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SENATE BILL NO. 107

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the Senate Committee for Courts of Justice
on February 1, 2010)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator McDougle)

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 46.2-324.1 and 46.2-335 of the Code of Virginia, relating to requirements for initial driver's license; restricted permit.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That §§ 46.2-324.1 and 46.2-335 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 46.2-324.1. Requirements for initial licensure of certain applicants.

No driver's license shall be issued to any applicant unless he either (i) provides written evidence of having satisfactorily completed a course of driver instruction at a driver training school licensed under Chapter 17 (§ 46.2-1700 et seq.) of this title or a comparable course approved by the Department or Department of Education or (ii) has held a learner's permit or restricted learner's permit pursuant to subsection A of § 46.2-335 issued by the Department for at least 30 days prior to his first behind-the-wheel examination by the Department.

The provisions of this section shall only apply to persons who are at least 19 years old and who either (i) have never held a driver's license issued by Virginia or any other state or territory of the United States or foreign country or (ii) have never been licensed or held the license endorsement or classification required to operate the type of vehicle which they now propose to operate, except that the provisions of this section shall apply to applicants for commercial driver's licenses who are 18 years old or older and have never before held a commercial driver's license or have never held the license endorsement or classification required to operate the type of commercial motor vehicle that they now propose to operate. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the Department from requiring any person to complete the skills examination as prescribed in § 46.2-325 and the written or automated examinations as prescribed in § 46.2-335.

§ 46.2-335. Learner's permits; fees; certification required.

A. The Department, on receiving from any Virginia resident over the age of 15 years and six months an application for a learner's permit or motorcycle learner's permit, may, subject to the applicant's satisfactory documentation of meeting the requirements of this chapter and successful completion of the written or automated knowledge and vision examinations and, in the case of a motorcycle learner's permit applicant, the automated motorcycle test, issue a permit entitling the applicant, while having the permit in his immediate possession, to drive a motor vehicle or, if the application is made for a motorcycle learner's permit, a motorcycle, on the highways, when accompanied by any licensed driver 21 years of age or older or by his parent or legal guardian, or by a brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, step-brother, or step-sister 18 years of age or older. The accompanying person shall be (i) alert, able to assist the driver, and actually occupying a seat beside the driver or, for motorcycle instruction, providing immediate supervision from a separate accompanying motor vehicle and (ii) lawfully permitted to operate the motor vehicle or accompanying motorcycle at that time.

The Department shall not, however, issue a learner's permit or motorcycle learner's permit to any minor applicant required to provide evidence of compliance with the compulsory school attendance law set forth in Article 1 (§ 22.1-254 et seq.) of Chapter 14 of Title 22.1, unless such applicant is in good academic standing or, if not in such standing or submitting evidence thereof, whose parent or guardian, having custody of such minor, provides written authorization for the minor to obtain a learner's permit or motorcycle learner's permit, which written authorization shall be obtained on forms provided by the Department and indicating the Commonwealth's interest in the good academic standing and regular school attendance of such minors. Any minor providing proper evidence of the solemnization of his marriage or a certified copy of a court order of emancipation shall not be required to provide the certification of good academic standing or any written authorization from his parent or guardian to obtain a learner's permit or motorcycle learner's permit.

Such permit, except a motorcycle learner's permit, shall be valid until the holder thereof either is issued a driver's license as provided for in this chapter or no longer meets the qualifications for issuance of a learner's permit as provided in this section. Motorcycle learner's permits shall be valid for 12 months. When a motorcycle learner's permit expires, the permittee may, upon submission of an application, payment of the application fee, and successful completion of the examinations, be issued another motorcycle learner's permit valid for 12 months.

