

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 1996 SESSION

CHAPTER 402

An Act to amend and reenact §§ 19.2-164 and 19.2-164.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to interpreters in criminal cases.

[H 676]

Approved March 31, 1996

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 19.2-164 and 19.2-164.1 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 19.2-164. Interpreters for non-English-speaking persons.

In any criminal case in which a non-English-speaking person is the accused, an interpreter for the non-English-speaking person shall be appointed. In any criminal case in which a non-English-speaking person is ~~the~~ *a victim or witness*, an interpreter shall be appointed by the judge of the court in which the case is to be heard unless the court finds that the ~~victim~~ *person* does not require the services of a court-appointed interpreter. An English-speaking person fluent in the language of the country of the accused ~~or the language of the country of the~~ *, a victim or a witness* shall be appointed by the judge of the court in which the case is to be heard, unless ~~the accused or the victim~~ *such person obtains* an interpreter of his own choosing who is approved by the court as being competent. ~~In either event~~ The compensation of ~~such an~~ *an* interpreter appointed by the court pursuant to this section shall be fixed by the court and shall be paid from the general fund of the state treasury as part of the expense of trial. Such fee shall not be assessed as part of the costs. Whenever a person communicates through an interpreter to any person under such circumstances that the communication would be privileged, and such person could not be compelled to testify as to the communications, this privilege shall also apply to the interpreter. The provisions of this section shall apply in both circuit courts and district courts.

§ 19.2-164.1. Interpreters for the deaf.

In any criminal case in which a deaf person is the accused, an interpreter for the deaf person shall be appointed. In any criminal case in which a deaf person is the *victim or a witness*, an interpreter for the deaf person shall be appointed by the court in which the case is to be heard unless the court finds that the deaf person does not require the services of a court-appointed interpreter and the ~~victim~~ *deaf person* waives his rights. Such interpreter shall be procured by the judge of the court in which the case is to be heard through the Department for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing.

The compensation of an interpreter appointed by the court pursuant to this section shall be fixed by the court and paid from the general fund of the state treasury as part of the expense of trial. Such fee shall not be assessed as part of the costs.

Any person entitled to the services of an interpreter under this section may waive these services for all or a portion of the proceedings. Such a waiver shall be made by the person upon the record after an opportunity to consult with legal counsel. A judicial officer, utilizing an interpreter obtained in accordance with this section, shall explain to the deaf person the nature and effect of any waiver. Any waiver shall be approved in writing by the deaf person's legal counsel. If the person does not have legal counsel, approval shall be made in writing by a judicial officer. A person who waives his right to an interpreter may provide his own interpreter at his own expense without regard to whether the interpreter is qualified under this section.

The provisions of this section shall apply in both circuit courts and district courts.

Whenever a person communicates through an interpreter to any person under such circumstances that the communication would be privileged, and such person could not be compelled to testify as to the communications, this privilege shall also apply to the interpreter.

In any judicial proceeding, the judge on his own motion or on the motion of a party to the proceeding may order all of the testimony of a deaf person and the interpretation thereof to be visually electronically recorded for use in verification of the official transcript of the proceedings.