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SENATE BILL NO. 1081

Offered January 11, 2023

Prefiled January 9, 2023

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 2.2-438 through 2.2-448 and 2.2-3703 of the Code of Virginia and to repeal § 2.2-449 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the Office of the Children's Ombudsman.

Patron—Edwards

Referred to Committee on General Laws and Technology

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 2.2-438 through 2.2-448 and 2.2-3703 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 2.2-438. Definitions.

As used in this chapter, unless context requires another meaning:

"Abused or neglected child" means the same as that term is defined in § 63.2-100.

"Administrative act" includes an action, omission, decision, recommendation, practice, or other procedure of the Department, a local department, an adoption attorney, or a child-placing agency with respect to a particular child related to adoption, foster care, or protective services.

"Adoption attorney" means an attorney acting as counsel in an adoption proceeding or case.

"Central registry" means the system maintained at the Department of Social Services pursuant to § 63.2-1515.

"Child" means an individual under the age of 18.

"Child abuse" means harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare that occurs through nonaccidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, abandonment, or maltreatment by a parent, a legal guardian, or any other person responsible for the child's health or welfare or by a teacher, a teacher's aide, or a member of the clergy.

"Child-caring institution" means a child care facility that is organized for the purpose of receiving minor children for care, maintenance, and supervision, usually on a 24-hour basis, in buildings maintained by the child-caring institution for that purpose, and that operates throughout the year. An educational program may be provided, but the educational program shall not be the primary purpose of the facility. "Child-caring institution" includes a children's residential facility as defined in § 63.2-100, a maternity home for the care of mothers who are minors, an inpatient substance use disorder treatment facility for minors, and an agency group home that is described as a small child-caring institution, owned, leased, or rented by a licensed agency providing care for more than four but less than 13 minor children. "Child-caring institution" also includes institutions for developmentally disabled or emotionally disturbed minor children. "Child-caring institution" does not include (i) a licensed or accredited educational institution whose pupils, in the ordinary course of events, return annually to the homes of their parents or guardians for not less than two months of summer vacation; (ii) an establishment required to be licensed as a summer camp by § 35.1-18; or (iii) a licensed or accredited hospital legally maintained as such.

"Child neglect" means harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare by a parent, legal guardian, or any other person responsible for the child's health or welfare that occurs through either of the following:

1. Negligent treatment, including the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care, though financially able to do so, or the failure to seek financial or other reasonable means to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care; or

2. Putting the child's health or welfare at unreasonable risk through failure of the parent, legal guardian, or other person responsible for the child's health or welfare to intervene to eliminate that risk when that person is able to do so and has, or should have, knowledge of any such risk.

"Child-placing agency" means (i) any person who places children in foster homes, adoptive homes, or independent living arrangements pursuant to § 63.2-1819; (ii) a local board that places children in foster homes or adoptive homes pursuant to §§ 63.2-900, 63.2-903, and 63.2-1221; or (iii) an entity that assists parents with the process of delegating parental and legal custodial powers of their children pursuant to Chapter 10 (§ 20-166 et seq.) of Title 20. "Child-placing agency" does not include the persons to whom such parental or legal custodial powers are delegated pursuant to Chapter 10 (§ 20-166 et seq.) of Title 20. Officers, employees, or agents of the Commonwealth or any locality thereof, acting within the scope of their authority as such, who serve as or maintain a child-placing agency shall not be required to be licensed.

INTRODUCED

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59 "Children's Ombudsman" or "Ombudsman" means the individual appointed to head the Office of the
60 Children's Ombudsman under § 2.2-439.

61 "Child-serving agency" means (i) a state agency that provides services to children, including the
62 Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, the Department of Education, the
63 Department of Health, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Social Services, and the
64 Office of Children's Services, and (ii) a local entity that provides services to children and that receives
65 funding from a state agency under clause (i). "Child-serving agency" does not include any
66 law-enforcement agency.

67 "Complainant" means an individual who makes a complaint pursuant to § 2.2-441.

68 "Department" means the Department of Social Services.

69 "Foster care" means care provided to a child by a child-caring institution or a foster parent, children's
70 residential facility, or group home licensed or approved by the Department under Chapter 9 (§
71 63.2-900) of Title 63.2; care provided to a child in a relative's home under a court order; or any other
72 care provided at the time the child's custody has been given to a government agency.

73 "Law-enforcement agency" means any crime victim and witness assistance program whose funding is
74 provided in whole or in part by grants administered by the Department of Criminal Justice Services
75 pursuant to § 9.1-104, any state or local police or sheriff's department, any office of an attorney for the
76 Commonwealth, or the Office of the Attorney General.