A restricted learner's permit may be issued only to a person who is at least 25 years of age, who meets the requirements of this section, and who has been granted restricted driving privileges by a court. Such restricted permit shall be subject to all limitations of a learner's permit as provided in this

60 *section, except those limitations reserved for persons younger than 18 years of age.*

61 *A restricted learner's permit shall be valid until the holder thereof is issued a driver's license or*
62 *restricted license or the restricted license privilege authorized by the court has expired. No restricted*
63 *learner's permit shall be issued under the provisions of subsection B of § 46.2-499. No restricted*
64 *learner's permit shall permit any person to operate a commercial motor vehicle as defined in the*
65 *Virginia Commercial Driver's License Act (§ 46.2-341.1 et seq.).*

66 B. No driver's license shall be issued to any such person who is less than 18 years old unless, while
67 holding a learner's permit, he has driven a motor vehicle for at least 45 hours, at least 15 of which were
68 after sunset, as certified by his parent, foster parent, or legal guardian unless the person is married or
69 otherwise emancipated. Such certification shall be on a form provided by the Commissioner and shall
70 contain the following statement:

71 "It is illegal for anyone to give false information in connection with obtaining a driver's license. This
72 certification is considered part of the driver's license application, and anyone who certifies to a false
73 statement may be prosecuted. I certify that the statements made and the information submitted by me
74 regarding this certification are true and correct."

75 Such form shall also include the driver's license or Department of Motor Vehicles-issued
76 identification card number of the person making the certification.

77 C. No learner's permit *issued to any person younger than 18 years of age* shall authorize its holder
78 to operate a motor vehicle with more than one passenger who is less than 18 years old, except when
79 participating in a driver education program approved by the Department of Education or a course
80 offered by a driver training school licensed by the Department. This passenger limitation, however, shall
81 not apply to the driver's family or household as defined in subsection B of § 46.2-334.01.

82 D. No learner's permit *issued to any person younger than 18 years of age* shall authorize its holder
83 to operate a motor vehicle between midnight and four o'clock a.m.

84 E. A violation of subsection C or D of this section shall not constitute negligence, be considered in
85 mitigation of damages of whatever nature, be admissible in evidence or be the subject of comment by
86 counsel in any action for the recovery of damages arising out of the operation, ownership, or
87 maintenance of a motor vehicle, nor shall anything in this subsection change any existing law, rule, or
88 procedure pertaining to any such civil action.

89 F. The provisions of §§ 46.2-323 and 46.2-334 relating to evidence and certification of Virginia
90 residence and, in the case of persons of school age, compliance with the compulsory school attendance
91 law shall apply, mutatis mutandis, to applications for learner's permits and motorcycle learner's permits
92 issued under this section.

93 G. For persons qualifying for a driver's license through driver education courses approved by the
94 Department of Education or courses offered by driver training schools licensed by the Department, the
95 application for the learner's permit shall be used as the application for the driver's license.

96 H. The Department shall charge a fee of \$3 for each learner's permit and motorcycle learner's permit
97 issued under this section. Fees for issuance of learner's permits shall be paid into the driver education
98 fund of the state treasury; fees for issuance of motorcycle learner's permits shall be paid into the state
99 treasury and credited to the Motorcycle Rider Safety Training Program Fund created pursuant to
100 § 46.2-1191. It shall be unlawful for any person, after having received a learner's permit, to drive a
101 motor vehicle without being accompanied by a licensed driver as provided in the foregoing provisions of
102 this section; however, a learner's permit other than a motorcycle learner's permit, accompanied by
103 documentation verifying that the driver is at least 16 years and three months old and has successfully
104 completed an approved driver's education course, signed by the minor's parent, guardian, legal custodian
105 or other person standing in loco parentis, shall constitute a temporary driver's license for the purpose of
106 driving unaccompanied by a licensed driver 18 years of age or older, if all other requirements of this
107 chapter have been met. Such temporary driver's license shall only be valid until the driver has received
108 his permanent license pursuant to § 46.2-336.

109 I. Nothing in this section shall be construed to permit the issuance of a learner's permit entitling a
110 person to drive a commercial motor vehicle, except as provided by the Virginia Commercial Driver's
111 License Act (§ 46.2-341.1 et seq.).

112 J. The following limitations shall apply to operation of motorcycles by all persons holding
113 motorcycle learner's permits:

114 1. The operator shall wear an approved safety helmet as provided in § 46.2-910.

115 2. Operation shall be under the immediate supervision of a person licensed to operate a motorcycle
116 who is 21 years of age or older.

117 3. No person other than the operator shall occupy the motorcycle.

118 K. Any violation of this section shall be punishable as a Class 2 misdemeanor.