

18100527D

HOUSE BILL NO. 1

Offered January 10, 2018

Prefiled November 20, 2017

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 2.2-3701, 2.2-3705.4, 22.1-287, 22.1-287.1, and 23.1-405 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; scholastic records; directory information.

Patrons—Wilt, Bell, Robert B., Cole, Collins, Cox, Edmunds, Fariss, Freitas, Garrett, Gilbert, Ingram, Jones, S.C., Knight, Landes, LaRock, Marshall, McGuire, O'Quinn, Pogge, Poindexter, Stolle, Webert and Wright

Referred to Committee on General Laws

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 2.2-3701, 2.2-3705.4, 22.1-287, 22.1-287.1, and 23.1-405 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 2.2-3701. Definitions.

As used in this chapter, unless the context requires a different meaning:

"Closed meeting" means a meeting from which the public is excluded.

"Electronic communication" means any audio or combined audio and visual communication method.

"Emergency" means an unforeseen circumstance rendering the notice required by this chapter impossible or impracticable and which circumstance requires immediate action.

"Information" as used in the exclusions established by §§ 2.2-3705.1 through 2.2-3705.7, means the content within a public record that references a specifically identified subject matter, and shall not be interpreted to require the production of information that is not embodied in a public record.

"Meeting" or "meetings" means the meetings including work sessions, when sitting physically, or through telephonic or video equipment pursuant to § 2.2-3708 or 2.2-3708.1, as a body or entity, or as an informal assemblage of (i) as many as three members or (ii) a quorum, if less than three, of the constituent membership, wherever held, with or without minutes being taken, whether or not votes are cast, of any public body. Neither the gathering of employees of a public body nor the gathering or attendance of two or more members of a public body (i) at any place or function where no part of the purpose of such gathering or attendance is the discussion or transaction of any public business, and such gathering or attendance was not called or prearranged with any purpose of discussing or transacting any business of the public body, or (ii) at a public forum, candidate appearance, or debate, the purpose of which is to inform the electorate and not to transact public business or to hold discussions relating to the transaction of public business, even though the performance of the members individually or collectively in the conduct of public business may be a topic of discussion or debate at such public meeting, shall be deemed a "meeting" subject to the provisions of this chapter.

"Open meeting" or "public meeting" means a meeting at which the public may be present.

"Public body" means any legislative body, authority, board, bureau, commission, district or agency of the Commonwealth or of any political subdivision of the Commonwealth, including cities, towns and counties, municipal councils, governing bodies of counties, school boards and planning commissions; governing boards of public institutions of higher education; and other organizations, corporations or agencies in the Commonwealth supported wholly or principally by public funds. It shall include (i) the Virginia Birth-Related Neurological Injury Compensation Program and its board of directors established pursuant to Chapter 50 (§ 38.2-5000 et seq.) of Title 38.2 and (ii) any committee, subcommittee, or other entity however designated, of the public body created to perform delegated functions of the public body or to advise the public body. It shall not exclude any such committee, subcommittee or entity because it has private sector or citizen members. Corporations organized by the Virginia Retirement System are "public bodies" for purposes of this chapter.

For the purposes of the provisions of this chapter applicable to access to public records, constitutional officers and private police departments as defined in § 9.1-101 shall be considered public bodies and, except as otherwise expressly provided by law, shall have the same obligations to disclose public records as other custodians of public records.

"Public records" means all writings and recordings that consist of letters, words or numbers, or their equivalent, set down by handwriting, typewriting, printing, photostating, photography, magnetic impulse, optical or magneto-optical form, mechanical or electronic recording or other form of data compilation, however stored, and regardless of physical form or characteristics, prepared or owned by, or in the possession of a public body or its officers, employees or agents in the transaction of public business.

INTRODUCED

HB1

"Regional public body" means a unit of government organized as provided by law within defined boundaries, as determined by the General Assembly, which unit includes two or more localities.

