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**HOUSE BILL NO. 2105**

Offered January 14, 2015

Prefiled January 14, 2015

*A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 20-107.1 and 20-109 of the Code of Virginia, relating to spousal support; denial of spousal support to spouses convicted of certain violations.*

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Patron—Peace

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Referred to Committee for Courts of Justice

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:****1. That §§ 20-107.1 and 20-109 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:****§ 20-107.1. Court may decree as to maintenance and support of spouses.**

A. Pursuant to any proceeding arising under subsection L of § 16.1-241 or upon the entry of a decree providing (i) for the dissolution of a marriage, (ii) for a divorce, whether from the bond of matrimony or from bed and board, (iii) that neither party is entitled to a divorce, or (iv) for separate maintenance, the court may make such further decree as it shall deem expedient concerning the maintenance and support of the spouses. However, the court shall have no authority to decree maintenance and support payable by the estate of a deceased spouse.

B. Any maintenance and support shall be subject to the provisions of § 20-109, and no permanent maintenance and support shall be awarded from a spouse if there exists in such spouse's favor a ground of divorce under the provisions of subdivision (1) of § 20-91. However, the court may make such an award notwithstanding the existence of such ground if the court determines from clear and convincing evidence, that a denial of support and maintenance would constitute a manifest injustice, based upon the respective degrees of fault during the marriage and the relative economic circumstances of the parties.

C. The court, in its discretion, may decree that maintenance and support of a spouse be made in periodic payments for a defined duration, or in periodic payments for an undefined duration, or in a lump sum award, or in any combination thereof.

D. In addition to or in lieu of an award pursuant to subsection C, the court may reserve the right of a party to receive support in the future. In any case in which the right to support is so reserved, there shall be a rebuttable presumption that the reservation will continue for a period equal to 50 percent of the length of time between the date of the marriage and the date of separation. Once granted, the duration of such a reservation shall not be subject to modification.

E. The court, in determining whether to award support and maintenance for a spouse, shall consider the circumstances and factors ~~which~~ *that* contributed to the dissolution of the marriage, specifically including adultery and any other ground for divorce under the provisions of subdivision (3) or (6) of § 20-91 or § 20-95. In determining the nature, amount and duration of an award pursuant to this section, the court shall consider the following:

1. The obligations, needs and financial resources of the parties, including but not limited to income from all pension, profit sharing or retirement plans, of whatever nature;

2. The standard of living established during the marriage;

3. The duration of the marriage;

4. The age and physical and mental condition of the parties and any special circumstances of the family;

5. The extent to which the age, physical or mental condition or special circumstances of any child of the parties would make it appropriate that a party not seek employment outside of the home;

6. The contributions, monetary and nonmonetary, of each party to the well-being of the family;

7. The property interests of the parties, both real and personal, tangible and intangible;

8. The provisions made with regard to the marital property under § 20-107.3;

9. The earning capacity, including the skills, education and training of the parties and the present employment opportunities for persons possessing such earning capacity;

10. The opportunity for, ability of, and the time and costs involved for a party to acquire the appropriate education, training and employment to obtain the skills needed to enhance his or her earning ability;

11. The decisions regarding employment, career, economics, education and parenting arrangements made by the parties during the marriage and their effect on present and future earning potential, including the length of time one or both of the parties have been absent from the job market;

12. The extent to which either party has contributed to the attainment of education, training, career position or profession of the other party; and

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HB2105

59 13. Such other factors, including the tax consequences to each party, as are necessary to consider the  
60 equities between the parties.

61 *E1. The court shall not award support to a spouse if such spouse was convicted of any violation of*  
62 *Article 4 (§ 18.2-51 et seq.) or 7 (§ 18.2-61 et seq.) of Chapter 4 of Title 18.2, or any substantially*  
63 *similar laws of any other state or of the United States, provided that (i) such violation was against the*  
64 *spouse from whom support is being sought and (ii) the conviction occurred within the five-year period*  
65 *immediately preceding the filing of the petition for divorce or at any time thereafter, unless the spouse*  
66 *seeking support proves by a preponderance of the evidence that a denial of support would be*  
67 *unconscionable.*

68 F. In contested cases in the circuit courts, any order granting, reserving or denying a request for  
69 spousal support shall be accompanied by written findings and conclusions of the court identifying the  
70 factors in subsection E ~~which~~ *or E1* that support the court's order. If the court awards periodic support  
71 for a defined duration, such findings shall identify the basis for the nature, amount and duration of the  
72 award and, if appropriate, a specification of the events and circumstances reasonably contemplated by  
73 the court ~~which~~ *that* support the award.

74 G. For purposes of this section and § 20-109, "date of separation" means the earliest date at which  
75 the parties are physically separated and at least one party intends such separation to be permanent  
76 provided the separation is continuous thereafter and "defined duration" means a period of time (i) with a  
77 specific beginning and ending date or (ii) specified in relation to the occurrence or cessation of an event  
78 or condition other than death or termination pursuant to § 20-110.

