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HOUSE BILL NO. 13

Offered January 13, 2010

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A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 9.1-177.1 and 19.2-299 of the Code of Virginia, relating to post-conviction dissemination of presentencing reports.

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Referred to Committee for Courts of Justice

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 9.1-177.1 and 19.2-299 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 9.1-177.1. Confidentiality of records of and reports on adult persons under investigation by, or placed on probation supervision with a local community-based probation services agency.

A. Any investigation report, including a presentencing investigation report, prepared by a local community-based probation officer is confidential and is exempt from the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (§ 2.2-3700 et seq.). Such reports shall be filed as a part of the case record. Such reports, *including sentencing guideline worksheets*, shall be made available only by court order and shall be sealed upon final order by the court; except that such reports shall be available upon request to (i) any criminal justice agency, as defined in § 9.1-101, of this or any other state or of the United States; (ii) any agency where the accused is referred for assessment or treatment; ~~or~~ (iii) counsel for the person who is the subject of the report*; or (iv) counsel who represents the person in pursuit of a post-conviction remedy, subject to the limitations set forth in § 37.2-901*.

B. Any report on the progress of an offender under the supervision ~~or~~ of a local community-based probation agency and any information relative to the identity of or inferring personal characteristics of an accused, including demographic information, diagnostic summaries, records of office visits, medical, substance abuse, psychiatric or psychological records or information, substance abuse screening, assessment and testing information, and other sensitive information not explicitly classified as criminal history record information, is exempt from the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (§ 2.2-3700 et seq.). However, such information may be disseminated to criminal justice agencies as defined in § 9.1-101 in the discretion of the custodian of these records.

§ 19.2-299. Investigations and reports by probation officers in certain cases.

A. When a person is tried in a circuit court (i) upon a charge of assault and battery in violation of § 18.2-57 or 18.2-57.2, stalking in violation of § 18.2-60.3, sexual battery in violation of § 18.2-67.4, attempted sexual battery in violation of § 18.2-67.5, or driving while intoxicated in violation of § 18.2-266, and is adjudged guilty of such charge, unless waived by the court and the defendant and the attorney for the Commonwealth, the court may, or on motion of the defendant shall; or (ii) upon a felony charge not set forth in subdivision (iii) below, the court may when there is a plea agreement between the defendant and the Commonwealth and shall when the defendant pleads guilty without a plea agreement or is found guilty by the court after a plea of not guilty; or (iii) the court shall when a person is charged and adjudged guilty of a felony violation, or conspiracy to commit or attempt to commit a felony violation, of § 18.2-46.2, 18.2-46.3, 18.2-48, clause (2) or (3) of § 18.2-49, § 18.2-61, 18.2-63, 18.2-64.1, 18.2-64.2, 18.2-67.1, 18.2-67.2, 18.2-67.3, 18.2-67.4:1, 18.2-67.5, 18.2-67.5:1, 18.2-355, 18.2-356, 18.2-357, 18.2-361, 18.2-362, 18.2-366, 18.2-368, 18.2-370, 18.2-370.1, or 18.2-370.2, or any attempt to commit or conspiracy to commit any felony violation of § 18.2-67.5, 18.2-67.5:2, or 18.2-67.5:3, direct a probation officer of such court to thoroughly investigate and report upon the history of the accused, including a report of the accused's criminal record as an adult and available juvenile court records, any information regarding the accused's participation or membership in a criminal street gang as defined in § 18.2-46.1, and all other relevant facts, to fully advise the court so the court may determine the appropriate sentence to be imposed. Unless the defendant or the attorney for the Commonwealth objects, the court may order that the report contain no more than the defendant's criminal history, any history of substance abuse, any physical or health-related problems as may be pertinent, and any applicable sentencing guideline worksheets. This expedited report shall be subject to all the same procedures as all other sentencing reports and sentencing guidelines worksheets. The probation officer, after having furnished a copy of this report at least five days prior to sentencing to counsel for the accused and the attorney for the Commonwealth for their permanent use, shall submit his report in advance of the sentencing hearing to the judge in chambers, who shall keep such report confidential. Counsel for the accused may provide the accused with a copy of the presentence report. The probation officer shall be available to testify from this report in open court in the presence of the

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accused, who shall have been provided with a copy of the presentence report by his counsel or advised of its contents and be given the right to cross-examine the investigating officer as to any matter contained therein and to present any additional facts bearing upon the matter. The report of the investigating officer shall at all times be kept confidential by each recipient, and shall be filed as a part of the record in the case. Any report so filed shall be made available only by court order and shall be sealed upon final order by the court, except that such reports or copies thereof shall be available at any time to any criminal justice agency, as defined in § 9.1-101, of this or any other state or of the United States; to any agency where the accused is referred for treatment by the court or by probation and parole services; and to counsel for any person who has been indicted jointly for the same felony as the person subject to the report. ~~Any~~ *Subject to the limitations set forth in § 37.2-901, any* report prepared pursuant to the provisions hereof*, including the sentencing guideline worksheets,* shall without court order be made available to counsel for the person who is the subject of the report if that person *(i)* is charged with a felony subsequent to the time of the preparation of the report *or (ii) has been convicted of the crime or crimes for which the report was prepared and is pursuing a post-conviction remedy*. The presentence report shall be in a form prescribed by the Department of Corrections. In all cases where such report is not ordered, a simplified report shall be prepared on a form prescribed by the Department of Corrections. For the purposes of this subsection, information regarding the accused's participation or membership in a criminal street gang may include the characteristics, specific rivalries, common practices, social customs and behavior, terminology, and types of crimes that are likely to be committed by that criminal street gang.

B. As a part of any presentence investigation conducted pursuant to subsection A when the offense for which the defendant was convicted was a felony, the court probation officer shall advise any victim of such offense in writing that he may submit to the Virginia Parole Board a written request (i) to be given the opportunity to submit to the Board a written statement in advance of any parole hearing describing the impact of the offense upon him and his opinion regarding the defendant's release and (ii) to receive copies of such other notifications pertaining to the defendant as the Board may provide pursuant to subsection B of § 53.1-155.

C. As part of any presentence investigation conducted pursuant to subsection A when the offense for which the defendant was convicted was a felony drug offense set forth in Article 1 (§ 18.2-247 et seq.) of Chapter 7 of Title 18.2, the presentence report shall include any known association of the defendant with illicit drug operations or markets.

D. As a part of any presentence investigation conducted pursuant to subsection A, when the offense for which the defendant was convicted was a felony, not a capital offense, committed on or after January 1, 2000, the defendant shall be required to undergo a substance abuse screening pursuant to § 18.2-251.01.