"Scholastic records" means those records containing information directly related to a student or an applicant for admission and maintained by a public body that is an educational agency or institution or by a person acting for such agency or institution.

§ 2.2-3705.4. Exclusions to application of chapter; educational records and certain records of educational institutions.

The following information contained in a public record is excluded from the mandatory disclosure provisions of this chapter but may be disclosed by the custodian in his discretion, except where such disclosure is prohibited by law. Redaction of information excluded under this section from a public record shall be conducted in accordance with § 2.2-3704.01.

1. Scholastic records containing information concerning identifiable individuals, except that such access shall not be denied to the person who is the subject thereof, or the parent or legal guardian of the student. *For scholastic records of students under the age of 18 years, this right of access may be asserted only by the student's legal guardian or parent, including a noncustodial parent, unless such parent's parental rights have been terminated or a court of competent jurisdiction has restricted or denied such access. For scholastic records of students who are emancipated or attending a public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth, the right of access may be asserted by the student.* However, no student shall have access to (i) financial records of a parent or guardian or (ii) records of instructional, supervisory, and administrative personnel and educational personnel ancillary thereto, that are in the sole possession of the maker thereof and that are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a substitute.

The parent or legal guardian of a student may prohibit, by written request, the release of any individual information regarding that student until the student reaches the age of 18 years. *For scholastic records of students under the age of 18 years, the right of access may be asserted only by his legal guardian or parent, including a noncustodial parent, unless such parent's parental rights have been terminated or a court of competent jurisdiction has restricted or denied such access. For scholastic records of students who are emancipated or attending a public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth, the right of access may be asserted by the student.*

Any person who is the subject of any scholastic record and who is 18 years of age or older may waive, in writing, the protections afforded by this subdivision. If the protections are so waived, such records shall be disclosed.

For the purpose of this subdivision, "scholastic records" means those records containing information directly related to a student or an applicant for admission and maintained by a public body that is an educational agency or institution or by a person acting for such agency or institution. Scholastic records shall include directory information, which includes the student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height as a member of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and most recent previous educational agency or institution attended; however, such directory information shall be released only as provided in §§ 22.1-287.1 and 23.1-405.

2. Confidential letters and statements of recommendation placed in the records of educational agencies or institutions respecting (i) admission to any educational agency or institution, (ii) an application for employment or promotion, or (iii) receipt of an honor or honorary recognition.

3. Information held by the Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Committee that would reveal personally identifiable information, including scholarship applications, personal financial information, and confidential correspondence and letters of recommendation.

4. Information of a proprietary nature produced or collected by or for faculty or staff of public institutions of higher education, other than the institutions' financial or administrative records, in the conduct of or as a result of study or research on medical, scientific, technical or scholarly issues, whether sponsored by the institution alone or in conjunction with a governmental body or a private concern, where such information has not been publicly released, published, copyrighted or patented.

5. Information held by the University of Virginia or the University of Virginia Medical Center or Eastern Virginia Medical School, as the case may be, that contain proprietary, business-related information pertaining to the operations of the University of Virginia Medical Center or Eastern Virginia Medical School, as the case may be, including business development or marketing strategies and activities with existing or future joint venturers, partners, or other parties with whom the University of Virginia Medical Center or Eastern Virginia Medical School, as the case may be, has formed, or forms, any arrangement for the delivery of health care, if disclosure of such information would be harmful to the competitive position of the University of Virginia Medical Center or Eastern Virginia Medical School, as the case may be.

6. Personal information, as defined in § 2.2-3801, provided to the Board of the Virginia College Savings Plan or its employees by or on behalf of individuals who have requested information about,

applied for, or entered into prepaid tuition contracts or savings trust account agreements pursuant to Chapter 7 (§ 23.1-700 et seq.) of Title 23.1, including personal information related to (i) qualified beneficiaries as that term is defined in § 23.1-700, (ii) designated survivors, or (iii) authorized individuals. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to prevent disclosure or publication of information in a statistical or other form that does not identify individuals or provide personal information. Individuals shall be provided access to their own personal information.

