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HOUSE BILL NO. 1274

Offered January 20, 2016

A *BILL to amend and reenact § 19.2-72 of the Code of Virginia, relating to judicial officers; recording citizen complaints.*

Patron—Fariss

Referred to Committee for Courts of Justice

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 19.2-72 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 19.2-72. When it may issue; what to recite and require.

On complaint of a criminal offense to any officer authorized to issue criminal warrants, he shall examine on oath the complainant and any other witnesses, or when such officer shall suspect that an offense punishable otherwise than by a fine has been committed he may, without formal complaint, issue a summons for witnesses and shall examine such witnesses. ~~A written complaint shall be required~~ *If the complainant is not a law-enforcement officer, a written complaint shall be required and any examination of the complainant or any other witness shall be recorded by a mechanical or electronic device approved by the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia.* If upon such examination such officer finds that there is probable cause to believe the accused has committed an offense, such officer shall issue a warrant for his arrest, except that no magistrate may issue an arrest warrant for a felony offense upon the basis of a complaint by a person other than a law-enforcement officer or an animal control officer without prior authorization by the attorney for the Commonwealth or by a law-enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the alleged offense. The warrant shall (i) be directed to an appropriate officer or officers, (ii) name the accused or, if his name is unknown, set forth a description by which he can be identified with reasonable certainty, (iii) describe the offense charged with reasonable certainty, (iv) command that the accused be arrested and brought before a court of appropriate jurisdiction in the county, city or town in which the offense was allegedly committed, and (v) be signed by the issuing officer. The warrant shall require the officer to whom it is directed to summon such witnesses as shall be therein named to appear and give evidence on the examination. But in a city or town having a police force, the warrant shall be directed "To any policeman, sheriff or his deputy sheriff of such city (or town)," and shall be executed by the policeman, sheriff or his deputy sheriff into whose hands it shall come or be delivered. A sheriff or his deputy may execute an arrest warrant throughout the county in which he serves and in any city or town surrounded thereby and effect an arrest in any city or town surrounded thereby as a result of a criminal act committed during the execution of such warrant. A jail officer as defined in § 53.1-1 employed at a regional jail or jail farm is authorized to execute a warrant of arrest upon an accused in his jail. The venue for the prosecution of such criminal act shall be the jurisdiction in which the offense occurred.

INTRODUCED

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