

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 1996 SESSION

CHAPTER 552

An Act to amend and reenact § 19.2-298.01 of the Code of Virginia, relating to sentencing guidelines worksheets.

[H 1086]

Approved April 3, 1996

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 19.2-298.01 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 19.2-298.01. Use of discretionary sentencing guidelines.

A. In all felony cases, other than Class 1 felonies, the court shall (i) have presented to it the appropriate discretionary sentencing guidelines worksheets and (ii) review and consider the suitability of the applicable discretionary sentencing guidelines established pursuant to Chapter 11 (§ 17-232 et seq.) of Title 17. Before imposing sentence, the court shall state for the record that such review and consideration have been accomplished and shall make the completed worksheets a part of the record of the case. In cases tried by a jury, the jury shall not be presented any information regarding sentencing guidelines.

B. In any felony case, other than Class 1 felonies, in which the court imposes a sentence which is either greater or less than that indicated by the discretionary sentencing guidelines, the court shall file with the record of the case a written explanation of such departure.

C. In felony cases, other than Class 1 felonies, tried by a jury and in felony cases tried by the court without a jury upon a plea of not guilty, the court shall direct a probation officer of such court to prepare the discretionary sentencing guidelines worksheets. In felony cases tried upon a plea of guilty, including cases which are the subject of a plea agreement, the court may direct a probation officer of such court to prepare the discretionary sentencing guidelines worksheets, or, with the concurrence of the accused, the court and the attorney for the Commonwealth, the worksheets may be prepared by the attorney for the Commonwealth.

D. Except as provided in subsection E, discretionary sentencing guidelines worksheets prepared pursuant to this section shall be subject to the same distribution as presentence investigation reports prepared pursuant to subsection A of § 19.2-299.

E. Following the entry of a final order of conviction and sentence in a felony case, the clerk of the circuit court in which the case was tried shall cause a copy of such order or orders, ~~a copy~~ *the original* of the discretionary sentencing guidelines worksheets prepared in the case, and a copy of any departure explanation prepared pursuant to subsection B to be forwarded to the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission within five days.

F. The failure to follow any or all of the provisions of this section or the failure to follow any or all of the provisions of this section in the prescribed manner shall not be reviewable on appeal or the basis of any other post-conviction relief.

G. The provisions of this section shall apply only to felony cases in which the offense is committed on or after January 1, 1995, and for which there are discretionary sentencing guidelines.