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SENATE BILL NO. 872

Offered January 11, 2023

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A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 37.2-808 and 37.2-810 of the Code of Virginia, relating to emergency custody; temporary detention; alternative transportation.

Patron—Newman

Referred to Committee on Education and Health

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That §§ 37.2-808 and 37.2-810 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:****§ 37.2-808. Emergency custody; issuance and execution of order.**

A. Any magistrate shall issue, upon the sworn petition of any responsible person, treating physician, or upon his own motion, or a court may issue pursuant to § 19.2-271.6, an emergency custody order when he has probable cause to believe that any person (i) has a mental illness and that there exists a substantial likelihood that, as a result of mental illness, the person will, in the near future, (a) cause serious physical harm to himself or others as evidenced by recent behavior causing, attempting, or threatening harm and other relevant information, if any, or (b) suffer serious harm due to his lack of capacity to protect himself from harm or to provide for his basic human needs, (ii) is in need of hospitalization or treatment, and (iii) is unwilling to volunteer or incapable of volunteering for hospitalization or treatment. Any emergency custody order entered pursuant to this section shall provide for the disclosure of medical records pursuant to § 37.2-804.2. This subsection shall not preclude any other disclosures as required or permitted by law.

When considering whether there is probable cause to issue an emergency custody order, the magistrate may, in addition to the petition, or the court may pursuant to § 19.2-271.6, consider (1) the recommendations of any treating or examining physician or psychologist licensed in Virginia, if available, (2) any past actions of the person, (3) any past mental health treatment of the person, (4) any relevant hearsay evidence, (5) any medical records available, (6) any affidavits submitted, if the witness is unavailable and it so states in the affidavit, and (7) any other information available that the magistrate or the court considers relevant to the determination of whether probable cause exists to issue an emergency custody order.

B. Any person for whom an emergency custody order is issued shall be taken into custody and transported to a convenient location to be evaluated to determine whether the person meets the criteria for temporary detention pursuant to § 37.2-809 and to assess the need for hospitalization or treatment. The evaluation shall be made by a person designated by the community services board who is skilled in the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness and who has completed a certification program approved by the Department.

C. The magistrate or court issuing an emergency custody order shall specify the primary law-enforcement agency and jurisdiction to execute the emergency custody order and provide transportation. However, the magistrate or court shall consider any request to authorize transportation by an alternative transportation provider in accordance with this section, whenever an alternative transportation provider is identified to the magistrate or court, which may be a person, facility, or agency, including a family member or friend of the person who is the subject of the order, a representative of the community services board, or other transportation provider with personnel trained to provide transportation in a safe manner, upon determining, following consideration of information provided by the petitioner; the community services board or its designee; the local law-enforcement agency, if any; the person's treating physician, if any; or other persons who are available and have knowledge of the person, and, when the magistrate or court deems appropriate, the proposed alternative transportation provider, either in person or via two-way electronic video and audio or telephone communication system, that the proposed alternative transportation provider is available to provide transportation, willing to provide transportation, and able to provide transportation in a safe manner. *The magistrate shall authorize alternative transportation if the person subject to the emergency custody order is deemed to not be a danger to himself or others and appropriate alternative transportation is available.*

When transportation is ordered to be provided by an alternative transportation provider, the magistrate or court shall order the specified primary law-enforcement agency to execute the order, to take the person into custody, and to transfer custody of the person to the alternative transportation provider identified in the order. In such cases, a copy of the emergency custody order shall accompany

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59 the person being transported pursuant to this section at all times and shall be delivered by the alternative
60 transportation provider to the community services board or its designee responsible for conducting the
61 evaluation. The community services board or its designee conducting the evaluation shall return a copy
62 of the emergency custody order to the court designated by the magistrate or the court that issued the
63 emergency custody order as soon as is practicable. Delivery of an order to a law-enforcement officer or
64 alternative transportation provider and return of an order to the court may be accomplished electronically
65 or by facsimile.