77 "Local department" means the local department of social services of any county or city in the
78 Commonwealth.

79 "Office" means the Office of the Children's Ombudsman established under § 2.2-439.

80 **§ 2.2-439. Children's Ombudsman; establishment; appointment; removal.**

81 A. There is hereby created the Office of the Children's Ombudsman as a means of effecting changes
82 in policy, procedure, and legislation; educating the public; investigating and reviewing actions of the
83 Department, local departments, child-placing agencies, or child-caring institutions; and monitoring and
84 ensuring compliance with relevant statutes, rules, and policies pertaining to child protective services and
85 the placement, supervision, and treatment of, and improvement of delivery of care to, children in foster
86 care and adoptive homes.

87 B. The Office of the Children's Ombudsman shall be headed by the Children's Ombudsman, who
88 shall be appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly. The individual
89 shall be qualified by training and experience to perform the duties and exercise the powers of the
90 Children's Ombudsman and the Office of the Children's Ombudsman as provided in this chapter.

91 C. The appointment shall be for a term of four years. The Governor may remove the Ombudsman
92 for cause in accordance with § 2.2-108. Vacancies shall be filled by appointment by the Governor for
93 the unexpired term.

94 ~~D. The operation and administration of the Office shall be funded by the Children's Advocacy Fund~~
95 ~~established pursuant to § 2.2-449.~~

96 **§ 2.2-440. Procedures; training; complaint; investigation; notification of safety concerns.**

97 A. The Ombudsman shall establish procedures for the Office for budget, expenditures, and
98 employment. Subject to annual appropriations, the Ombudsman shall employ sufficient personnel to
99 carry out the duties and powers prescribed by this chapter.

100 B. The Ombudsman shall establish procedures for receiving and processing complaints from
101 complainants and individuals not meeting the definition of complainant, conducting investigations,
102 holding informal hearings, and reporting findings and recommendations resulting from investigations.

103 C. Personnel employed by the Office shall receive mandatory training in domestic violence and in
104 handling complaints of ~~alleging that a child abuse or child neglect that include a history of domestic~~
105 ~~violence is an abused or neglected child.~~

106 D. Any individual may submit a complaint to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman has the sole
107 discretion and authority to determine if a complaint falls within the Ombudsman's duties and powers to
108 investigate and if a complaint involves an administrative act. The Ombudsman may initiate an
109 investigation without receiving a complaint. The Ombudsman may initiate an investigation upon receipt
110 of a complaint from an individual not meeting the definition of complainant. An individual not meeting
111 the definition of complainant is not entitled to receive information under this chapter as if such
112 individual is a complainant. The individual is entitled to receive the recommendations of the
113 Ombudsman and the Department or local department's response to the recommendations of the
114 Ombudsman in accordance with state and federal law. During the course of an investigation, the
115 Ombudsman may refer a case to a child-serving agency if the Ombudsman determines that such agency
116 received a complaint on the case but did not conduct an investigation. If the Ombudsman refers a case
117 to a child-serving agency, such agency shall conduct an investigation of the case or provide notice to the
118 Ombudsman explaining why an investigation was not conducted or what alternative steps may have been
119 taken to address the situation. If an investigation has been conducted, the child-serving agency shall
120 report the results to the Ombudsman.

121 E. The Ombudsman shall notify a child-serving agency of any immediate safety concerns regarding a
122 child or children who are part of an active or open child protective services or foster care case. This
123 notification shall occur as soon as possible, but not later than one business day after the Ombudsman
124 becomes aware of the concerns.

125 **§ 2.2-441. Individuals making complaint to Children's Ombudsman.**

126 Any of the following individuals may make a complaint to the Ombudsman with respect to a
127 particular child, alleging that an administrative act is contrary to law, rule, or policy; imposed without
128 an adequate statement of reason; or based on irrelevant, immaterial, or erroneous grounds:

- 129 1. The child, if the child is able to articulate a complaint;
- 130 2. A biological parent of the child;
- 131 3. A foster parent of the child;
- 132 4. An adoptive parent or a prospective adoptive parent of the child;
- 133 5. A legally appointed guardian of the child;
- 134 6. A guardian ad litem ~~of~~ *for* the child;
- 135 7. A relative of the child or any person with a legitimate interest as defined in § 20-124.1;
- 136 8. A Virginia legislator;
- 137 9. An individual required to report ~~that a child abuse or child neglect under § 63.2-1509 is suspected~~
138 *to be an abused or neglected child*; and
- 139 10. An attorney for any individual described in subdivisions 1 through 7.

