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HOUSE BILL NO. 1947

Offered January 20, 1995

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 46.2-208 and 46.2-209 of the Code of Virginia, relating to release of Department of Motor Vehicles records.

Patrons—Puller, Croshaw, Orrock, Shuler and Spruill; Senators: Barry, Chichester, Reasor, Schewel and Wampler

Referred to Committee on Roads and Internal Navigation

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That §§ 46.2-208 and 46.2-209 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 46.2-208. Records of Department; when open for inspection; release of privileged information.

A. All records in the office of the Department containing the specific classes of information outlined below shall be considered privileged records:

1. Personal information, including all data defined as "personal information" in § 2.1-379;

2. Driver information, including all data that relates to driver's license status and driver activity; and

3. Vehicle information, including all descriptive vehicle data and title, registration, and vehicle activity data.

B. The Commissioner shall release such information only under the following conditions:

1. Notwithstanding other provisions of this section, medical data included in personal data shall be released only to a physician as provided in § 46.2-322.

2. Insurance data may be released as specified in §§ 46.2-372, 46.2-380, and 46.2-706.

3. Notwithstanding other provisions of this section, information disclosed or furnished shall be assessed a fee as specified in § 46.2-214.

4. When the person requesting the information is (i) the subject of the information, (ii) the parent or guardian of the subject of the information, (iii) the authorized representative of the subject of the information, or (iv) the owner of the vehicle that is the subject of the information, the Commissioner shall provide him with the requested information and a complete explanation of it. Requests for such information need not be made in writing or in person and may be made orally or by telephone, provided that the Department is satisfied that there is adequate verification of the requester's identity. When so requested in writing by (i) the subject of the information, (ii) the parent or guardian of the subject of the information, (iii) the authorized representative of the subject of the information, or (iv) the owner of the vehicle that is the subject of the information, the Commissioner shall verify and, if necessary, correct the personal information provided and furnish driver and vehicle information in the form of an abstract of the record.

5. On the written request of any insurance carrier, surety, or representative of an insurance carrier or surety, the Commissioner shall furnish such insurance carrier, surety, or representative an abstract of the record of any person subject to the provisions of this title. The abstract shall include any record of any conviction of a violation of any provision of any statute or ordinance relating to the operation or ownership of a motor vehicle or of any injury or damage in which he was involved and a report of which is required by § 46.2-372. No such report of any conviction or accident shall be made after sixty months from the date of the conviction or accident unless the Commissioner or court used the conviction or accident as a reason for the suspension or revocation of a driver's license or driving privilege, in which case the revocation or suspension and any conviction or accident pertaining thereto shall not be reported after sixty months from the date that the driver's license or driving privilege has been reinstated. This abstract shall not be admissible in evidence in any court proceedings.

6. On the written request of any business organization or its agent, in the conduct of its business, the Commissioner shall compare personal information supplied by the business organization or agent with that contained in the Department's records and, when the information supplied by the business organization or agent is different from that contained in the Department's records, provide the business organization or agent with correct information as contained in the Department's records. Personal information provided under this subdivision shall be used solely for the purpose of pursuing remedies which require locating an individual.

7. The Commissioner shall provide vehicle information to any business organization or agent on such business' or agent's written request. Disclosures made under this subdivision shall not include any personal information and shall not be subject to the limitations contained in subdivision 6 of this subsection.

8. On the written request of any motor vehicle rental or leasing company or its designated agent, the

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HB1947

60 Commissioner shall (i) compare personal information supplied by the company or agent with that
61 contained in the Department's records and, when the information supplied by the company or agent is
62 different from that contained in the Department's records, provide the company or agent with correct
63 information as contained in the Department's records and (ii) provide the company or agent with driver
64 information in the form of an abstract of any person subject to the provisions of this title. Such abstract
65 shall include any record of any conviction of a violation of any provision of any statute or ordinance
66 relating to the operation or ownership of a motor vehicle or of any injury or damage in which the
67 subject of the abstract was involved and a report of which is required by § 46.2-372. No such abstract
68 shall include any record of any conviction or accident more than sixty months after the date of such
69 conviction or accident unless the Commissioner or court used the conviction or accident as a reason for
70 the suspension or revocation of a driver's license or driving privilege, in which case the revocation or
71 suspension and any conviction or accident pertaining thereto shall cease to be included in such abstract
72 after sixty months from the date on which the driver's license or driving privilege was reinstated. No
73 abstract released under this subdivision shall be admissible in evidence in any court proceedings.

74 9. On the request of any federal, state, or local governmental entity, law-enforcement officer, attorney
75 for the Commonwealth, or court, the Commissioner shall (i) compare personal information supplied by
76 the governmental entity, officer, attorney for the Commonwealth, or court with that contained in the
77 Department's records and, when the information supplied by the governmental entity, officer, attorney
78 for the Commonwealth, or court is different from that contained in the Department's records, provide the
79 governmental entity, officer, attorney for the Commonwealth, or court with correct information as
80 contained in the Department's records and (ii) provide driver and vehicle information in the form of an
81 abstract of the record showing all convictions, accidents, driver's license suspensions or revocations, and
82 other appropriate information as the governmental entity, officer, attorney for the Commonwealth, or
83 court may require in order to carry out its official functions.

84 10. On request of the driver licensing authority in any other state or foreign country, the
85 Commissioner shall provide whatever classes of information the requesting authority shall require in
86 order to carry out its official functions.

