

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2019 RECONVENED SESSION

CHAPTER 850

An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 46.2-861.1 and to repeal § 46.2-921.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to duties of drivers of vehicles approaching stationary vehicles displaying certain warning lights; penalty.

[H 1911]

Approved April 29, 2019

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 46.2-861.1 as follows:

§ 46.2-861.1. Drivers to yield right-of-way or reduce speed when approaching stationary vehicles displaying certain warning lights on highways; penalties.

A. The driver of any motor vehicle, upon approaching a stationary vehicle that is displaying a flashing, blinking, or alternating blue, red, or amber light or lights as provided in § 46.2-1022, 46.2-1023, or 46.2-1024 or subsection B of § 46.2-1026 shall (i) on a highway having at least four lanes, at least two of which are intended for traffic proceeding as the approaching vehicle, proceed with caution and, if reasonable, with due regard for safety and traffic conditions, yield the right-of-way by making a lane change into a lane not adjacent to the stationary vehicle or (ii) if changing lanes would be unreasonable or unsafe, proceed with due caution and maintain a safe speed for highway conditions. A violation of any provision of this subsection is reckless driving.

B. The driver of any motor vehicle, upon approaching a stationary vehicle that is displaying a flashing, blinking, or alternating amber light or lights as provided in subdivision A 1 or 2 of § 46.2-1025 shall (i) on a highway having at least four lanes, at least two of which are intended for traffic proceeding as the approaching vehicle, proceed with caution and, if reasonable, with due regard for safety and traffic conditions, yield the right-of-way by making a lane change into a lane not adjacent to the stationary vehicle or (ii) if changing lanes would be unreasonable or unsafe, proceed with due caution and maintain a safe speed for highway conditions. A violation of any provision of this subsection shall be punishable as a traffic infraction.

C. If the violation resulted in damage to property of another person, the court may, in addition, order the suspension of the driver's privilege to operate a motor vehicle for not more than one year. If the violation resulted in injury or death to another person, the court may, in addition to any other penalty imposed, order the suspension of the driver's privilege to operate a motor vehicle for not more than two years.

D. The provisions of this section shall not apply in highway work zones as defined in § 46.2-878.1.

2. That § 46.2-921.1 of the Code of Virginia is repealed.

3. That the provisions of this act may result in a net increase in periods of imprisonment or commitment. Pursuant to § 30-19.1:4 of the Code of Virginia, the estimated amount of the necessary appropriation cannot be determined for periods of imprisonment in state adult correctional facilities; therefore, Chapter 2 of the Acts of Assembly of 2018, Special Session I, requires the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission to assign a minimum fiscal impact of \$50,000. Pursuant to § 30-19.1:4 of the Code of Virginia, the estimated amount of the necessary appropriation cannot be determined for periods of commitment to the custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice.