

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2023 RECONVENED SESSION

CHAPTER 788

An Act to amend and reenact § 16.1-296 of the Code of Virginia, relating to juvenile and domestic relations district courts; notice of appeal to the circuit court.

[H 1992]

Approved April 12, 2023

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 16.1-296 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 16.1-296. Jurisdiction of appeals; procedure.

A. From any final order or judgment of the juvenile court affecting the rights or interests of any person coming within its jurisdiction, an appeal may be taken to the circuit court within 10 days from the entry of a final judgment, order, or conviction and shall be heard de novo. ~~However, in~~ *In any such case, a copy of the notice of appeal shall be served consistent with Rule 1:12 of the Rules of Supreme Court of Virginia by the appealing party upon the opposing party or each counsel of record. The failure of the appealing party to properly serve the notice of appeal shall not affect the validity of an otherwise proper appeal. However, if the court determines that the appealing party failed to properly serve a copy of the notice of appeal upon an opposing party, the court may, on its own motion, (i) continue any hearing on such appeal or (ii) dismiss such appeal absent a showing of good cause by the appealing party.*

A1. In a case arising under the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (§ 20-88.32 et seq.), a party may take an appeal pursuant to this section within 30 days from entry of a final order or judgment. Protective orders issued pursuant to § 16.1-279.1 in cases of family abuse and orders entered pursuant to § 16.1-278.2 are final orders from which an appeal may be taken.

B. Upon receipt of notice of such appeal the juvenile court shall forthwith transmit to the attorney for the Commonwealth a report incorporating the results of any investigation conducted pursuant to § 16.1-273, which shall be confidential in nature and made available only to the court and the attorney for the defendant (i) after the guilt or innocence of the accused has been determined or (ii) after the court has made its findings on the issues subject to appeal. After final determination of the case, the report and all copies thereof shall be forthwith returned to such juvenile court.

C. Where an appeal is taken by a child on a finding that he or she is delinquent and on a disposition pursuant to § 16.1-278.8, trial by jury on the issue of guilt or innocence of the alleged delinquent act may be had on motion of the child, the attorney for the Commonwealth or the circuit court judge. If the alleged delinquent act is one which, if committed by an adult, would constitute a felony, the child shall be entitled to a jury of 12 persons. In all other cases, the jury shall consist of seven persons. If the jury in such a trial finds the child guilty, disposition shall be by the judge pursuant to the provisions of § 16.1-278.8 after taking into consideration the report of any investigation made pursuant to § 16.1-237 or 16.1-273.

C1. In any hearing held upon an appeal taken by a child on a finding that he is delinquent and on a disposition pursuant to § 16.1-278.8, the provisions of § 16.1-302 shall apply mutatis mutandis, except in the case of trial by jury which shall be open. If proceedings in the circuit court are closed pursuant to this subsection, any records or portions thereof relating to such closed proceedings shall remain confidential.

C2. Where an appeal is taken by a juvenile on a finding that he is delinquent and on a disposition pursuant to § 16.1-278.8 and the juvenile is in a secure facility pending the appeal, the circuit court, when practicable, shall hold a hearing on the merits of the case within 45 days of the filing of the appeal. Upon receipt of the notice of appeal from the juvenile court, the circuit court shall provide a copy of the order and a copy of the notice of appeal to the attorney for the Commonwealth within seven days after receipt of notice of an appeal. The time limitations shall be tolled during any period in which the juvenile has escaped from custody. A juvenile held continuously in secure detention shall be released from confinement if there is no hearing on the merits of his case within 45 days of the filing of the appeal. The circuit court may extend the time limitations for a reasonable period of time based upon good cause shown, provided the basis for such extension is recorded in writing and filed among the papers of the proceedings.

D. When an appeal is taken in a case involving termination of parental rights brought under § 16.1-283, the circuit court shall hold a hearing on the merits of the case within 90 days of the perfecting of the appeal. An appeal of the case to the Court of Appeals shall take precedence on the docket of the Court.