87 11. On the written request of any employer, prospective employer, or authorized agent of either, and
88 with the written consent of the individual concerned, the Commissioner shall (i) compare personal
89 information supplied by the employer, prospective employer, or agent with that contained in the
90 Department's records and, when the information supplied by the employer, prospective employer, or
91 agent is different from that contained in the Department's records, provide the employer, prospective
92 employer, or agent with correct information as contained in the Department's records and (ii) provide the
93 employer, prospective employer, or agent with driver information in the form of an abstract of an
94 individual's record showing all convictions, accidents, driver's license suspensions or revocations, and
95 any type of driver's license that the individual currently possesses, provided that the individual's position
96 or the position that the individual is being considered for involves the operation of a motor vehicle.

97 12. On the written request of any member of or applicant for membership in a volunteer fire
98 company or volunteer rescue squad, the Commissioner shall (i) compare personal information supplied
99 by the volunteer fire company or volunteer rescue squad with that contained in the Department's records
100 and, when the information supplied by the volunteer fire company or volunteer rescue squad is different
101 from that contained in the Department's records, provide the volunteer fire company or volunteer rescue
102 squad with correct information as contained in the Department's records and (ii) provide driver
103 information in the form of an abstract of the member's or applicant's record showing all convictions,
104 accidents, license suspensions or revocations, and any type of driver's license that the individual
105 currently possesses. Such abstract shall be provided free of charge if the request is accompanied by
106 appropriate written evidence that the person is a member of or applicant for membership in a volunteer
107 fire company or volunteer rescue squad and the abstract is needed by a volunteer fire company or
108 volunteer rescue squad to establish the qualifications of the member or applicant to operate equipment
109 owned by the volunteer fire company or volunteer rescue squad.

110 13. On the written request of any person who has applied to be a volunteer with a Virginia affiliate
111 of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, the Commissioner shall (i) compare personal information
112 supplied by a Virginia affiliate of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America with that contained in the
113 Department's records and, when the information supplied by a Virginia affiliate of Big Brothers/Big
114 Sisters of America is different from that contained in the Department's records, provide the Virginia
115 affiliate of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America with correct information as contained in the
116 Department's records and (ii) provide driver information in the form of an abstract of the applicant's
117 record showing all convictions, accidents, license suspensions or revocations, and any type of driver's
118 license that the individual currently possesses. Such abstract shall be provided free of charge if the
119 request is accompanied by appropriate written evidence that the person has applied to be a volunteer
120 with a Virginia affiliate of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America.

121 14. On the written request of any person who has applied to be a volunteer with a court-appointed

special advocate program pursuant to § 9-173.8, the Commissioner shall provide an abstract of the applicant's record showing all convictions, accidents, license suspensions or revocations, and any type of driver's license that the individual currently possesses. Such abstract shall be provided free of charge if the request is accompanied by appropriate written evidence that the person has applied to be a volunteer with a court-appointed special advocate program pursuant to § 9-173.8.

14. Whenever the Commissioner issues an order to suspend or revoke the driver's license or driving privilege of any individual, he may notify the National Driver Register Service operated by the United States Department of Transportation and any similar national driver information system and provide whatever classes of information the authority may require.

15. Accident reports may be inspected under the provisions of §§ 46.2-379 and 46.2-380.

16. Whenever the Commissioner takes any licensing action pursuant to the provisions of the Virginia Commercial Driver's License Act (§ 46.2-341.1 et seq.), he may provide information to the Commercial Driver License Information System, or any similar national commercial driver information system, regarding such action.

17. Upon the request of any employer, prospective employer, or authorized representative of either, the Commissioner shall (i) compare personal information supplied by the employer, prospective employer, or agent with that contained in the Department's records and, when the information supplied by the employer, prospective employer, or agent is different from that contained in the Department's records, provide the employer, prospective employer, or agent with correct information as contained in the Department's records and (ii) provide driver information in the form of an abstract of the driving record of any individual who has been issued a commercial driver's license, provided that the individual's position or the position that the individual is being considered for involves the operation of a commercial motor vehicle. Such abstract shall show all convictions, accidents, license suspensions, revocations, or disqualifications, and any type of driver's license that the individual currently possesses.

18. Upon the receipt of a completed application and payment of applicable processing fees, the Commissioner may enter into an agreement with any governmental authority or business to exchange information specified in this section by electronic or other means.

19. In addition to the foregoing provisions of this section, vehicle information may also be inspected under the provisions of §§ 43-33, 43-34, 46.2-633, and 46.2-1200.1 through 46.2-1237.

20. Upon the request of an attorney representing a person in a motor vehicle accident or upon the request of any authorized representative of an insurance company including, without limitation, claims adjusters and underwriters, the Commissioner shall provide vehicle information, including the owner's name and address, to the attorney such person.

18. Upon the request of the security force of a public service company, the Commissioner shall provide vehicle information necessary for the conduct of the company's business as a public service company.

C. Whenever the Commissioner issues an order to suspend or revoke the driver's license or driving privilege of any individual, he may notify the National Driver Register Service operated by the United States Department of Transportation and any similar national driver information system and provide whatever classes of information the authority may require.

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GG. The Department may promulgate regulations to govern the means by which personal, vehicle, and driver information is requested and disseminated.

HH. Driving records of any person accused of an offense involving the operation of a motor vehicle shall be provided by the Commissioner upon request to any person acting as counsel for the accused. If such counsel is from the public defender's office or has been appointed by the court, such records shall be provided free of charge.

§ 46.2-209. Release of information in Department records for research purposes.

Notwithstanding the provisions of § 46.2-208, the Commissioner may furnish information for research purposes when the information is furnished in such a manner that individuals cannot be identified by social security or license number or in other cases wherein, in his opinion, highway safety or the general welfare of the public will be promoted by furnishing the information, and the recipient of the information has agreed in writing with the Commissioner or his designee that the information furnished will be used for no purpose other than the purpose for which it was furnished. No such information shall be used for any solicitation of any kind.