

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2020 SESSION

CHAPTER 1127

An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Title 52 a chapter numbered 7.5, consisting of a section numbered 52-34.13, relating to the Department of State Police; establishment of cold case searchable database.

[H 1024]

Approved April 10, 2020

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Title 52 a chapter numbered 7.5, consisting of a section numbered 52-34.13, as follows:

CHAPTER 7.5.

COLD CASE SEARCHABLE DATABASE.

§ 52-34.13. Cold case searchable database established.

A. As used in this section, "cold case" means an investigation into a homicide, missing person, or unidentified person case that has remained unsolved for at least five years after the crime occurred, the person went missing, or the unidentified body was found, whichever occurred last.

B. The Superintendent of State Police shall establish and maintain a searchable electronic database of cold cases to assist law-enforcement agencies in the development of information leading to the identification and arrest of persons who may have committed the crimes or to persons who may have relevant information to solve the case. Such database shall be available to the public through the Department of State Police official website.

C. The searchable electronic database shall include (i) the category of cold case and, in the case of a homicide or missing person, the name of the victim or missing person, unless disclosure is prohibited or restricted by § 19.2-11.2; (ii) the location where the crime was committed, where the person was last seen, or where the body was found, if known; (iii) the date and time the crime occurred, the person was last seen, or the body was found, if known; (iv) the name and contact information of the investigating law-enforcement agency; (v) a brief summary of the crime or case; and (vi) any other information that the investigating law-enforcement agency determines is appropriate. The Department of State Police and submitting law-enforcement agencies shall have the discretion to withhold such information, in whole or in part, from the database (a) as they deem necessary for investigative purposes, protection of privacy, or any other lawful reason or (b) upon request of the victim's or missing person's next of kin.