66 Transportation under this section shall include transportation to a medical facility as may be
67 necessary to obtain emergency medical evaluation or treatment that shall be conducted immediately in
68 accordance with state and federal law. Transportation under this section shall include transportation to a
69 medical facility for a medical evaluation if a physician at the hospital in which the person subject to the
70 emergency custody order may be detained requires a medical evaluation prior to admission.

71 D. In specifying the primary law-enforcement agency and jurisdiction for purposes of this section,
72 the magistrate or court shall order the primary law-enforcement agency from the jurisdiction served by
73 the community services board that designated the person to perform the evaluation required in
74 subsection B to execute the order and, in cases in which transportation is ordered to be provided by the
75 primary law-enforcement agency, provide transportation. If the community services board serves more
76 than one jurisdiction, the magistrate or court shall designate the primary law-enforcement agency from
77 the particular jurisdiction within the community services board's service area where the person who is
78 the subject of the emergency custody order was taken into custody or, if the person has not yet been
79 taken into custody, the primary law-enforcement agency from the jurisdiction where the person is
80 presently located to execute the order and provide transportation.

81 E. The law-enforcement agency or alternative transportation provider providing transportation
82 pursuant to this section may transfer custody of the person to the facility or location to which the person
83 is transported for the evaluation required in subsection B, G, or H if the facility or location (i) is
84 licensed to provide the level of security necessary to protect both the person and others from harm, (ii)
85 is actually capable of providing the level of security necessary to protect the person and others from
86 harm, and (iii) in cases in which transportation is provided by a law-enforcement agency, has entered
87 into an agreement or memorandum of understanding with the law-enforcement agency setting forth the
88 terms and conditions under which it will accept a transfer of custody, provided, however, that the
89 facility or location may not require the law-enforcement agency to pay any fees or costs for the transfer
90 of custody.

91 F. A law-enforcement officer may lawfully go or be sent beyond the territorial limits of the county,
92 city, or town in which he serves to any point in the Commonwealth for the purpose of executing an
93 emergency custody order pursuant to this section.

94 G. A law-enforcement officer who, based upon his observation or the reliable reports of others, has
95 probable cause to believe that a person meets the criteria for emergency custody as stated in this section
96 may take that person into custody and transport that person to an appropriate location to assess the need
97 for hospitalization or treatment without prior authorization. A law-enforcement officer who takes a
98 person into custody pursuant to this subsection or subsection H may lawfully go or be sent beyond the
99 territorial limits of the county, city, or town in which he serves to any point in the Commonwealth for
100 the purpose of obtaining the assessment. Such evaluation shall be conducted immediately. The period of
101 custody shall not exceed eight hours from the time the law-enforcement officer takes the person into
102 custody.

103 H. A law-enforcement officer who is transporting a person who has voluntarily consented to be
104 transported to a facility for the purpose of assessment or evaluation and who is beyond the territorial
105 limits of the county, city, or town in which he serves may take such person into custody and transport
106 him to an appropriate location to assess the need for hospitalization or treatment without prior
107 authorization when the law-enforcement officer determines (i) that the person has revoked consent to be
108 transported to a facility for the purpose of assessment or evaluation, and (ii) based upon his
109 observations, that probable cause exists to believe that the person meets the criteria for emergency
110 custody as stated in this section. The period of custody shall not exceed eight hours from the time the
111 law-enforcement officer takes the person into custody.

112 I. Nothing herein shall preclude a law-enforcement officer or alternative transportation provider from
113 obtaining emergency medical treatment or further medical evaluation at any time for a person in his
114 custody as provided in this section.

115 J. A representative of the primary law-enforcement agency specified to execute an emergency
116 custody order or a representative of the law-enforcement agency employing a law-enforcement officer
117 who takes a person into custody pursuant to subsection G or H shall notify the community services
118 board responsible for conducting the evaluation required in subsection B, G, or H as soon as practicable
119 after execution of the emergency custody order or after the person has been taken into custody pursuant
120 to subsection G or H.

K. The person shall remain in custody until (i) a temporary detention order is issued in accordance with § 37.2-809, (ii) an order for temporary detention for observation, testing, or treatment is entered in accordance with § 37.2-1104, ending law enforcement custody, (iii) the person is released, or (iv) the emergency custody order expires. An emergency custody order shall be valid for a period not to exceed eight hours from the time of execution.

