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HOUSE BILL NO. 1341

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the House Committee for Courts of Justice
on December 20, 1996)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Moore)

*A BILL to amend and reenact § 20-109 of the Code of Virginia, relating to termination of support.***Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:****1. That § 20-109 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 20-109. Changing maintenance and support for a spouse; effect of stipulations as to maintenance and support for a spouse; cessation upon cohabitation, remarriage or death.

A. Upon petition of either party the court may increase, decrease, or terminate spousal support and maintenance that may thereafter accrue, whether previously or hereafter awarded, as the circumstances may make proper. ~~However, in~~

B. *In* suits for divorce, annulment and separate maintenance, and in proceedings arising under subdivision A 3 or L of § 16.1-241, if a stipulation or contract signed by the party to whom such relief might otherwise be awarded is filed before entry of a final decree, no decree or order directing the payment of support and maintenance for the spouse, suit money, or counsel fee or establishing or imposing any other condition or consideration, monetary or nonmonetary, shall be entered except in accordance with that stipulation or contract. ~~Upon the death or remarriage of the spouse receiving support, spousal support shall terminate unless otherwise provided by stipulation or contract.~~ If such a stipulation or contract is filed after entry of a final decree and if any party so moves, the court shall modify its decree to conform to such stipulation or contract.

C. *Unless otherwise provided by stipulation or contract, spousal support and maintenance shall terminate (i) upon the death or remarriage of the spouse receiving support; or (ii) upon order of the court based on clear and convincing evidence that the spouse receiving support has been habitually cohabiting with another person for a year or more and that termination of such support would not constitute a manifest injustice based on the relative economic circumstances of the parties.*

For purposes of this section, "cohabiting with another person" means dwelling together with another adult in a committed, intimate, personal relationship that includes the assumption of joint financial responsibilities. Nothing in this section shall be construed to make conduct lawful that is made unlawful by other statutes.