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**SENATE BILL NO. 343**

Offered January 14, 2004

Prefiled January 14, 2004

*A BILL to amend and reenact § 8.01-216.3 of the Code of Virginia, relating to Virginia Fraud Against Taxpayers Act.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patron—Williams

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Referred to Committee for Courts of Justice

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:****1. That § 8.01-216.3 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 8.01-216.3. False claims; civil penalty.

A. Any person who:

1. Knowingly presents, or causes to be presented, to an officer or employee of the Commonwealth a false or fraudulent claim for payment or approval;

2. Knowingly makes, uses, or causes to be made or used, a false record or statement to get a false or fraudulent claim paid or approved by the Commonwealth;

3. Conspires to defraud the Commonwealth by getting a false or fraudulent claim allowed or paid;

4. Has possession, custody, or control of property or money used, or to be used, by the Commonwealth and, intending to defraud the Commonwealth or willfully to conceal the property, delivers, or causes to be delivered, less property than the amount for which the person receives a certificate or receipt;

5. Authorizes to make or deliver a document certifying receipt of property used, or to be used, by the Commonwealth and, intending to defraud the Commonwealth, makes or delivers the receipt without completely knowing that the information on the receipt is true;

6. Knowingly buys or receives as a pledge of an obligation or debt, public property from an officer or employee of the Commonwealth who lawfully may not sell or pledge the property; or

7. Knowingly makes, uses, or causes to be made or used, a false record or statement to conceal, avoid, or decrease an obligation to pay or transmit money or property to the Commonwealth;

shall be liable to the Commonwealth for a civil penalty of not less than \$5,000 and not more than \$10,000, plus three times the amount of damages sustained by the Commonwealth.

B. If the court finds that (i) the person committing the violation of this section furnished officials of the Commonwealth responsible for investigating false claims violations with all information known to the person about the violation within ~~thirty~~ 30 days after the date on which the defendant first obtained the information; (ii) such person fully cooperated with any Commonwealth investigation of such violation; (iii) at the time such person furnished the Commonwealth with the information about the violation, no criminal prosecution, civil action, or administrative action had commenced with respect to such violation, and (iv) the person did not have actual knowledge of the existence of an investigation into such violation, the court may assess not less than two times the amount of damages that the Commonwealth sustains because of the act of the person. A person violating this section shall also be liable to the Commonwealth for the costs of a civil action brought to recover any such penalty or damages.

C. For purposes of this section, the terms "knowing" and "knowingly" mean that a person, with respect to information (i) has actual knowledge of the information; (ii) acts in deliberate ignorance of the truth or falsity of the information; or (iii) acts in reckless disregard of the truth or falsity of the information, and no proof of specific intent to defraud is required.

D. This section shall not apply to claims, records or statements relating to ~~income taxation as set forth in Title 58.4~~ state or local taxes.

INTRODUCED

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