

2010 SESSION

INTRODUCED

10100272D

HOUSE BILL NO. 9

Offered January 13, 2010

Prefiled December 3, 2009

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 52-6.2, relating to the State Police Volunteer Chaplaincy Program.*

Patrons—Carrico, Anderson, Athey, Bell, Richard P., Byron, Cox, J.A., Crockett-Stark, Gilbert, Lewis, Lingamfelter, Lohr, Merricks and Sherwood; Senator: Puckett

Referred to Committee on Militia, Police and Public Safety

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 52-6.2 as follows:

§ 52-6.2. Volunteer Chaplaincy Program.

The Superintendent of State Police shall have the authority to establish a Volunteer Chaplaincy Program, enabling employees of the Department otherwise trained in ministry to serve as volunteer chaplains, without supplemental compensation. Duties of volunteer chaplains shall be established by order of the Superintendent and may include, but are not limited to, providing employees of the Department and their families with spiritual counseling and guidance and providing invocations and benedictions at Department-sanctioned events and ceremonies. In providing such guidance and counseling, the volunteer chaplains shall respect and be sensitive to the religious beliefs of the employees and their families. The Superintendent may establish guidelines regarding the selection and general supervision of the volunteer chaplains in the Volunteer Chaplaincy Program; however, the activities and services of each volunteer chaplain shall be provided in his individual capacity and in accordance with the dictates of his own conscience. Neither the Department, the Superintendent, or any other Department official, shall prescribe, proscribe, regulate, limit, or otherwise dictate the religious content of the volunteer chaplains' expressions of religious beliefs, prayers, invocations, benedictions, spiritual counseling, or spiritual guidance. Anytime a volunteer chaplain is called upon to provide an invocation or benediction for the purpose of solemnizing a Department-sanctioned event or ceremony and a printed agenda or program is distributed at such event or ceremony, a disclaimer shall be included on the agenda or program to acknowledge that the invocation or benediction is the voluntary offering of an individual and that the views or beliefs expressed by such individual have not been previously reviewed, approved, sanctioned, or endorsed by the Department. No employee of the Department shall be compelled or required to attend the prayer, invocation, or benediction of a Department-sanctioned event or ceremony.

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HB9