

1 VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

2 *An Act to amend and reenact § 18.2-371.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to operating a child welfare*
3 *agency without a license; abuse and neglect of child; penalty.*

4 [H 1189]

5 Approved

6 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**7 **1. That § 18.2-371.1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**8 **§ 18.2-371.1. Abuse and neglect of children; penalty; abandoned infant.**

9 A. Any parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the care of a child under the age of 18 who
10 by willful act or *willful* omission or refusal to provide any necessary care for the child's health causes or
11 permits serious injury to the life or health of such child is guilty of a Class 4 felony. For purposes of
12 this subsection, "serious injury" includes but is not limited to (i) disfigurement, (ii) a fracture, (iii) a
13 severe burn or laceration, (iv) mutilation, (v) maiming, (vi) forced ingestion of dangerous substances,
14 and (vii) life-threatening internal injuries. *For purposes of this subsection, "willful act or willful*
15 *omission" includes operating or engaging in the conduct of a child welfare agency as defined in*
16 *§ 63.2-100 without first obtaining a license such person knows is required by Subtitle IV (§ 63.2-1700 et*
17 *seq.) of Title 63.2 or after such license has been revoked or has expired and not been renewed.*

18 B. 1. Any parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the care of a child under the age of 18
19 whose willful act or omission in the care of such child was so gross, wanton, and culpable as to show a
20 reckless disregard for human life is guilty of a Class 6 felony.

21 2. If a prosecution under this subsection is based solely on the accused parent having left the child at
22 a hospital or emergency medical services agency, it shall be an affirmative defense to prosecution of a
23 parent under this subsection that such parent safely delivered the child to a hospital that provides
24 24-hour emergency services or to an attended emergency medical services agency that employs
25 emergency medical services personnel, within the first 14 days of the child's life. In order for the
26 affirmative defense to apply, the child shall be delivered in a manner reasonably calculated to ensure the
27 child's safety.

28 C. Any parent, guardian, or other person having care, custody, or control of a minor child who in
29 good faith is under treatment solely by spiritual means through prayer in accordance with the tenets and
30 practices of a recognized church or religious denomination shall not, for that reason alone, be considered
31 in violation of this section.

32 **2. That the provisions of this act may result in a net increase in periods of imprisonment or**
33 **commitment. Pursuant to § 30-19.1:4, the estimated amount of the necessary appropriation cannot**
34 **be determined for periods of imprisonment in state adult correctional facilities; therefore, Chapter**
35 **665 of the Acts of Assembly of 2015 requires the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission to**
36 **assign a minimum fiscal impact of \$50,000. Pursuant to § 30-19.1:4, the estimated amount of the**
37 **necessary appropriation cannot be determined for periods of commitment to the custody of the**
38 **Department of Juvenile Justice.**

ENROLLED

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