140 **§ 2.2-442. Children's Ombudsman; powers.**

141 The Children's Ombudsman has the authority to do all of the following with regard to children
142 receiving child-protective services, in foster care, or placed for adoption:

- 143 1. Pursue all necessary action, including legal action, to protect the rights and welfare of such
144 children;
- 145 2. Pursue legislative advocacy in the best interest of such children;
- 146 3. Review policies and procedures relating to any child-serving agency's involvement with such
147 children *upon the Ombudsman's own initiative or upon receipt of a complaint* and make
148 recommendations for improvement; ~~and~~
- 149 4. *Initiate investigations of administrative acts of the Department, a local department, or*
150 *child-placing agency in cases relating to such children upon the Ombudsman's own initiative or upon*
151 *receipt of a complaint; and*
- 152 5. Subject to an appropriation of funds, commence and conduct investigations into alleged violations
153 of the rights of a foster parent.

154 **§ 2.2-443. Abused or neglected children; children receiving child-protective services, in foster
155 care, or placed for adoption; powers of Children's Ombudsman; child fatality cases; investigation.**

156 A. The Ombudsman may do all of the following in relation to a child who may be a ~~victim of an~~
157 *abused or neglected child abuse or child neglect*, including a child who may have died as a result of
158 suspected ~~child abuse or child neglect~~, *or is receiving child-protective services, in foster care, or placed*
159 *for adoption*:

- 160 1. Upon the Ombudsman's own initiative or upon receipt of a complaint, investigate an administrative
161 act that is alleged to be contrary to law or rule; contrary to any policy of the Department, a local
162 department, or a child-placing agency; imposed without an adequate statement of reason; or based on
163 irrelevant, immaterial, or erroneous grounds. The Ombudsman has sole discretion to determine if a
164 complaint involves an administrative act.
- 165 2. Decide, in the Ombudsman's discretion, whether to investigate an administrative act.
- 166 3. Upon the Ombudsman's own initiative or upon receipt of a complaint and subject to an
167 appropriation of funds, investigate an alleged violation of the rights of a foster parent.
- 168 4. Except as otherwise provided in this subdivision, access records and reports necessary to carry out
169 the Ombudsman's powers and duties under this chapter to the same extent and in the same manner as
170 provided to the Department. The Ombudsman shall be provided access to medical and mental health
171 disorder records in the same manner as access is provided to the Department. The Ombudsman may
172 request substance use disorder records if the Ombudsman obtains a valid consent or a court order under
173 42 C.F.R. Part 2. In the course of a child fatality investigation, the Ombudsman may access records
174 from the court of jurisdiction, Attorney General, prosecuting attorney, or any attorney retained by the
175 Department or local department and reports from a county child fatality review team to the same extent
176 and in the same manner as provided to the Department or local department under state law.
- 177 5. Request a subpoena from a court requiring the production of a record or report necessary to carry
178 out the Ombudsman's duties and powers, including a child fatality investigation. If the person to whom a
179 subpoena is issued fails or refuses to produce the record or report, the Ombudsman may petition the
180 court for enforcement of the subpoena.
- 181 6. Hold informal hearings and request that individuals appear before the Ombudsman and give

182 testimony or produce documentary or other evidence that the Ombudsman considers relevant to a matter
183 under investigation.

184 7. Make recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly concerning the need for child
185 protective services, adoption, or foster care legislation, policy, or practice without prior review by other
186 offices, departments, or agencies in the executive branch in order to facilitate rapid implementation of
187 recommendations or for suggested improvements to the recommendations. No other office, department,
188 or agency shall prohibit the release of an Ombudsman's recommendation to the Governor or the General
189 Assembly.

190 B. The Ombudsman may investigate all child fatality cases that occurred or are alleged to have
191 occurred due to ~~child~~ abuse or ~~child~~ neglect of a child in the following situations:

192 1. A child died during an active child protective services investigation or open services case, or there
193 was a valid or invalid child protective services complaint within 12 months immediately preceding the
194 child's death.

195 2. A child died while in foster care, unless the death is determined to have resulted from natural
196 causes and there were no prior child protective services or licensing complaints concerning the foster
197 home.

198 3. A child was returned home from foster care and there is an active foster care case.

199 4. A foster care case involving the deceased child or sibling was closed within 24 months
200 immediately preceding the child's death.

