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HOUSE BILL NO. 953

Offered January 11, 2006

Prefiled January 10, 2006

A *BILL to amend and reenact § 2.2-3701 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the Freedom of Information Act; definition of public body.*

Patron—Joannou

Referred to Committee on General Laws

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 2.2-3701 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:****§ 2.2-3701. Definitions.**

As used in this chapter, unless the context requires a different meaning:

"Closed meeting" means a meeting from which the public is excluded.

"Emergency" means an unforeseen circumstance rendering the notice required by this chapter impossible or impracticable and which circumstance requires immediate action.

"Meeting" or "meetings" means the meetings including work sessions, when sitting physically, or through telephonic or video equipment pursuant to § 2.2-3708, as a body or entity, or as an informal assemblage of (i) as many as three members or (ii) a quorum, if less than three, of the constituent membership, wherever held, with or without minutes being taken, whether or not votes are cast, of any public body. The gathering of employees of a public body shall not be deemed a "meeting" subject to the provisions of this chapter.

"Open meeting" or "public meeting" means a meeting at which the public may be present.

"Public body" means any legislative body, authority, board, bureau, commission, district or agency of the Commonwealth or of any political subdivision of the Commonwealth, including cities, towns and counties, municipal councils, governing bodies of counties, school boards and planning commissions; boards of visitors of public institutions of higher education; and other organizations, corporations or agencies in the Commonwealth supported wholly or principally by public funds. It shall include (i) the Virginia Birth-Related Neurological Injury Compensation Program and its board of directors established pursuant to Chapter 50 (§ 38.2-5000 et seq.) of Title 38.2 and (ii) any committee, subcommittee, or other entity however designated, of the public body created to perform delegated functions of the public body or to advise the public body. It shall not exclude any such committee, subcommittee or entity because it has private sector or citizen members. Corporations organized or created by the Virginia Retirement System are, or acting on behalf of, any authority, board, bureau, commission, district, or agency of the Commonwealth shall be deemed "public bodies" for purposes of this chapter.

For the purposes of the provisions of this chapter applicable to access to public records, constitutional officers shall be considered public bodies and, except as otherwise expressly provided by law, shall have the same obligations to disclose public records as other custodians of public records.

"Public records" means all writings and recordings that consist of letters, words or numbers, or their equivalent, set down by handwriting, typewriting, printing, photostatting, photography, magnetic impulse, optical or magneto-optical form, mechanical or electronic recording or other form of data compilation, however stored, and regardless of physical form or characteristics, prepared or owned by, or in the possession of a public body or its officers, employees or agents in the transaction of public business.

"Scholastic records" means those records containing information directly related to a student and maintained by a public body that is an educational agency or institution or by a person acting for such agency or institution.

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