

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2016 RECONVENED SESSION

CHAPTER 747

An Act to amend and reenact § 53.1-234 of the Code of Virginia, relating to method of execution.

[H 815]

Approved April 20, 2016

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 53.1-234 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 53.1-234. Transfer of prisoner; how death sentence executed; who to be present.

The clerk of the circuit court in which is pronounced the sentence of death against any person shall, after such judgment becomes final in the circuit court, deliver a certified copy thereof to the Director. Such person so sentenced to death shall be confined prior to the execution of the sentence in a state correctional facility designated by the Director. Prior to the time fixed in the judgment of the court for the execution of the sentence, the Director shall cause the condemned prisoner to be conveyed to the state correctional facility housing the death chamber.

The Director, or the assistants appointed by him, shall at the time named in the sentence, unless a suspension of execution is ordered, cause the prisoner under sentence of death to be electrocuted or injected with a lethal substance, until he is dead. The method of execution shall be chosen by the prisoner. In the event the prisoner refuses to make a choice at least ~~fifteen~~ 15 days prior to the scheduled execution, the method of execution shall be by lethal injection. Execution by lethal injection shall be permitted in accordance with procedures developed by the Department. At the execution there shall be present the Director or an assistant, a physician employed by the Department or his assistant, such other employees of the Department as may be required by the Director and, in addition thereto, at least six citizens who shall not be employees of the Department. In addition, the counsel for the prisoner and a clergyman may be present.

The Director may make and enter into contracts with a pharmacy, as defined in § 54.1-3300, or outsourcing facility, as defined in § 54.1-3401, for the compounding of drugs necessary to carry out an execution by lethal injection. Any such drugs provided to the Department pursuant to the terms of such a contract shall be used only for the purpose of carrying out an execution by lethal injection. The compounding of such drugs pursuant to the terms of such a contract (i) shall not constitute the practice of pharmacy as defined in § 54.1-3300; (ii) is not subject to the jurisdiction of the Board of Pharmacy, the Board of Medicine, or the Department of Health Professions; and (iii) is exempt from the provisions of Chapter 33 (§ 54.1-3300 et seq.) of Title 54.1 and the Drug Control Act (§ 54.1-3400 et seq.). The pharmacy or outsourcing facility providing such drugs to the Department pursuant to the terms of such a contract shall label each such drug with the drug name, its quantity, a projected expiration date for the drug, and a statement that the drug shall be used only by the Department for the purpose of carrying out an execution by lethal injection.

The identities of any pharmacy or outsourcing facility that enters into a contract with the Department for the compounding of drugs necessary to carry out an execution by lethal injection, any officer or employee of such pharmacy or outsourcing facility, and any person or entity used by such pharmacy or outsourcing facility to obtain equipment or substances to facilitate the compounding of such drugs and any information reasonably calculated to lead to the identities of such persons or entities, including their names, residential and office addresses, residential and office telephone numbers, social security numbers, and tax identification numbers, shall be confidential, shall be exempt from the Freedom of Information Act (§ 2.2-3700 et seq.), and shall not be subject to discovery or introduction as evidence in any civil proceeding unless good cause is shown.