201 C. Subject to state appropriations, an investigation under subsection B shall be completed within 12
202 months after the Ombudsman opens a child fatality case for investigation.

203 D. The Ombudsman is subject to the same standards for safeguarding the confidentiality of
204 information under this section and the same sanctions for unauthorized release of information as the
205 Department.

206 **§ 2.2-444. Decision to investigate; notice; pursuing administrative remedies or channels of**
207 **complaint; further investigation; violation of state or federal criminal law; complaint against**
208 **child-placing agency; petition requesting court jurisdiction or termination of parental rights.**

209 A. Upon deciding to investigate a complaint from a complainant or an individual not meeting the
210 definition of complainant, the Ombudsman shall notify the complainant or the individual not meeting the
211 definition of complainant of the decision to investigate and shall notify the Department or local
212 department, ~~adoption attorney~~, or child-placing agency of the intention to investigate. If the Ombudsman
213 declines to investigate a complaint or continue an investigation, the Ombudsman shall notify the
214 complainant or the individual not meeting the definition of complainant and the Department or local
215 department or child-placing agency of the decision and of the reasons for the Ombudsman's action.

216 B. The Ombudsman shall advise a complainant of administrative remedies and may advise the
217 individual to pursue all administrative remedies or channels of complaint open to the complainant before
218 pursuing a complaint with the Ombudsman. Subsequent to the administrative processing of a complaint,
219 the Ombudsman may conduct further investigations of a complaint upon the request of the complainant
220 or upon the Ombudsman's own initiative.

221 C. If the Ombudsman finds in the course of an investigation that an individual's action is in violation
222 of state or federal criminal law, the Ombudsman shall immediately report that fact to the local attorney
223 for the Commonwealth or the Attorney General. If the complaint is against a child-placing agency, the
224 Ombudsman shall refer the matter to the Department or local department for further action with respect
225 to licensing or approval.

226 **§ 2.2-445. Department and child-placing agency; duties; information to be provided to biological**
227 **parent, adoptive parent, or foster parent; access to departmental computer networks.**

228 A. The Department or local department and a child-placing agency shall do all of the following:

229 1. Upon the Ombudsman's request, grant the Ombudsman or the Ombudsman's designee access to all
230 information, records, and documents in the possession of the Department or local department or
231 child-placing agency that the Ombudsman considers relevant and necessary in an investigation.

232 2. Assist the Ombudsman to obtain the necessary releases of those documents that are specifically
233 restricted.

234 3. Upon the Ombudsman's request, provide the Ombudsman *or the Ombudsman's designee* with
235 progress reports concerning the administrative processing of a complaint.

236 4. Upon the Ombudsman's request, provide the Ombudsman *or the Ombudsman's designee* the
237 information requested under subdivision 1 or notification within 10 business days after the request that
238 the Department or local department has determined that release of the information would violate federal
239 or state law.

240 B. The Department or local department, an attorney involved with an adoption, and a child-placing
241 agency shall provide information to a biological parent, prospective adoptive parent, or foster parent
242 regarding the provisions of this chapter.

243 C. The Ombudsman *and employees of the Office* shall have access, in the Ombudsman's own office,

244 to departmental computer networks pertaining to protective services, foster care, adoption, juvenile
 245 delinquency, and the central registry, unless otherwise prohibited by state or federal law or if the release
 246 of the information to the Ombudsman would jeopardize federal funding. The cost of implementing this
 247 subsection shall be negotiated among the Office and the custodians of such networks.

248 **§ 2.2-446. Confidentiality of record of Children's Ombudsman; disclosure; limitations; release of**
 249 **certain information.**

250 A. ~~Subject to subsections B through F, a record~~ *All records* of the Office ~~is are~~ confidential, shall
 251 only be used for purposes set forth in this chapter, ~~is are~~ not subject to the Virginia Freedom of
 252 Information Act (§ 2.2-3700 et seq.) or to court subpoena, and ~~is are~~ not discoverable in a legal
 253 proceeding. If the Ombudsman identifies action or inaction by the state through its agencies or services
 254 that failed to protect children, the Ombudsman shall provide any findings and recommendations to the
 255 agency affected by those findings, and make those findings and recommendations available to the
 256 complainant and the General Assembly upon request, to the extent consistent with state or federal law.
 257 The Ombudsman shall not disclose any information that impairs the rights of the child or the child's
 258 parents or guardians.

