

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2017 SESSION

CHAPTER 78

An Act to amend and reenact §§ 17.1-293 and 17.1-295 of the Code of Virginia, relating to remote access to nonconfidential court records for date of birth verification.

[H 1713]

Approved February 20, 2017

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 17.1-293 and 17.1-295 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 17.1-293. Posting and availability of certain information on the Internet; prohibitions.

A. Notwithstanding Chapter 37 (§ 2.2-3700 et seq.) of Title 2.2 or subsection B, it shall be unlawful for any court clerk to disclose the social security number or other identification numbers appearing on driver's licenses or information on credit cards, debit cards, bank accounts, or other electronic billing and payment systems that was supplied to a court clerk for the purpose of paying fees, fines, taxes, or other charges collected by such court clerk. The prohibition shall not apply where disclosure of such information is required (i) to conduct or complete the transaction for which such information was submitted or (ii) by other law or court order.

B. Beginning January 1, 2004, no court clerk shall post on the Internet any document that contains the following information: (i) an actual signature, (ii) a social security number, (iii) a date of birth identified with a particular person, (iv) the maiden name of a person's parent so as to be identified with a particular person, (v) any financial account number or numbers, or (vi) the name and age of any minor child.

C. Each such clerk shall post notice that includes a list of the documents routinely posted on its website. However, the clerk shall not post information on his website that includes private activity for private financial gain.

D. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit access to any original document as provided by law.

E. This section shall not apply to the following:

1. Providing access to any document among the land records via secure remote access pursuant to § 17.1-294;

2. Postings related to legitimate law-enforcement purposes;

3. Postings of historical, genealogical, interpretive, or educational documents and information about historic persons and events;

4. Postings of instruments and records filed or recorded that are more than 100 years old;

5. Providing secure remote access to any person, his counsel, or staff which counsel directly supervises to documents filed in matters to which such person is a party;

6. Providing official certificates and certified records in digital form of any document maintained by the clerk pursuant to § 17.1-258.3:2; and

7. Providing secure remote access to nonconfidential court records, subject to any fees charged by the clerk, to members in good standing with the Virginia State Bar and their authorized agents, pro hac vice attorneys authorized by the court for purposes of the practice of law, and such governmental agencies as authorized by the clerk.

F. Nothing in this section shall prohibit the Supreme Court or any other court clerk from providing online access to a case management system that may include abstracts of case filings and proceedings in the courts of the Commonwealth, *including online access to subscribers of nonconfidential criminal case information to confirm the complete date of birth of a defendant.*

G. The court clerk shall be immune from suit arising from any acts or omissions relating to providing remote access on the Internet pursuant to this section unless the clerk was grossly negligent or engaged in willful misconduct.

This subsection shall not be construed to limit, withdraw, or overturn any defense or immunity already existing in statutory or common law, or to affect any cause of action accruing prior to July 1, 2005.

H. Nothing in this section shall be construed to permit any data accessed by secure remote access to be sold or posted on any other website or in any way redistributed to any third party, and the clerk, in his discretion, may deny secure remote access to ensure compliance with these provisions. However, the data accessed by secure remote access may be included in products or services provided to a third party of the subscriber provided that (i) such data is not made available to the general public and (ii) the subscriber maintains administrative, technical, and security safeguards to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and limited availability of the data.

§ 17.1-295. Definitions.

As used in this title:

"Confidential court records" means any civil or criminal record maintained by a clerk of the circuit court designated by this Code as confidential or any such record sealed pursuant to court order.

"Electronic filing of court records" means the networks or systems maintained by a clerk of the circuit court, or the clerk's designated application service providers, for the submittal of instruments for electronic filing of court records in accordance with this title, the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, and the secure remote access standards developed by the Virginia Information Technologies Agency.

"Electronic recording of land records" means the networks or systems maintained by a clerk of the circuit court, or the clerk's designated application service providers, for the submittal of instruments for electronic filing of land records in accordance with the Uniform Real Property Electronic Recording Act (§ 55-142.10 et seq.), the provisions of Article 2.1 (§ 55-66.8 et seq.) of Chapter 4 of Title 55 regarding the satisfaction of mortgages and the provisions of this title.

"Operational expenses" means expenses of the clerk of court used to maintain the clerk's office and includes, but is not limited to, (i) computer support, maintenance, enhancements, upgrades, and replacements and office automation and information technology equipment, including software and conversion services; (ii) preserving, maintaining, and enhancing court records, including, but not limited to, the costs of repairs, maintenance, consulting services, service contracts, redaction of social security numbers from certain records, and system replacements or upgrades; and (iii) improving public access to records maintained by the clerk, including locating technology in an offsite facility for such purposes or for implementation of a disaster recovery plan.

"Public access" means that the clerk of the circuit court has made available to subscribers that are other than governmental agencies, secure remote access to ~~land~~ records maintained by the clerk in accordance with § 17.1-294.

"Secure remote access to court records" means public access by electronic means on a network or system to ~~land~~ court records maintained by the clerk of the circuit court or the clerk's designated application service providers, in compliance with this title, the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, and the secure remote access standards developed by the Virginia Information Technologies Agency.

"Secure remote access to land records" means public access by electronic means on a network or system to land records maintained by the clerk of the circuit court or the clerk's designated application service providers, in compliance with the Secure Remote Access Standards developed by the Virginia Information Technologies Agency.

"Subscriber" means any person who has entered into a subscriber agreement with the clerk of the circuit court authorizing the subscriber to have secure remote access to land records or secure remote access to court records maintained by the clerk or the clerk's designated application service providers. If the subscriber is an entity with more than one person who will use the network or system to access land records maintained by the clerk, or the clerk's designated application service providers, each individual user shall execute a subscriber agreement and obtain a separate "user id" and "password" from the clerk. The subscriber is responsible for the fees due under this title and the proper use of the secure remote access system pursuant to the subscriber agreement, applicable Virginia law, and Secure Remote Access Standards developed by the Virginia Information Technologies Agency.