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HOUSE BILL NO. 950

Offered January 11, 2012

Prefiled January 11, 2012

A BILL to amend and reenact § 19.2-165 of the Code of Virginia, relating to cost allowances for trial and hearing transcripts provided to the Commonwealth.

 Patron—Bell, Robert B.

 Referred to Committee for Courts of Justice

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 19.2-165 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 19.2-165. Recording evidence and incidents of trial in felony cases; cost of recording; cost of transcripts; certified transcript deemed prima facie correct; request for copy of transcript.

In all felony cases, the court or judge trying the case shall by order entered of record provide for the recording verbatim of the evidence and incidents of trial either by a court reporter or by mechanical or electronic devices approved by the court. The expense of reporting or recording the trial of criminal cases shall be paid by the Commonwealth out of the appropriation for criminal charges, upon approval of the trial judge. However, if the defendant is convicted, the Commonwealth shall be entitled to receive the amount allocated to the court reporter fund under the fixed felony fee. Localities that maintain mechanical or electronic devices for this purpose shall be entitled to retain their reasonable expenses attributable to the cost of operating and maintaining such equipment.

In all felony cases in which a transcript of any related prior proceedings, including but not limited to a mistrial or preliminary hearing, is provided to the defendant, a transcript shall also be made available contemporaneously to the Commonwealth. The cost of such transcript shall be included in any allowances made by the court out of the state treasury from the appropriation for criminal charges on the certificate of the court stating the nature of the service pursuant to § 19.2-332.

In all felony cases where it appears to the court from the affidavit of the defendant and other evidence that the defendant intends to seek an appeal and is financially unable to pay such costs or to bear the expense of a copy of the transcript of the evidence for an appeal, the trial court shall, upon the motion of counsel for the defendant, order the evidence transcribed for such appeal and all costs therefor paid by the Commonwealth out of the appropriation for criminal charges. If the conviction is not reversed, all costs paid by the Commonwealth, under the provisions hereof, shall be assessed against the defendant.

The reporter or other individual designated to report and record the trial shall file the original shorthand notes or other original records with the clerk of the circuit court who shall preserve them in the public records of the court for not less than five years if an appeal was taken and a transcript was prepared, or ten years if no appeal was taken. The transcript in any case certified by the reporter or other individual designated to report and record the trial shall be deemed prima facie a correct statement of the evidence and incidents of trial.

Upon the request of any counsel of record, or of any party not represented by counsel, and upon payment of the reasonable cost thereof, the court reporter covering any proceeding shall provide the requesting party with a copy of the transcript of such proceeding or any requested portion thereof.

The court shall not direct the court reporter to cease recording any portion of the proceeding without the consent of all parties or of their counsel of record.

The administration of this section shall be under the direction of the Supreme Court of Virginia.

INTRODUCED

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