

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 1994 SESSION

CHAPTER 60

An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 27 of Title 9 an article numbered 1.6, consisting of sections numbered 9-173.16 through 9-173.20, and to repeal Articles 1.3, consisting of §§ 9-173.4 and 9-173.5, and 1.5, consisting of §§ 9-173.14 and 9-173.15, of Title 9 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the establishment of a Crime Prevention Center.

[H 1114]

Approved March 9, 1994

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 27 of Title 9 an article numbered 1.6, consisting of sections numbered 9-173.16 through 9-173.20, as follows:

Article 1.6.

Crime Prevention Center.

§ 9-173.16. Creation of Crime Prevention Center.

The Department of Criminal Justice Services shall establish a Crime Prevention Center for the purpose of providing crime prevention assistance and training, resource material, and research into methods and procedures to reduce the opportunity for crime. Any state funding for such Center shall be subject to the approval of the General Assembly.

§ 9-173.17. McGruff House Program continued; duties of Department.

The symbol of "McGruff" with the phrase "McGruff House" shall be the symbol used to designate a house in the Commonwealth where a child who is abused, neglected or otherwise emotionally or physically in danger may seek refuge and assistance.

The Department of Criminal Justice Services shall adopt a standard symbol to be used throughout the Commonwealth which is the same as or substantially similar to the McGruff House symbol in use in other states. The Department shall establish by regulation appropriate procedures governing (i) qualifications and criteria for designation as a McGruff House and participants' duties and responsibilities, such regulations to include, but not be limited to, duties regarding reporting of incidents to the local law-enforcement agency and department of social services' child-protective services program, (ii) programs to publicize the McGruff House Program, (iii) dissemination of the McGruff House symbol to day care centers, schools, and law-enforcement agencies, (iv) designation and registration of McGruff Houses with, and monitoring and periodic review of such houses by, local law-enforcement agencies, and (v) coordination of the program with the child-protective services component of the local department of social services. Nothing herein shall prohibit the use of a symbol other than "McGruff" by a locality which currently has some other safe house program in existence and operation.

§ 9-173.18. Designation of McGruff House; penalty.

All persons displaying the McGruff House symbol so that it is visible from the outside of their house shall first apply for designation as a McGruff House with the local law-enforcement agency. Upon receipt of an application for designation, the local law-enforcement agency shall conduct a background check of the applicant in accordance with Chapter 23 (§ 19.2-387 et seq.) of Title 19.2 and the regulations promulgated by the Department at no charge to the applicant. Any background checks of applicants for this program conducted by the Department of Social Services through the Child Abuse Registry shall be done at no charge. Upon finding that the applicant meets the criteria established by the Department for maintaining a McGruff House and receipt of a signed statement by the applicant agreeing to the terms and conditions of the McGruff House Program, the law-enforcement agency shall provide the applicant with the McGruff House symbol.

The McGruff House symbol remains the property of the local law-enforcement agency. Upon a determination by the issuing law-enforcement agency that a house no longer meets the established criteria for a McGruff House, the symbol shall promptly be returned to the issuing law-enforcement agency. Failure to return the symbol promptly after receipt of a written request to do so, which shall state the reason for the request, shall be subject to a civil penalty of up to \$100. Subsequent to July 1, 1990, display of a McGruff House symbol by persons not designated pursuant to this section to participate in the program shall be subject to a civil penalty of up to \$100.

§ 9-173.19. Establishment of crime prevention specialists.

The Board of Criminal Justice Services shall promulgate regulations establishing minimum standards for certification of crime prevention specialists. The duties of a crime prevention specialist shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- 1. To provide citizens living within his jurisdiction information concerning personal safety and the security of property, and other matters relating to the reduction of criminal opportunity;*
- 2. To provide business establishments within his jurisdiction information concerning business and*

employee security, and other matters relating to reduction of criminal activity;

3. To provide citizens and businesses within his jurisdiction assistance in forming and maintaining neighborhood and business watch groups and other community-based crime prevention programs;

4. To provide assistance to other units of government within his jurisdiction in developing plans and procedures related to the reduction of criminal activity within government and the community; and

5. To promote the reduction and prevention of crime within his jurisdiction and the Commonwealth.

§ 9-173.20. Eligibility; requirements for crime prevention specialists.

A. Any employee of a local or state law-enforcement agency is eligible to be trained and certified as a crime prevention specialist.

B. The chief executive of any local or state law-enforcement agency may designate one or more employees in his department or office to be trained and certified as a crime prevention specialist.

2. That Articles 1.3, consisting of §§ 9-173.4 and 9-173.5, and 1.5, consisting of §§ 9-173.14 and 9-173.15, of Title 9 of the Code of Virginia are repealed.