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HOUSE BILL NO. 1902

Offered January 14, 2015

Prefiled January 13, 2015

A *BILL to amend and reenact §§ 18.2-60.3 and 55-225.16 of the Code of Virginia, relating to stalking; early termination of rental agreements; penalty.*

Patron—Lopez

Referred to Committee for Courts of Justice

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

- 1. That §§ 18.2-60.3 and 55-225.16 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**
§ 18.2-60.3. Stalking; penalty.

A. Any person, except a law-enforcement officer, as defined in § 9.1-101, and acting in the performance of his official duties, and a registered private investigator, as defined in § 9.1-138, who is regulated in accordance with § 9.1-139 and acting in the course of his legitimate business, who on more than one occasion engages in conduct *by any action, method, device, or means* directed at another person with the intent to place, or when he knows or reasonably should know that the conduct places, that other person in reasonable fear of death, criminal sexual assault, or bodily injury to that other person or to that other person's family or household member is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

B. Any person who is convicted of a second offense of subsection A occurring within five years of a prior conviction of such an offense when the person was also convicted within the five-year period prior to the instant offense of a violation of (i) § 18.2-51, 18.2-51.2, 18.2-51.6, 18.2-52, or 18.2-57 and the victim of that crime was the same person who is the victim of the stalking activity in the instant conviction, (ii) § 18.2-57.2, or (iii) a protective order, is guilty of a Class 6 felony.

C. Any person convicted of a third or subsequent conviction of subsection A occurring within five years of a conviction for an offense under this section or for a similar offense under the law of any other jurisdiction is guilty of a Class 6 felony.

D. A person may be convicted under this section irrespective of the jurisdiction or jurisdictions within the Commonwealth wherein the conduct described in subsection A occurred, if the person engaged in that conduct on at least one occasion in the jurisdiction where the person is tried. Evidence of any such conduct that occurred outside the Commonwealth may be admissible, if relevant, in any prosecution under this section provided that the prosecution is based upon conduct occurring within the Commonwealth.

E. Upon finding a person guilty under this section, the court shall, in addition to the sentence imposed, issue an order prohibiting contact between the defendant and the victim or the victim's family or household member.

F. The Department of Corrections, sheriff or regional jail director shall give notice prior to the release from a state correctional facility or a local or regional jail of any person incarcerated upon conviction of a violation of this section, to any victim of the offense who, in writing, requests notice, or to any person designated in writing by the victim. The notice shall be given at least 15 days prior to release of a person sentenced to a term of incarceration of more than 30 days or, if the person was sentenced to a term of incarceration of at least 48 hours but no more than 30 days, 24 hours prior to release. If the person escapes, notice shall be given as soon as practicable following the escape. The victim shall keep the Department of Corrections, sheriff or regional jail director informed of the current mailing address and telephone number of the person named in the writing submitted to receive notice.

All information relating to any person who receives or may receive notice under this subsection shall remain confidential and shall not be made available to the person convicted of violating this section.

For purposes of this subsection, "release" includes a release of the offender from a state correctional facility or a local or regional jail (i) upon completion of his term of incarceration or (ii) on probation or parole.

No civil liability shall attach to the Department of Corrections nor to any sheriff or regional jail director or their deputies or employees for a failure to comply with the requirements of this subsection.

G. For purposes of this section:

"Family or household member" has the same meaning as provided in § 16.1-228.

§ 55-225.16. Early termination of rental agreements by victims of family abuse, sexual abuse, criminal sexual assault, or stalking.

A. Any tenant who is a victim of (i) family abuse as defined by § 16.1-228, (ii) sexual abuse as defined by § 18.2-67.10, or (iii) other criminal sexual assault under Article 7 (§ 18.2-61 et seq.) of

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59 Chapter 4 of Title 18.2, or (iv) *stalking as defined by § 18.2-60.3* may terminate such tenant's
60 obligations under a rental agreement under the following circumstances:

61 1. The victim has obtained an order of protection pursuant to § 16.1-279.1 and has given written
62 notice of termination in accordance with subsection B during the period of the protective order or any
63 extension thereof; or

64 2. A court has entered an order convicting a perpetrator of any crime of *stalking as defined by*
65 *§ 18.2-60.3*, sexual assault under Article 7 (§ 18.2-61 et seq.) of Chapter 4 of Title 18.2, sexual abuse as
66 defined by § 18.2-67.10, or family abuse as defined by § 16.1-228 against the victim and the victim
67 gives written notice of termination in accordance with subsection B. A victim may exercise a right of
68 termination under this section to terminate a rental agreement in effect when the conviction order is
69 entered and one subsequent rental agreement based upon the same conviction.

70 B. A tenant who qualifies to terminate obligations under a rental agreement pursuant to subsection A
71 shall do so by serving on the landlord a written notice of termination to be effective on a date stated
72 therein, such date to be not less than 30 days after the first date on which the next rental payment is
73 due and payable after the date on which the written notice is given. When the tenant serves the
74 termination notice on the landlord, the tenant shall also provide the landlord with a copy of (i) the order
75 of protection issued or (ii) the conviction order.

76 C. The rent shall be payable at such time as would otherwise have been required by the terms of the
77 rental agreement through the effective date of the termination as provided in subsection B.

78 D. The landlord may not charge any liquidated damages.

79 E. The victim's obligations as a tenant under § 55-225.4 shall continue through the effective date of
80 the termination as provided in subsection B. Any co-tenants on the lease with the victim shall remain
81 responsible for the rent for the balance of the term of the rental agreement. If the perpetrator is the
82 remaining sole tenant obligated on the rental agreement, the landlord may terminate the rental agreement
83 and collect actual damages for such termination against the perpetrator.

84 **2. That the provisions of this act may result in a net increase in periods of imprisonment or**
85 **commitment. Pursuant to § 30-19.1:4, the estimated amount of the necessary appropriation is \$0**
86 **for periods of imprisonment in state adult correctional facilities and cannot be determined for**
87 **periods of commitment to the custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice.**