259 B. Unless otherwise part of the public record, the Office shall not release any of the following
 260 confidential information to the general public:

- 261 1. Records relating to a mental health evaluation or treatment of a parent or child;
- 262 2. Records relating to the evaluation or treatment of a substance abuse-related disorder of a parent or
 263 child;
- 264 3. Records relating to a medical diagnosis or treatment of a parent or child;
- 265 4. Records relating to domestic violence-related services and sexual assault services provided to a
 266 parent or child; or
- 267 5. Records relating to educational services provided to a parent or child.

268 C. Notwithstanding subsection B, if the Ombudsman determines that disclosure of confidential
 269 information is necessary to identify, prevent, or respond to the abuse or neglect of a child, the
 270 Ombudsman may disclose such information to the Department or local department, a court, a
 271 law-enforcement agency, or a prosecuting attorney investigating a report of known or suspected child
 272 abuse or ~~child~~ neglect of a child. The Ombudsman shall not release the address, telephone number, or
 273 other information regarding the whereabouts of a victim or suspected victim of domestic violence unless
 274 ordered to by a court.

275 D. Except as provided in subsection C, the Ombudsman shall not disclose information relating to an
 276 ongoing law-enforcement investigation or an ongoing child protective services investigation. The
 277 Ombudsman may release the results of its investigation to a complainant, or an individual not meeting
 278 the definition of complainant, if the Ombudsman receives notification that releasing the results of its
 279 investigation is not related to and will not interfere with an ongoing law-enforcement investigation or
 280 ongoing child protective services investigation.

281 E. The Ombudsman shall not disclose the identity of an individual making a ~~child abuse or child~~
 282 ~~neglect~~ complaint *alleging that a child is an abused or neglected child* unless that individual's written
 283 permission is obtained first or a court has ordered the Ombudsman to release such information.

284 F. The Ombudsman may release an individual's identity who makes an intentionally false report of
 285 ~~child abuse or child neglect~~ *alleging that a child is an abused or neglected child*, subject to other laws
 286 relating to such disclosure.

287 **§ 2.2-447. Report of findings; recommendations; consultation with individual, Department, local**
 288 **department, or child-placing agency; publication of adverse opinion; notice of actions; information**
 289 **provided to complainant; child fatality investigation; report.**

290 A. The Ombudsman shall prepare a report of the factual findings of an investigation and make
 291 recommendations to the Department, local department, or child-placing agency if the Ombudsman finds
 292 any of the following:

- 293 1. A matter should be further considered by the Department, local department, or child-placing
 294 agency.
- 295 2. An administrative act or omission should be modified, canceled, or corrected.
- 296 3. Reasons should be given for an administrative act or omission.
- 297 4. Other action should be taken by the Department, local department, or child-placing agency.

298 B. Before announcing a conclusion or recommendation that expressly or by implication criticizes an
 299 individual, the Department, the local department, or a child-placing agency *that is or was the subject of*
 300 *an investigation by the Ombudsman*, the Ombudsman shall consult with that individual, the Department,
 301 the local department, or the child-placing agency. When publishing an opinion adverse to the
 302 Department, local department, or child-placing agency, the Ombudsman shall include in the publication
 303 any statement of reasonable length made to the Ombudsman by the Department, local department, or
 304 child-placing agency in defense or mitigation of the action. The Ombudsman may request to be notified

305 by the Department, local department, or child-placing agency, within a specified time, of any action
 306 taken on any recommendation presented.

307 C. The Ombudsman shall notify the complainant of the actions taken by the Ombudsman and by the
 308 Department, local department, or child-placing agency.

309 D. The Ombudsman may provide to the complainant the following information:

310 1. A copy of the Ombudsman's report regarding the investigation's findings, recommendations to the
 311 Department or local department made according to the investigation, the Department or local
 312 department's response to the Ombudsman's findings and recommendations, and any epilogue to the
 313 Ombudsman's report and the Department or local department's response; or

314 2. Information that has otherwise been made public.

315 E. The Ombudsman shall not release information to the individual making the complaint if doing so
 316 could endanger the health or welfare of a child or another individual.

317 F. With respect to a child fatality case investigated under subsection B of § 2.2-443 and upon review
 318 of records or other information received under subdivision A 3 or 4 of § 2.2-443 in the course of a child
 319 fatality investigation, if there is no ongoing child protection proceeding involving a sibling of the child
 320 who died, the Ombudsman shall provide any necessary recommendations for improving systemic issues
 321 that are discovered during the investigation of the child fatality. The recommendations may be provided
 322 to the court of jurisdiction, the state court administrative office, the county child fatality review team,
 323 medical professionals, or attorneys or other legal professionals involved with the particular child who
 324 died. The recommendations shall also be summarized and included in the annual report referenced in
 325 subsection G.