79 H. Where there are no minor children whom the parties have a mutual duty to support, an order  
80 directing the payment of spousal support, including those orders confirming separation agreements,  
81 entered on or after October 1, 1985, whether they are original orders or modifications of existing orders,  
82 shall contain the following:

83 1. If known, the name, date of birth and social security number of each party and, unless otherwise  
84 ordered, each party's residential and, if different, mailing address, residential and employer telephone  
85 number, driver's license number, and the name and address of his employer; however, when a protective  
86 order has been issued or the court otherwise finds reason to believe that a party is at risk of physical or  
87 emotional harm from the other party, information other than the name of the party at risk shall not be  
88 included in the order;

89 2. The amount of periodic spousal support expressed in fixed sums, together with the payment  
90 interval, the date payments are due, and the date the first payment is due;

91 3. A statement as to whether there is an order for health care coverage for a party;

92 4. If support arrearages exist, (i) to whom an arrearage is owed and the amount of the arrearage, (ii)  
93 the period of time for which such arrearage is calculated, and (iii) a direction that all payments are to be  
94 credited to current spousal support obligations first, with any payment in excess of the current obligation  
95 applied to arrearages;

96 5. If spousal support payments are ordered to be paid directly to the obligee, and unless the court for  
97 good cause shown orders otherwise, the parties shall give each other and the court at least 30 days'  
98 written notice, in advance, of any change of address and any change of telephone number within 30  
99 days after the change; and

100 6. Notice that in determination of a spousal support obligation, the support obligation as it becomes  
101 due and unpaid creates a judgment by operation of law.

102 **§ 20-109. Changing maintenance and support for a spouse; effect of stipulations as to**  
103 **maintenance and support for a spouse; cessation upon cohabitation, remarriage or death.**

104 A. Upon petition of either party the court may increase, decrease, or terminate the amount or  
105 duration of any spousal support and maintenance that may thereafter accrue, whether previously or  
106 hereafter awarded, as the circumstances may make proper. Upon order of the court based upon clear and  
107 convincing evidence that the spouse receiving support has been habitually cohabiting with another  
108 person in a relationship analogous to a marriage for one year or more commencing on or after July 1,  
109 1997, the court shall terminate spousal support and maintenance unless (i) otherwise provided by  
110 stipulation or contract or (ii) the spouse receiving support proves by a preponderance of the evidence  
111 that termination of such support would be unconscionable. *Spousal support shall be terminated if the*  
112 *spouse to whom it was awarded was subsequently convicted of any violation of Article 4 (§ 18.2-51 et*  
113 *seq.) or 7 (§ 18.2-61 et seq.) of Chapter 4 of Title 18.2, or any substantially similar laws of any other*  
114 *state or of the United States, provided such violation was against the spouse from whom support was*  
115 *awarded, unless the spouse receiving support proves by a preponderance of the evidence that*  
116 *termination of such support would be unconscionable.*

117 The provisions of this subsection shall apply to all orders and decrees for spousal support, regardless  
118 of the date of the suit for initial setting of support, the date of entry of any such order or decree, or the  
119 date of any petition for modification of support.

120 B. The court may consider a modification of an award of spousal support for a defined duration

121 upon petition of either party filed within the time covered by the duration of the award. Upon  
122 consideration of the factors set forth in subsection E *or E1* of § 20-107.1, the court may increase,  
123 decrease or terminate the amount or duration of the award upon finding that (i) there has been a  
124 material change in the circumstances of the parties, not reasonably in the contemplation of the parties  
125 when the award was made or (ii) an event ~~which~~ *that* the court anticipated would occur during the  
126 duration of the award and ~~which~~ *that* was significant in the making of the award, does not in fact occur  
127 through no fault of the party seeking the modification. The provisions of this subsection shall apply only  
128 to suits for initial spousal support orders filed on or after July 1, 1998, and suits for modification of  
129 spousal support orders arising from suits for initial support orders filed on or after July 1, 1998.

130 C. In suits for divorce, annulment and separate maintenance, and in proceedings arising under  
131 subdivision A 3 or subsection L of § 16.1-241, if a stipulation or contract signed by the party to whom  
132 such relief might otherwise be awarded is filed before entry of a final decree, no decree or order  
133 directing the payment of support and maintenance for the spouse, suit money, or counsel fee or  
134 establishing or imposing any other condition or consideration, monetary or nonmonetary, shall be  
135 entered except in accordance with that stipulation or contract. If such a stipulation or contract is filed  
136 after entry of a final decree and if any party so moves, the court shall modify its decree to conform to  
137 such stipulation or contract.

138 D. Unless otherwise provided by stipulation or contract, spousal support and maintenance shall  
139 terminate upon the death of either party or remarriage of the spouse receiving support. The spouse  
140 entitled to support shall have an affirmative duty to notify the payor spouse immediately of remarriage  
141 at the last known address of the payor spouse.