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HOUSE BILL NO. 1516

Offered January 20, 2006

A *BILL to amend and reenact § 22.1-277.07 of the Code of Virginia, relating to possession of certain weapons on school property; expulsion.*

 Patron—Tata

 Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 22.1-277.07 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 22.1-277.07. Expulsion of students under certain circumstances; exceptions.

A. In compliance with the federal Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Part F-Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994), a school board shall expel from school attendance for a period of not less than one year any student whom such school board has determined, in accordance with the procedures set forth in this article, to have brought a firearm onto school property or to a school-sponsored activity as prohibited by § 18.2-308.1; or to have brought a firearm or destructive device as defined in subsection E, a firearm muffler or firearm silencer, or a pneumatic gun as defined in subsection E of § 15.2-915.4 onto school property or to a school-sponsored activity; *or to have possessed an above-mentioned weapon on school property or at a school-sponsored activity.* A school administrator, pursuant to school board policy, or a school board may, however, determine, based on the facts of a particular situation, that special circumstances exist and no disciplinary action or another disciplinary action or another term of expulsion is appropriate. A school board may promulgate guidelines for determining what constitutes special circumstances. In addition, a school board may, by regulation, authorize the division superintendent or his designee to conduct a preliminary review of such cases to determine whether a disciplinary action other than expulsion is appropriate. Such regulations shall ensure that, if a determination is made that another disciplinary action is appropriate, any such subsequent disciplinary action is to be taken in accordance with the procedures set forth in this article.

B. The Board of Education is designated as the state education agency to carry out the provisions of the federal Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, and shall administer the funds to be appropriated to the Commonwealth under this act.

C. Each school board shall revise its standards of student conduct no later than three months after the date on which this act becomes effective. Local school boards requesting moneys apportioned to the Commonwealth through the federal Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 shall submit to the Department of Education an application requesting such assistance. Applications for assistance shall include:

1. Documentation that the local school board has adopted and implemented student conduct policies in compliance with this section; and

2. A description of the circumstances pertaining to expulsions imposed under this section, including (i) the schools from which students were expelled under this section, (ii) the number of students expelled from each such school in the school division during the school year, and (iii) the types of firearms involved in the expulsions.

D. No school operating a Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) program shall prohibit the JROTC program from conducting marksmanship training when such training is a normal element of such programs. Such programs may include training in the use of pneumatic guns. The administration of a school operating a JROTC program shall cooperate with the JROTC staff in implementing such marksmanship training.

E. As used in this section:

"Destructive device" means (i) any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, mine, or other similar device; (ii) any weapon, except a shotgun or a shotgun shell generally recognized as particularly suitable for sporting purposes, by whatever name known that will, or may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and that has any barrel with a bore of more than one-half inch in diameter that is homemade or was not made by a duly licensed weapon manufacturer, any fully automatic firearm, any sawed-off shotgun or sawed-off rifle as defined in § 18.2-299 or any firearm prohibited from civilian ownership by federal law; and (iii) any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described in this subsection and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled. "Destructive device" shall not include any device that is

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59 not designed or redesigned for use as a weapon, or any device originally designed for use as a weapon
60 and that is redesigned for use as a signaling, pyrotechnic, line-throwing, safety, or other similar device,
61 nor shall it include any antique firearm as defined in subsection G of § 18.2-308.2:2.

62 "Firearm" means any weapon prohibited on school property or at a school-sponsored activity
63 pursuant to § 18.2-308.1, or any weapon, including a starter gun, that will, or is designed or may readily
64 be converted to, expel single or multiple projectiles by the action of an explosion of a combustible
65 material or the frame or receiver of any such weapon. "Firearm" shall not include any pneumatic gun, as
66 defined in subsection E of § 15.2-915.4.

67 "One year" means 365 calendar days as required in federal regulations.

68 "School property" means any real property owned or leased by the school board or any vehicle
69 owned or leased by the school board or operated by or on behalf of the school board.

70 F. The exemptions set out in § 18.2-308 regarding concealed weapons shall apply, mutatis mutandis,
71 to the provisions of this section. The provisions of this section shall not apply to persons who possess
72 such firearm or firearms or pneumatic guns as a part of the curriculum or other programs sponsored by
73 the schools in the school division or any organization permitted by the school to use its premises or to
74 any law-enforcement officer while engaged in his duties as such.

75 G. This section shall not be construed to diminish the authority of the Board of Education or the
76 Governor concerning decisions on whether, or the extent to which, Virginia shall participate in the
77 federal Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, or to diminish the Governor's authority to coordinate
78 and provide policy direction on official communications between the Commonwealth and the United
79 States government.