326 G. The Ombudsman shall submit to the Governor, the director of the Department, and the General
 327 Assembly an annual report on the Ombudsman's activities, including any recommendations regarding the
 328 need for legislation or for a change in rules or policies.

329 **§ 2.2-448. Penalty for filing complaint or cooperating in investigation prohibited.**

330 A. An official, the Department, a local department, a child-serving agency, or a child-placing agency
 331 shall not penalize any person for filing a complaint or cooperating with the Ombudsman in investigating
 332 a complaint.

333 B. An individual, the Department, a local department, ~~an adoption attorney~~, a child-serving agency,
 334 or a child-placing agency shall not hinder the lawful actions of the Ombudsman or employees of the
 335 Ombudsman.

336 C. A report by the Ombudsman is not subject to prior approval by a person outside of the Office.

337 **§ 2.2-3703. Public bodies and records to which chapter inapplicable; voter registration and
 338 election records; access by persons incarcerated in a state, local, or federal correctional facility.**

339 A. The provisions of this chapter shall not apply to:

340 1. The Virginia Parole Board (the Board), except that (i) information from the Board providing the
 341 number of inmates considered by the Board for discretionary parole, the number of inmates granted or
 342 denied parole, and the number of parolees returned to the custody of the Department of Corrections
 343 solely as a result of a determination by the Board of a violation of parole shall be open to inspection
 344 and available for release, on a monthly basis, as provided by § 2.2-3704; (ii) all guidance documents, as
 345 defined in § 2.2-4101, shall be public records and subject to the provisions of this chapter; (iii) all
 346 records concerning the finances of the Board shall be public records and subject to the provisions of this
 347 chapter; and (iv) individual Board member votes shall be public records and subject to the provisions of
 348 this chapter. The information required by clause (i) shall be furnished by offense, sex, race, age of the
 349 inmate, and the locality in which the conviction was obtained, upon the request of the party seeking the
 350 information. The information required by clause (ii) shall include all documents establishing the policy
 351 of the Board or any change in or clarification of such policy with respect to grant, denial, deferral,
 352 revocation, or supervision of parole or geriatric release or the process for consideration thereof, and shall
 353 be clearly and conspicuously posted on the Board's website. However, such information shall not include
 354 any portion of any document reflecting the application of any policy or policy change or clarification of
 355 such policy to an individual inmate;

356 2. Petit juries and grand juries;

357 3. Family assessment and planning teams established pursuant to § 2.2-5207;

358 4. Sexual assault response teams established pursuant to § 15.2-1627.4, except that records relating
 359 to (i) protocols and policies of the sexual assault response team and (ii) guidelines for the community's
 360 response established by the sexual assault response team shall be public records and subject to the
 361 provisions of this chapter;

362 5. Multidisciplinary child sexual abuse response teams established pursuant to § 15.2-1627.5;

363 6. The Virginia State Crime Commission; ~~and~~

364 7. *The Office of the Children's Ombudsman*; ~~and~~

365 8. The records maintained by the clerks of the courts of record, as defined in § 1-212, for which
 366 clerks are custodians under § 17.1-242, and courts not of record, as defined in § 16.1-69.5, for which

367 clerks are custodians under § 16.1-69.54, including those transferred for storage, maintenance, or
368 archiving. Such records shall be requested in accordance with the provisions of §§ 16.1-69.54:1 and
369 17.1-208, as appropriate. However, other records maintained by the clerks of such courts shall be public
370 records and subject to the provisions of this chapter.

371 B. Public access to voter registration and election records shall be governed by the provisions of
372 Title 24.2 and this chapter. The provisions of Title 24.2 shall be controlling in the event of any conflict.

373 C. No provision of this chapter or Chapter 21 (§ 30-178 et seq.) of Title 30 shall be construed to
374 afford any rights to any person (i) incarcerated in a state, local or federal correctional facility, whether
375 or not such facility is (a) located in the Commonwealth or (b) operated pursuant to the Corrections
376 Private Management Act (§ 53.1-261 et seq.) or (ii) civilly committed pursuant to the Sexually Violent
377 Predators Act (§ 37.2-900 et seq.). However, this subsection shall not be construed to prevent such
378 persons from exercising their constitutionally protected rights, including, but not limited to, their right to
379 call for evidence in their favor in a criminal prosecution.

380 **2. That § 2.2-449 of the Code of Virginia is repealed.**