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HOUSE BILL NO. 1214

Offered January 19, 2012

A *BILL to amend and reenact § 46.2-301 of the Code of Virginia, relating to reduction of charge of driving while operator's license suspended.*

Patron—Lewis

Referred to Committee on Transportation

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 46.2-301 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 46.2-301. Driving while license, permit, or privilege to drive suspended or revoked.

A. In addition to any other penalty provided by this section, any motor vehicle administratively impounded or immobilized under the provisions of § 46.2-301.1 may, in the discretion of the court, be impounded or immobilized for an additional period of up to 90 days upon conviction of an offender for driving while his driver's license, learner's permit, or privilege to drive a motor vehicle has been suspended or revoked for (i) a violation of § 18.2-36.1, 18.2-51.4, 18.2-266, 18.2-272, or 46.2-341.24 or a substantially similar ordinance or law in any other jurisdiction or (ii) driving after adjudication as an habitual offender, where such adjudication was based in whole or in part on an alcohol-related offense, or where such person's license has been administratively suspended under the provisions of § 46.2-391.2. However, if, at the time of the violation, the offender was driving a motor vehicle owned by another person, the court shall have no jurisdiction over such motor vehicle but may order the impoundment or immobilization of a motor vehicle owned solely by the offender at the time of arrest. All costs of impoundment or immobilization, including removal or storage expenses, shall be paid by the offender prior to the release of his motor vehicle.

B. Except as provided in §§ 46.2-304 and 46.2-357, no resident or nonresident (i) whose driver's license, learner's permit, or privilege to drive a motor vehicle has been suspended or revoked or (ii) who has been directed not to drive by any court or by the Commissioner, or (iii) who has been forbidden, as prescribed by operation of any statute of the Commonwealth or a substantially similar ordinance of any county, city or town, to operate a motor vehicle in the Commonwealth shall thereafter drive any motor vehicle or any self-propelled machinery or equipment on any highway in the Commonwealth until the period of such suspension or revocation has terminated or the privilege has been reinstated or a restricted license is issued pursuant to subsection E. A clerk's notice of suspension of license for failure to pay fines or costs given in accordance with § 46.2-395 shall be sufficient notice for the purpose of maintaining a conviction under this section. For the purposes of this section, the phrase "motor vehicle or any self-propelled machinery or equipment" shall not include mopeds.

C. A violation of subsection B is a Class 1 misdemeanor. A third or subsequent offense occurring within a 10-year period shall include a mandatory minimum term of confinement in jail of 10 days. However, the court shall not be required to impose a mandatory minimum term of confinement in any case where a motor vehicle is operated in violation of this section in a situation of apparent extreme emergency which requires such operation to save life or limb.

D. Upon a violation of subsection B, the court shall suspend the person's license or privilege to drive a motor vehicle for the same period for which it had been previously suspended or revoked. In the event the person violated subsection B by driving during a period of suspension or revocation which was not for a definite period of time, the court shall suspend the person's license, permit or privilege to drive for an additional period not to exceed 90 days, to commence upon the expiration of the previous suspension or revocation or to commence immediately if the previous suspension or revocation has expired.

E. Any person who is otherwise eligible for a restricted license may petition each court that suspended his license pursuant to subsection D for authorization for a restricted license, provided that the period of time for which the license was suspended by the court pursuant to subsection D, if measured from the date of conviction, has expired, even though the suspension itself has not expired. A court may, for good cause shown, authorize the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue a restricted license for any of the purposes set forth in subsection E of § 18.2-271.1. No restricted license shall be issued unless each court that issued a suspension of the person's license pursuant to subsection D authorizes the Department to issue a restricted license. Any restricted license issued pursuant to this subsection shall be in effect until the expiration of any and all suspensions issued pursuant to subsection D, except that it shall automatically terminate upon the expiration, cancellation, suspension, or revocation of the person's license or privilege to drive for any other cause. No restricted license issued pursuant to this subsection shall permit a person to operate a commercial motor vehicle as defined in the

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59 Commercial Driver's License Act (§ 46.2-341.1 et seq.). The court shall forward to the Commissioner a
60 copy of its authorization entered pursuant to this subsection, which shall specifically enumerate the
61 restrictions imposed and contain such information regarding the person to whom such a license is issued
62 as is reasonably necessary to identify the person. The court shall also provide a copy of its authorization
63 to the person, who may not operate a motor vehicle until receipt from the Commissioner of a restricted
64 license. A copy of the restricted license issued by the Commissioner shall be carried at all times while
65 operating a motor vehicle.

66 F. Any person who operates a motor vehicle or any self-propelled machinery or equipment in
67 violation of the terms of a restricted license issued pursuant to subsection E of § 18.2-271.1 is not guilty
68 of a violation of this section but is guilty of a violation of § 18.2-272.

69 *G. Upon the trial of any person charged with a violation of subsection B whose full privilege to*
70 *operate a motor vehicle is restored prior to trial, the court in its discretion may find the accused not*
71 *guilty of driving while his license is suspended but guilty of driving without an operator's license in*
72 *violation of § 46.2-300.*