For purposes of this subdivision:

"Authorized individual" means an individual who may be named by the account owner to receive information regarding the account but who does not have any control or authority over the account.

"Designated survivor" means the person who will assume account ownership in the event of the account owner's death.

7. Information maintained in connection with fundraising activities by or for a public institution of higher education that would reveal (i) personal fundraising strategies relating to identifiable donors or prospective donors or (ii) wealth assessments; estate, financial, or tax planning information; health-related information; employment, familial, or marital status information; electronic mail addresses, facsimile or telephone numbers; birth dates or social security numbers of identifiable donors or prospective donors. Nothing in this subdivision, however, shall be construed to prevent the disclosure of information relating to the amount, date, purpose, and terms of the pledge or donation, or the identity of the donor unless the donor has requested anonymity in connection with or as a condition of making a pledge or donation. The exclusion provided by this subdivision shall not apply to protect from disclosure (i) the identities of sponsors providing grants to or contracting with the institution for the performance of research services or other work or (ii) the terms and conditions of such grants or contracts.

8. Information held by a threat assessment team established by a local school board pursuant to § 22.1-79.4 or by a public institution of higher education pursuant to § 23.1-805 relating to the assessment or intervention with a specific individual. However, in the event an individual who has been under assessment commits an act, or is prosecuted for the commission of an act that has caused the death of, or caused serious bodily injury, including any felony sexual assault, to another person, such information of the threat assessment team concerning the individual under assessment shall be made available as provided by this chapter, with the exception of any criminal history records obtained pursuant to § 19.2-389 or 19.2-389.1, health records obtained pursuant to § 32.1-127.1:03, or scholastic records as defined in § 22.1-289. The public body providing such information shall remove personally identifying information of any person who provided information to the threat assessment team under a promise of confidentiality.

§ 22.1-287. Limitations on access to records.

A. No teacher, principal or employee of any public school nor any school board member shall permit access to any records concerning any particular pupil enrolled in the school in any class to any person except under judicial process unless the person is one of the following:

1. Either parent of such pupil or such pupil; provided that a school board may require that such pupil, if he be less than 18 years of age, as a condition precedent to access to such records, furnish written consent of his or her parent for such access;

2. A person designated in writing by such pupil if the pupil is 18 years of age or older or by either parent of such pupil if the pupil is less than 18 years of age;

3. The principal, or someone designated by him, of a school where the pupil attends, has attended, or intends to enroll;

4. The current teachers of such pupil;

5. State or local law-enforcement or correctional personnel, including a law-enforcement officer, probation officer, parole officer or administrator, or a member of a parole board, seeking information in the course of his duties;

6. The Superintendent of Public Instruction, a member of his staff, the division superintendent of schools where the pupil attends, has attended, or intends to enroll or a member of his staff;

7. An officer or employee of a county or city agency responsible for protective services to children, as to a pupil referred to that agency as a minor requiring investigation or supervision by that agency.

B. A parent or pupil entitled to see the records pursuant to subdivision A 1 shall have access to all records relating to such pupil maintained by the school except as otherwise provided by law and need only appear in person during regular hours of the school day and request to see such records. No material concerning such pupil shall be edited or withheld except as otherwise provided by law, and the parent or pupil shall be entitled to read such material personally.

