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SENATE BILL NO. 351

Offered January 11, 2006

Prefiled January 11, 2006

A BILL to amend and reenact § 16.1-300 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the confidentiality of Department of Juvenile Justice records; exceptions.

Patron—Howell

Referred to Committee for Courts of Justice

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 16.1-300 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 16.1-300. Confidentiality of Department records.

A. The social, medical, psychiatric and psychological reports and records of children who are or have been (i) before the court, (ii) under supervision, or (iii) receiving services from a court service unit or who are committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice shall be confidential and shall be open for inspection only to the following:

1. The judge, prosecuting attorney, probation officers and professional staff assigned to serve a court having the child currently before it in any proceeding;

2. Any public agency, child welfare agency, private organization, facility or person who is treating or providing services to the child pursuant to a contract with the Department or pursuant to the Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control Act as set out in Article 12.1 (§ 16.1-309.2 et seq.) of Chapter 11 of this title;

3. The child's parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person standing in loco parentis and the child's attorney;

4. Any person who has reached the age of majority and requests access to his own records or reports;

5. Any state agency providing funds to the Department of Juvenile Justice and required by the federal government to monitor or audit the effectiveness of programs for the benefit of juveniles which are financed in whole or in part by federal funds;

6. Any other person, agency or institution, by order of the court, having a legitimate interest in the case or in the work of the court;

7. Any person, agency or institution having a legitimate interest when release of the confidential information is (i) for the provision of treatment or rehabilitation services for the juvenile who is the subject of the information or (ii) when the requesting party has custody or is providing supervision for a juvenile and the release of the confidential information is in the interest of maintaining security in a secure facility as defined by § 16.1-228;

8. Any attorney for the Commonwealth, any pretrial services officer, local community-based probation officer and adult probation and parole officer for the purpose of preparing pretrial investigation, including risk assessment instruments, presentence reports, including those provided in § 19.2-299, discretionary sentencing guidelines worksheets, including related risk assessment instruments, as directed by the court pursuant to subsection C of § 19.2-298.01 or any court-ordered post-sentence investigation report; ~~and~~

9. Any person, agency, organization or institution outside the Department that, at the Department's request, is conducting research or evaluation on the work of the Department or any of its divisions; *and*

10. *Any full-time or part-time employee of the Department of State Police or of a police department or sheriff's office that is a part of or administrated by the Commonwealth or any political subdivision thereof, and who is responsible for the enforcement of the penal, traffic, or motor vehicle laws of the Commonwealth, for purposes of a criminal investigation of an allegation of criminal activity involving a criminal act as defined in § 18.2-46.1 or information that a person is a member of a criminal street gang as defined in § 18.2-46.1. No person who obtains information pursuant to this section shall divulge such information except in connection with a criminal investigation authorized by the Attorney General or attorney for the Commonwealth or with a prosecution or proceeding in court.*

A designated individual treating or responsible for the treatment of a person may inspect such reports and records as are kept by the Department on such person or receive copies thereof, when the person who is the subject of the reports and records or his parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person standing in loco parentis if the person is under the age of 18, provides written authorization to the Department prior to the release of such reports and records for inspection or copying to the designated individual.

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59 B. The Department may withhold from inspection by a child's parent, guardian, legal custodian or
60 other person standing in loco parentis that portion of the records referred to in subsection A hereof,
61 when the staff of the Department determines, in its discretion, that disclosure of such information would
62 be detrimental to the child or to a third party, provided that the juvenile and domestic relations district
63 court (i) having jurisdiction over the facility where the child is currently placed or (ii) that last had
64 jurisdiction over the child if such child is no longer in the custody or under the supervision of the
65 Department shall concur in such determination.

66 If any person authorized under subsection A to inspect Department records requests to inspect the
67 reports and records and if the Department withholds from inspection any portion of such record or
68 report pursuant to the preceding provisions, the Department shall (i) inform the individual making the
69 request of the action taken to withhold any information and the reasons for such action; (ii) provide
70 such individual with as much information as is deemed appropriate under the circumstances; and (iii)
71 notify the individual in writing at the time of the request of his right to request judicial review of the
72 Department's decision. The circuit court (a) having jurisdiction over the facility where the child is
73 currently placed or (b) that had jurisdiction over the original proceeding or over an appeal of the
74 juvenile and domestic relations district court final order of disposition concerning the child if such child
75 is no longer in the custody or under the supervision of the Department shall have jurisdiction over
76 petitions filed for review of the Department's decision to withhold reports or records as provided herein.