a penal institution and the person so committed may be convicted of escape if he leaves the place of commitment without authority. The court may revoke such commitment, at any time, and transfer the

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