E. Where an appeal is taken by an adult on a finding of guilty of an offense within the jurisdiction of the juvenile and domestic relations district court, the appeal shall be dealt with in all respects as is an

appeal from a general district court pursuant to §§ 16.1-132 through 16.1-137; however, where an appeal is taken by any person on a charge of nonsupport, the procedure shall be as is provided for appeals in prosecutions under Chapter 5 (§ 20-61 et seq.) of Title 20.

F. In all other cases on appeal, proceedings in the circuit court shall be heard without a jury; however, hearing of an issue by an advisory jury may be allowed, in the discretion of the judge, upon the motion of any party. An appeal from an order of protection issued pursuant to § 16.1-279.1 shall be given precedence on the docket of the court over other civil appeals taken to the circuit court from the district courts and shall be assigned a case number within two business days of receipt of such appeal.

If a party files an appeal of a district court order of protection entered pursuant to § 16.1-279.1, such notice of appeal shall be on a form prescribed by the Office of the Executive Secretary. The district court clerk shall contact the appellate court to determine whether the hearing on the appeal shall be set by the appellate court on (i) a date scheduled by the district court clerk with the court, (ii) on the next docket call date, or (iii) a date set for district court appeals. Once the hearing date is set and the appeal documents have been transmitted, the appellate court shall have the parties served with notice of the appeal stating the date and time of the hearing in accordance with subdivision 1 of § 8.01-296. No such hearing on the appeal shall be heard in the appellate court unless the appellee has been so served with such notice or notice has been waived by the non-moving party.

G. Costs, taxes and fees on appealed cases shall be assessed only in those cases in which a trial fee could have been assessed in the juvenile and domestic relations court and shall be collected in the circuit court, except that the appeal to circuit court of any case in which a fee either was or could have been assessed pursuant to § 16.1-69.48:5 shall also be in accordance with § 16.1-296.2.

H. No appeal bond shall be required of a party appealing from an order of a juvenile and domestic relations district court except for that portion of any order or judgment establishing a support arrearage or suspending payment of support during pendency of an appeal. In cases involving support, no appeal shall be allowed until the party applying for the same or someone for him gives bond, in an amount and with sufficient surety approved by the judge or by his clerk if there is one, to abide by such judgment as may be rendered on appeal if the appeal is perfected or, if not perfected, then to satisfy the judgment of the court in which it was rendered. Upon appeal from a conviction for failure to support or from a finding of civil or criminal contempt involving a failure to support, the juvenile and domestic relations district court may require the party applying for the appeal or someone for him to give bond, with or without surety, to insure his appearance and may also require bond in an amount and with sufficient surety to secure the payment of prospective support accruing during the pendency of the appeal. An appeal will not be perfected unless such appeal bond as may be required is filed within 30 days from the entry of the final judgment or order. However, no appeal bond shall be required of the Commonwealth or when an appeal is proper to protect the estate of a decedent, an infant, a convict or an insane person, or the interest of a county, city or town.

If bond is furnished by or on behalf of any party against whom judgment has been rendered for money, the bond shall be conditioned for the performance and satisfaction of such judgment or order as may be entered against the party on appeal, and for the payment of all damages which may be awarded against him in the appellate court. If the appeal is by a party against whom there is no recovery, the bond shall be conditioned for the payment of any damages as may be awarded against him on the appeal. The provisions of § 16.1-109 shall apply to bonds required pursuant to this subsection.

This subsection shall not apply to release on bail pursuant to other subsections of this section or § 16.1-298.

I. In all cases on appeal, the circuit court in the disposition of such cases shall have all the powers and authority granted by the chapter to the juvenile and domestic relations district court. Unless otherwise specifically provided by this Code, the circuit court judge shall have the authority to appoint counsel for the parties and compensate such counsel in accordance with the provisions of Article 6 (§ 16.1-266 et seq.) of this chapter.

J. In any case which has been referred or transferred from a circuit court to a juvenile court and an appeal is taken from an order or judgment of the juvenile court, the appeal shall be taken to the circuit court in the same locality as the juvenile court to which the case had been referred or transferred.