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SENATE BILL NO. 265

Offered January 9, 2008

Prefiled January 8, 2008

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Article 3 of Chapter 3 of Title 8.01 a section numbered 8.01-44.8, relating to false academic credentials; civil remedy.*

Patron—Deeds

Referred to Committee for Courts of Justice

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Article 3 of Chapter 3 of Title 8.01 a section numbered 8.01-44.8 as follows:

§ 8.01-44.8. False academic credentials; civil remedy.

A. As used in this section, unless the context requires otherwise:

"Academic credential" means a degree or diploma, transcript, education or completion certificate, or similar document that indicates completion of a program of study or instruction or completion of one or more courses at an institution of higher education or the grant of an associate, bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree.

"False academic credential" means an academic credential issued or manufactured by a person that is not a qualified institution.

"Qualified institution" means any of the following: (i) an institution of higher education as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1001, located in the United States or (ii) any other institution of higher education authorized to do business in the Commonwealth.

B. A person shall not knowingly issue or manufacture a false academic credential in the Commonwealth.

C. An individual shall not knowingly use a false academic credential to obtain employment; to obtain a promotion or higher compensation in employment; to obtain admission to a qualified institution; or in connection with any loan, business, trade, profession, or occupation.

D. A person damaged by a violation of this section may bring a civil action and may recover costs, reasonable attorney fees, and the greater of either the person's actual damages or \$100,000.

INTRODUCED

SB265