



Fiscal Impact Statement for Proposed Legislation

Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission

House Bill No. 5080 (Patron – Webert)

LD#: 20200609

Date: 8/18/2020

Topic: Projecting a laser at another person

Fiscal Impact Summary:

- **State Adult Correctional Facilities:**
\$50,000 *
- **Local Adult Correctional Facilities:**
Cannot be determined
- **Adult Community Corrections Programs:**
Cannot be determined

- **Juvenile Correctional Centers:**
Cannot be determined**
 - **Juvenile Detention Facilities:**
Cannot be determined**
- **Provided by the Department of Juvenile Justice

* The estimated amount of the necessary appropriation cannot be determined for periods of imprisonment in state adult correctional facilities; therefore, Chapter 1289 of the Acts of Assembly of 2020 requires the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission to assign a minimum fiscal impact of \$50,000.

Summary of Proposed Legislation:

The proposal amends § 18.2-57.01, relating to pointing lasers at certain individuals. Currently, under § 18.2-57.01, intentionally projecting a beam or point of light from a laser, a laser gun sight, or any device that simulates a laser at a law-enforcement officer, probation or parole officer, or a correctional officer is a Class 2 misdemeanor. The proposal would increase the penalty for this offense to a Class 1 misdemeanor. The proposal would also expand this provision to prohibit the intentional projection of a laser at any person (not just law enforcement, probation or parole officers, or correctional officers) with the intent to cause bodily injury. This new offense would be punishable as a Class 6 felony.

Analysis:

According to the General District Court Case Management System (CMS) for FY2014 through FY2019, six offenders were convicted of a Class 2 misdemeanor under § 18.2-57.01 for pointing a laser at a law enforcement officer, probation or parole officer, or correctional officer. Of these, the violation of § 18.2-57.01 was the most serious offense in five cases. None of these individuals received an active period of incarceration to serve after sentencing.

Impact of Proposed Legislation:

State adult correctional facilities. The proposal creates a new Class 6 felony under § 18.2-57.01 for pointing a laser at another person with the intent to cause bodily injury. Existing data do not provide sufficient detail to estimate the number of new felony convictions that would result from enactment of the proposal. Therefore, the impact on state-responsible (prison) bed space needs of the Commonwealth cannot be determined.

Local adult correctional facilities. Similarly, the proposal may increase the local-responsible (jail) bed space needs. Since the number of new convictions that may result from enactment of the proposal cannot be determined, the magnitude of the impact on jail bed space needs cannot be estimated.

Adult community corrections programs. Because the proposal could result in felony convictions and subsequent supervision requirements for additional offenders, the proposal may increase the need for adult community corrections resources. Since the number of cases that may be affected cannot be determined, the potential impact on community corrections cannot be quantified.

Virginia's sentencing guidelines. Convictions under § 18.2-57.01 are not covered by the sentencing guidelines when this offense is the primary, or most serious, offense in a case. However, convictions under this statute could augment the guidelines recommendation if the most serious offense at sentencing is covered by the guidelines. No adjustment to the guidelines would be necessary under the proposal.

Juvenile direct care. According to the Department of Juvenile Justice, the impact of the proposal on direct care (juvenile correctional center or alternative commitment placement) bed space needs cannot be determined.

Juvenile detention facilities. According to the Department of Juvenile Justice, the impact of the proposal on the bed space needs of juvenile detention facilities cannot be determined.

Pursuant to § 30-19.1:4, the estimated amount of the necessary appropriation cannot be determined for periods of imprisonment in state adult correctional facilities; therefore, Chapter 1289 of the Acts of Assembly of 2020 requires the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission to assign a minimum fiscal impact of \$50,000.

Pursuant to § 30-19.1:4, the estimated amount of the necessary appropriation cannot be determined for periods of commitment to the custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice.

laser01_0609