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## HOUSE BILL NO. 1477

Offered January 17, 2018

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 22.1-79.7, relating to school boards; school meals; practices.

Patrons—Roem (By Request) and Price; Senator: Wexton

Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 22.1-79.7 as follows:

§ 22.1-79.7. *School meals; practices.*

A. As used in this section, "meals" includes breakfast and lunch.

B. Each school board shall require each public elementary and secondary school in the local school division to participate in the federal National School Lunch Program and the federal School Breakfast Program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and to make meals available pursuant to such programs to any student who requests such a meal, regardless of such student's family income or whether such student has the money to pay for the meal or owes money for meals previously provided, unless the student's parent has provided written permission to the school board to withhold such a meal from the student.

C. Each school board shall adopt policies to:

1. Prohibit any school board employee from:

a. Requiring a student to throw away a meal after the meal has been served because the student does not have the money to pay for the meal or owes money for a meal previously provided;

b. Requiring a student who does not have the money to pay for a meal or who owes money for a meal previously provided to do chores or other work to pay for the meal;

c. Serving to a student an alternative to the meal served pursuant to the federal National School Lunch Program or the federal School Breakfast Program because the student does not have the money to pay for the meal or owes money for a meal previously provided;

d. Publicly identifying or stigmatizing a student who owes money for a meal previously provided, including requiring such student to wear a hand stamp or wrist band, excluding such student from activities, and requiring such student to sit in a different part of the lunch room or school for the lunch period; and

e. Involving a student in any attempt to collect on a debt for a meal previously provided to such student, provided that such policies permit any such school board employee to send a letter home with the student notifying the parent of the debt;

2. Permit any school board employee to:

a. Attempt to collect from a parent on a debt for a meal previously provided to the student, provided that such employee does not use a debt collector, as that term is defined in the federal Consumer Credit Protection Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692a, to collect on such a debt; and

b. Solicit and receive public donations at any time during the school year to satisfy debts for meals provided to students; and

3. Require the appropriate school board employee to:

a. Exhaust all options and methods to directly identify each enrolled student who is eligible for free or reduced price meals pursuant to the federal National School Lunch Program or the federal School Breakfast Program, provide the parent of each such student with a paper copy of or an electronic link to the application for such programs, and encourage each such parent to apply;

b. Reimburse the appropriate amount of funds to any parent who paid for meals or paid meal debts in any period during which the student was eligible for free or reduced price meals pursuant to the federal National School Lunch Program or the federal School Breakfast Program; and

c. Notify the parent of any student who owes money for a meal previously provided of the amount of such debt no later than 10 days after it accrues.

D. No student meal debt shall carry over to a subsequent school year. Each school board shall absorb each unpaid meal debt that remains at the end of each school year into its budget as a whole.

INTRODUCED

HB1477