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## SENATE BILL NO. 644

Offered January 18, 2016

A *BILL to amend and reenact § 18.2-57 of the Code of Virginia, relating to battery; public transportation operators; penalty.*

Patron—Alexander

Referred to Committee for Courts of Justice

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That § 18.2-57 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

**§ 18.2-57. Assault and battery; penalty.**

A. Any person who commits a simple assault or assault and battery is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor, and if the person intentionally selects the person against whom a simple assault is committed because of his race, religious conviction, color or national origin, the penalty upon conviction shall include a term of confinement of at least six months, 30 days of which shall be a mandatory minimum term of confinement.

B. However, if a person intentionally selects the person against whom an assault and battery resulting in bodily injury is committed because of his race, religious conviction, color or national origin, the person is guilty of a Class 6 felony, and the penalty upon conviction shall include a term of confinement of at least six months, 30 days of which shall be a mandatory minimum term of confinement.

C. In addition, if any person commits an assault or an assault and battery against another knowing or having reason to know that such other person is a judge, a magistrate, a law-enforcement officer as defined in subsection F G, a correctional officer as defined in § 53.1-1, a person directly involved in the care, treatment, or supervision of inmates in the custody of the Department of Corrections or an employee of a local or regional correctional facility directly involved in the care, treatment, or supervision of inmates in the custody of the facility, a person directly involved in the care, treatment, or supervision of persons in the custody of or under the supervision of the Department of Juvenile Justice, an employee or other individual who provides control, care, or treatment of sexually violent predators committed to the custody of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, a firefighter as defined in § 65.2-102, or a volunteer firefighter or any emergency medical services personnel member who is employed by or is a volunteer of an emergency medical services agency or as a member of a bona fide volunteer fire department or volunteer emergency medical services agency, regardless of whether a resolution has been adopted by the governing body of a political subdivision recognizing such firefighters or emergency medical services personnel as employees, engaged in the performance of his public duties anywhere in the Commonwealth, such person is guilty of a Class 6 felony, and, upon conviction, the sentence of such person shall include a mandatory minimum term of confinement of six months.

Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to affect the right of any person charged with a violation of this section from asserting and presenting evidence in support of any defenses to the charge that may be available under common law.

D. In addition, if any person commits a battery against another knowing or having reason to know that such other person is a full-time or part-time employee of any public or private elementary or secondary school and is engaged in the performance of his duties as such, he is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor and the sentence of such person upon conviction shall include a sentence of 15 days in jail, two days of which shall be a mandatory minimum term of confinement. However, if the offense is committed by use of a firearm or other weapon prohibited on school property pursuant to § 18.2-308.1, the person shall serve a mandatory minimum sentence of confinement of six months.

E. In addition, any person who commits a battery against another knowing or having reason to know that such individual is a health care provider as defined in § 8.01-581.1 who is engaged in the performance of his duties as an emergency health care provider in an emergency room of a hospital or clinic or on the premises of any other facility rendering emergency medical care is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. The sentence of such person, upon conviction, shall include a term of confinement of 15 days in jail, two days of which shall be a mandatory minimum term of confinement.

F. *In addition, any person who commits a battery against another knowing or having reason to know that such individual is an operator of a vehicle operated by a public transportation service as defined in § 18.2-160.2 who is engaged in the performance of his duties is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. The sentence of such person, upon conviction, shall include a term of confinement of 15 days in jail, two*

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59 *days of which shall be a mandatory minimum term of confinement.*

60 G. As used in this section:

61 "Judge" means any justice or judge of a court of record of the Commonwealth including a judge  
62 designated under § 17.1-105, a judge under temporary recall under § 17.1-106, or a judge pro tempore  
63 under § 17.1-109, any member of the State Corporation Commission, or of the Virginia Workers'  
64 Compensation Commission, and any judge of a district court of the Commonwealth or any substitute  
65 judge of such district court.

66 (Effective until July 1, 2018) "Law-enforcement officer" means any full-time or part-time employee  
67 of a police department or sheriff's office that is part of or administered by the Commonwealth or any  
68 political subdivision thereof who is responsible for the prevention or detection of crime and the  
69 enforcement of the penal, traffic or highway laws of the Commonwealth, any conservation officer of the  
70 Department of Conservation and Recreation commissioned pursuant to § 10.1-115, any special agent of  
71 the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, conservation police officers appointed pursuant to  
72 § 29.1-200, and full-time sworn members of the enforcement division of the Department of Motor  
73 Vehicles appointed pursuant to § 46.2-217, and such officer also includes jail officers in local and  
74 regional correctional facilities, all deputy sheriffs, whether assigned to law-enforcement duties, court  
75 services or local jail responsibilities, auxiliary police officers appointed or provided for pursuant to  
76 §§ 15.2-1731 and 15.2-1733, auxiliary deputy sheriffs appointed pursuant to § 15.2-1603, police officers  
77 of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority pursuant to § 5.1-158, and fire marshals appointed  
78 pursuant to § 27-30 when such fire marshals have police powers as set out in §§ 27-34.2 and 27-34.2:1.

79 (Effective July 1, 2018) "Law-enforcement officer" means any full-time or part-time employee of a  
80 police department or sheriff's office that is part of or administered by the Commonwealth or any  
81 political subdivision thereof who is responsible for the prevention or detection of crime and the  
82 enforcement of the penal, traffic or highway laws of the Commonwealth, any conservation officer of the  
83 Department of Conservation and Recreation commissioned pursuant to § 10.1-115, any special agent of  
84 the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority, conservation police officers appointed pursuant to  
85 § 29.1-200, and full-time sworn members of the enforcement division of the Department of Motor  
86 Vehicles appointed pursuant to § 46.2-217, and such officer also includes jail officers in local and  
87 regional correctional facilities, all deputy sheriffs, whether assigned to law-enforcement duties, court  
88 services or local jail responsibilities, auxiliary police officers appointed or provided for pursuant to  
89 §§ 15.2-1731 and 15.2-1733, auxiliary deputy sheriffs appointed pursuant to § 15.2-1603, police officers  
90 of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority pursuant to § 5.1-158, and fire marshals appointed  
91 pursuant to § 27-30 when such fire marshals have police powers as set out in §§ 27-34.2 and 27-34.2:1.

92 "School security officer" means an individual who is employed by the local school board for the  
93 purpose of maintaining order and discipline, preventing crime, investigating violations of school board  
94 policies and detaining persons violating the law or school board policies on school property, a school  
95 bus or at a school-sponsored activity and who is responsible solely for ensuring the safety, security and  
96 welfare of all students, faculty and staff in the assigned school.

97 G. H. "Simple assault" or "assault and battery" shall not be construed to include the use of, by any  
98 school security officer or full-time or part-time employee of any public or private elementary or  
99 secondary school while acting in the course and scope of his official capacity, any of the following: (i)  
100 incidental, minor or reasonable physical contact or other actions designed to maintain order and control;  
101 (ii) reasonable and necessary force to quell a disturbance or remove a student from the scene of a  
102 disturbance that threatens physical injury to persons or damage to property; (iii) reasonable and  
103 necessary force to prevent a student from inflicting physical harm on himself; (iv) reasonable and  
104 necessary force for self-defense or the defense of others; or (v) reasonable and necessary force to obtain  
105 possession of weapons or other dangerous objects or controlled substances or associated paraphernalia  
106 that are upon the person of the student or within his control.

107 In determining whether a person was acting within the exceptions provided in this subsection, due  
108 deference shall be given to reasonable judgments that were made by a school security officer or  
109 full-time or part-time employee of any public or private elementary or secondary school at the time of  
110 the event.