C. ~~The restrictions imposed by this section shall not apply to the~~ The giving of information by school personnel concerning participation in athletics and other school activities, the winning of scholastic or other honors and awards, and other like information *shall be governed by the provisions of § 22.1-287.1.*

D. Notwithstanding the restrictions imposed by this section:

1. A division superintendent of schools may, in his discretion, provide information to the staff of an institution of higher education or educational research and development organization or laboratory if such information is necessary to a research project or study conducted, sponsored, or approved by the institution of higher education or educational research and development organization or laboratory and if no pupil will be identified by name in the information provided for research;

2. The name and address of a pupil, the record of a pupil's daily attendance, a pupil's scholastic record in the form of grades received in school subjects, the names of a pupil's parents, a pupil's date and place of birth, and the names and addresses of other schools a pupil has attended may be released to an officer or employee of the United States government seeking this information in the course of his duties when the pupil is a veteran of military service with the United States, an orphan or dependent of such veteran, or an alien;

3. The record of a pupil's daily attendance shall be open for inspection and reproduction to an employee of a local department of social services who needs the record to determine the eligibility of the pupil's family for public assistance and social services;

4. The principal or his designee may disclose identifying information from a pupil's scholastic record for the purpose of furthering the ability of the juvenile justice system to effectively serve the pupil prior to adjudication. In addition to those agencies or personnel identified in subdivisions A 5 and 7, the principal or his designee may disclose identifying information from a pupil's scholastic record to attorneys for the Commonwealth, court services units, juvenile detention centers or group homes, mental and medical health agencies, state and local children and family service agencies, and the Department of Juvenile Justice and to the staff of such agencies. Prior to disclosure of any such scholastic records, the persons to whom the records are to be disclosed shall certify in writing to the principal or his designee that the information will not be disclosed to any other party, except as provided under state law, without the prior written consent of the parent of the pupil or by such pupil if the pupil is 18 years of age or older.

§ 22.1-287.1. Directory information.

~~Notwithstanding §§ 22.1-287 and 22.1-288, Student directory information may shall not be publicly released in accordance with federal law and regulations and the regulations of the Board of Education unless the student who is the subject of such information, or the student's parent if the student is less than 18 years of age, has expressly consented, in writing, to the release of such information. In such cases, such information shall be released only as permitted under the provisions of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. § 1232g) and related regulations or other federal law and regulations and the regulations of the Board. Such directory information may include For the purpose of this section, "directory information" includes the student's name, sex, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members as a member of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and other similar information most recent previous educational agency or institution attended.~~

§ 23.1-405. Student records and personal information; social media.

A. As used in this section:

"Social media account" means a personal account with an electronic medium or service through which users may create, share, or view user-generated content, including, without limitation, videos, photographs, blogs, podcasts, messages, emails, or website profiles or locations. "Social media account" does not include an account (i) opened by a student at the request of a public or private institution of higher education or (ii) provided to a student by a public or private institution of higher education such as the student's email account or other software program owned or operated exclusively by a public or private institution of higher education.

B. Each public institution of higher education and private institution of higher education may require any student who attends, or any applicant who has been accepted to and has committed to attend, such institution to provide, to the extent available, from the originating secondary school and, if applicable, any institution of higher education he has attended a complete student record, including any mental health records held by the previous school or institution. Such records shall be kept confidential as required by state and federal law, including the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. § 1232g).

C. ~~Student directory information shall not be publicly released unless the student who is the subject of such information, or the student's parent or legal guardian if the student is less than 18 years of age, has expressly consented, in writing, to the release of such information. In such cases, such information shall be released only as permitted under the provisions of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. § 1232g) and related regulations or other federal law and regulations and the regulations of the Council. For the purpose of this section, "directory information" includes the student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially~~

242 *recognized activities and sports, weight and height as a member of athletic teams, dates of attendance,*
243 *degrees and awards received, and most recent previous educational agency or institution attended.*

244 D. No public institution of higher education shall sell students' personal information, including
245 names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses, to any person. This subsection shall not apply to
246 transactions involving credit, debit, employment, finance, identity verification, risk assessment, fraud
247 prevention, or other transactions initiated by the student.

248 ~~D.~~ E. No public or private institution of higher education shall require a student to disclose the
249 username or password to any of such student's personal social media accounts. Nothing in this
250 subsection shall prevent a campus police officer appointed under Article 3 (§ 23.1-809 et seq.) of
251 Chapter 8 from performing his official duties.