

1 VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

2 An Act to amend and reenact § 24.2-955.3 of the Code of Virginia, relating to elections; political  
3 campaign advertisements; illegal negative ads; civil penalty.

4 [H 125]  
5 Approved

6 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**  
7 **1. That § 24.2-955.3 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**  
8 **§ 24.2-955.3. Penalties for violations of this chapter.**

9 A. Any sponsor violating Article 2 (§ 24.2-956 et seq.) of this chapter shall be subject to (i) a civil  
10 penalty not to exceed \$1,000; or (ii) in the case of a violation occurring within the 14 days prior to or  
11 on the election day of the election to which the advertisement pertains, a civil penalty not to exceed  
12 \$2,500; or (iii) in the case of a violation related to an advertisement that expressly advocates the  
13 election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate, a civil penalty not to exceed \$25,000. In the case of  
14 a willful violation, he shall be is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

15 B. Any sponsor violating Article 3 (§ 24.2-957 et seq.) or 4 (§ 24.2-958 et seq.) of this chapter shall  
16 be subject to (i) a civil penalty not to exceed \$1,000 per occurrence; or (ii) in the case of a violation  
17 occurring within the 14 days prior to or on the election day of the election to which the advertisement  
18 pertains, a civil penalty not to exceed \$2,500 per occurrence; or (iii) in the case of a violation related to  
19 an advertisement that expressly advocates the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate, a civil  
20 penalty not to exceed \$25,000. In the case of a willful violation, he shall be is guilty of a Class 1  
21 misdemeanor. In no event shall the total civil penalties imposed for multiple broadcasts of one particular  
22 campaign advertisement exceed ~~\$10,000~~ \$25,000.

23 C. Any person violating Article 5 (§ 24.2-959 et seq.) of this chapter shall be subject to a civil  
24 penalty not to exceed \$2,500; or in the case of a violation related to campaign telephone calls that  
25 expressly advocates the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate, a civil penalty not to exceed  
26 \$25,000, and in the case of a willful violation, he shall be is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. A  
27 violation of the provisions of Article 5 of this chapter shall not void any election.

28 D. The State Board, in a public hearing, shall determine whether to find a violation of this chapter  
29 and to assess a civil penalty. At least 10 days prior to such hearing, the State Board shall send notice by  
30 certified mail to persons whose actions will be reviewed at such meeting and may be subject to civil  
31 penalty. Notice shall include the time and date of the meeting, an explanation of the violation, and the  
32 maximum civil penalty that may be assessed.

33 E. It shall not be deemed a violation of this chapter if the contents of the disclosure legend or  
34 statement convey the required information.

35 F. Any civil penalties collected pursuant to an action under this section shall be payable to the State  
36 Treasurer for deposit to the general fund. The procedure to enforce the civil penalties provided in this  
37 section shall be as stated in § 24.2-946.3.