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SENATE BILL NO. 181

Offered January 14, 1998

A BILL to amend and reenact § 54.1-3935 of the Code of Virginia, relating to disciplinary proceedings involving lawyers.

Patron—Gartlan

Referred to the Committee for Courts of Justice

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 54.1-3935 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 54.1-3935. Procedure for revocation of license.

A. If the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, or any circuit court of this Commonwealth observes, or if a complaint, verified by affidavit is made by any person to such court, that any attorney has been convicted of a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude or a felony or has violated the Virginia Code of Professional Responsibility, the court may assign the matter to the Virginia State Bar for investigation. Upon receipt of the report of the Virginia State Bar, the court may issue a rule against such attorney to show cause why his license to practice law shall not be revoked. If the complaint, verified by affidavit, is made by a district committee of the Virginia State Bar, the court shall issue a rule against the attorney to show cause why his license to practice law shall not be revoked.

B. ~~At the time~~ If the rule is issued by the Supreme Court or the Court of Appeals, the rule shall be returnable to the Circuit Court of the City of Richmond. At the time the rule is issued by the Supreme Court, the Chief Justice shall designate three circuit court judges to hear and decide the case. If the rule is issued by the ~~court issuing it~~ Court of Appeals or a circuit court, the issuing court shall certify the fact of such issuance and the time and place of the hearing thereon, to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, who shall designate three circuit court judges of circuits other than the circuit in which the case is pending to hear and decide the case.

C. Bar Counsel of the Virginia State Bar shall prosecute the case. Special counsel may be appointed to prosecute the case pursuant to § 2.1-122.

D. Upon the hearing, if the attorney is found guilty by the court, his license to practice law in this Commonwealth shall be revoked or suspended for such time as the court may prescribe. However, in lieu of revocation or suspension, the court may reprimand such attorney.

E. The attorney, may, as of right, appeal from the judgment of the court to the Supreme Court, by petition based upon a true transcript of the record, which shall be made up and certified as in actions at law. In all such cases where an attorney's license to practice law has been revoked by the court, his privilege to practice law shall be suspended pending appeal.

F. In any proceeding to revoke the license of an attorney, the attorney shall be entitled to representation by counsel.

G. Nothing in this section shall affect the right of a court to require from an attorney security for his good behavior, or to fine him for contempt of court.

INTRODUCED

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