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SENATE BILL NO. 427

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the Senate Committee for Courts of Justice
on February 8, 2010)

(Patrons Prior to Substitute—Senators Herring and McEachin [SB 638])

A BILL to amend and reenact § 8.01-417 of the Code of Virginia, relating to civil procedure; disclosure of insurance liability limits.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 8.01-417 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 8.01-417. Copies of written statements or transcriptions of verbal statements by injured person to be delivered to him; copies of subpoenaed documents to be provided to other party.

A. Any person who takes from a person who has sustained a personal injury a signed written statement or voice recording of any statement relative to such injury shall deliver to such injured person a copy of such written statement forthwith or a verified typed transcription of such recording within 30 days from the date such statement was given or recording made, when and if the statement or recording is transcribed or in all cases when requested by the injured person or his attorney.

B. Unless otherwise ordered for good cause shown, when one party to a civil proceeding subpoenas documents, the subpoenaing party, upon receipt of the subpoenaed documents, shall, if requested in writing, provide true and full copies of the same to any other party or to the attorney for any other party, provided the other party or attorney for the other party pays the reasonable cost of copying or reproducing the subpoenaed documents. This provision does not apply where the subpoenaed documents are returnable to and maintained by the clerk of court in which the action is pending.

C. After he gives written notice that he represents an injured person, an attorney, or an individual injured in a motor vehicle accident if he is not represented by counsel, may, prior to the filing of a civil action for personal injuries sustained as a result of a motor vehicle accident, request in writing that the insurer disclose the limits of liability of any motor vehicle liability or any personal injury liability insurance policy that may be applicable to the claim. The requesting party shall provide the insurer with the date of the motor vehicle accident, the name and last known address of the alleged tortfeasor, a copy of the accident report, if any, and the claim number, if available. The requesting party shall also submit to the insurer the injured person's medical records, medical bills, and wage-loss documentation, if applicable, pertaining to the claimed injury. If the total of all such medical bills and wage losses equals or exceeds \$12,500, the insurer shall respond in writing within 30 days of receipt of the request and shall disclose the limits of liability at the time of the accident of all such policies, regardless of whether the insurer contests the applicability of the policy to the injured person's claim. Disclosure of the policy limits under this section shall not constitute an admission that alleged injury or damage is subject to the policy. Information concerning the insurance policy is not by reason of disclosure pursuant to this subsection admissible as evidence at trial.

D. After he gives written notice that he represents the personal representative of the estate of a decedent who died as a result of a motor vehicle accident, an attorney, or the personal representative of the estate of a decedent who died as a result of a motor vehicle accident if he is not represented by counsel, may, prior to the filing of a civil action for wrongful death as a result of a motor vehicle accident, request in writing that the insurer disclose the limits of liability of any motor vehicle liability insurance policy or any personal injury liability insurance policy that may be applicable to the claim. The requesting party shall provide the insurer with the date of the motor vehicle accident, the name and last known address of the alleged tortfeasor, a copy of the accident report, if any, and the claim number, if available. The requesting party shall submit to the insurer the death certificate of the decedent, the certificate of qualification of the personal representative of the decedent's estate, the names and relationships of the statutory beneficiaries to the decedent, medical bills, if any, supporting a claim for damages under subdivision 3 of § 8.01-52, and, if at the time the request is made, a claim for damages under clause (i) of subdivision 2 of § 8.01-52 is anticipated, a description of the source, amount, and payment history of the claimed income loss for each beneficiary. The insurer shall respond in writing within 30 days of receipt of the request and shall disclose the limits of liability at the time of the accident of all such policies, regardless of whether the insurer contests the applicability of the policy to the personal representative's claim. Disclosure of the policy limits under this section shall not constitute an admission that the alleged death or other damage is subject to the policy. Information concerning the insurance policy is not by reason of disclosure pursuant to this subsection admissible as evidence at trial.