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HOUSE BILL NO. 2228

Offered January 13, 2021

Prefiled January 13, 2021

A BILL to amend and reenact § 65.2-400 of the Code of Virginia, relating to workers' compensation; injuries caused by repetitive and sustained physical stressors.

Patrons—Guzman, Mullin, Carter, Hope, Jenkins, Kory, Krizek, Levine, Plum, Samirah, Simon and Simonds

Referred to Committee on Labor and Commerce

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 65.2-400 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 65.2-400. "Occupational disease" defined.

A. As used in this title, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, ~~the term~~ "occupational disease" means a disease arising out of and in the course of employment, but not an ordinary disease of life to which the general public is exposed outside of the employment. *"Occupational disease" includes injuries from conditions resulting from repetitive and sustained physical stressors, including repetitive and sustained motions, exertions, posture stress, contact stresses, vibration, or noise.*

B. A disease shall be deemed to arise out of the employment only if there is apparent to the rational mind, upon consideration of all the circumstances:

1. A direct causal connection between the conditions under which work is performed and the occupational disease;

2. It can be seen to have followed as a natural incident of the work as a result of the exposure occasioned by the nature of the employment;

3. It can be fairly traced to the employment as the proximate cause;

4. It is neither a disease to which an employee may have had substantial exposure outside of the employment, nor any condition of the neck, back, or spinal column;

5. It is incidental to the character of the business and not independent of the relation of employer and employee; and

6. It had its origin in a risk connected with the employment and flowed from that source as a natural consequence, though it need not have been foreseen or expected before its contraction.

C. Hearing loss and the condition of carpal tunnel syndrome are not occupational diseases but are ordinary diseases of life as defined in § 65.2-401.

D. Notwithstanding prior decisions to the contrary, injuries from conditions resulting from repetitive and sustained physical stressors shall be covered injuries if shown to arise out of and in the course of the employment as provided in this section. Coverage for such injuries shall not require the injuries to have occurred over a particular period, provided that such a period can be reasonably identified and documented and further provided that the employment is shown to have primarily caused the injury, considering all causes. For the purposes of this subsection, "primarily" means more than 50 percent.

INTRODUCED

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