L. Nothing in this section shall preclude the issuance of an order for temporary detention for testing, observation, or treatment pursuant to § 37.2-1104 for a person who is also the subject of an emergency custody order issued pursuant to this section. In any case in which an order for temporary detention for testing, observation, or treatment is issued for a person who is also the subject of an emergency custody order, the person may be detained by a hospital emergency room or other appropriate facility for testing, observation, and treatment for a period not to exceed 24 hours, unless extended by the court as part of an order pursuant to § 37.2-1101, in accordance with subsection C of § 37.2-1104. Upon completion of testing, observation, or treatment pursuant to § 37.2-1104, the hospital emergency room or other appropriate facility in which the person is detained shall notify the nearest community services board, and the designee of the community services board shall, as soon as is practicable and prior to the expiration of the order for temporary detention issued pursuant to § 37.2-1104, conduct an evaluation of the person to determine if he meets the criteria for temporary detention pursuant to § 37.2-809.

M. Any person taken into emergency custody pursuant to this section shall be given a written summary of the emergency custody procedures and the statutory protections associated with those procedures.

N. If an emergency custody order is not executed within eight hours of its issuance, the order shall be void and shall be returned unexecuted to the office of the clerk of the issuing court or, if such office is not open, to any magistrate serving the jurisdiction of the issuing court.

O. In addition to the eight-hour period of emergency custody set forth in subsection G, H, or K, if the individual is detained in a state facility pursuant to subsection E of § 37.2-809, the state facility and an employee or designee of the community services board as defined in § 37.2-809 may, for an additional four hours, continue to attempt to identify an alternative facility that is able and willing to provide temporary detention and appropriate care to the individual.

P. Payments shall be made pursuant to § 37.2-804 to licensed health care providers for medical screening and assessment services provided to persons with mental illnesses while in emergency custody.

Q. No person who provides alternative transportation pursuant to this section shall be liable to the person being transported for any civil damages for ordinary negligence in acts or omissions that result from providing such alternative transportation.

R. For purposes of this section:

"Law-enforcement agency" includes an auxiliary police force established pursuant to § 15.2-1731.

"Law-enforcement officer" includes an auxiliary police officer appointed or provided for pursuant to §§ 15.2-1731 and 15.2-1733, except for the purposes of subsection G.

§ 37.2-810. Transportation of person in the temporary detention process.

A. In specifying the primary law-enforcement agency and jurisdiction for purposes of this section, the magistrate shall specify in the temporary detention order the law-enforcement agency of the jurisdiction in which the person resides, or any other willing law-enforcement agency that has agreed to provide transportation, to execute the order and, in cases in which transportation is ordered to be provided by the primary law-enforcement agency, provide transportation. However, if the nearest boundary of the jurisdiction in which the person resides is more than 50 miles from the nearest boundary of the jurisdiction in which the person is located, the law-enforcement agency of the jurisdiction in which the person is located shall execute the order and provide transportation.

B. The magistrate issuing the temporary detention order shall (i) specify the law-enforcement agency to execute the order and (ii) designate a transportation provider. In determining the transportation provider, the magistrate shall consider any request to authorize transportation by an alternative transportation provider in accordance with this section, whenever an alternative transportation provider is identified to the magistrate, which may be a person, facility, or agency, including a family member or friend of the person who is the subject of the temporary detention order, a representative of the community services board, an employee of or person providing services pursuant to a contract with the Department, or other transportation provider with personnel trained to provide transportation in a safe manner. *The magistrate shall authorize alternative transportation if the person subject to the temporary detention order is deemed to not be a danger to himself or others and appropriate alternative transportation is available.* Upon determining, following consideration of information provided by the petitioner; the community services board or its designee; the local law-enforcement agency, if any; the person's treating physician, if any; or other persons who are available and have knowledge of the person, and, when the magistrate deems appropriate, the proposed alternative transportation provider, either in person or via two-way electronic video and audio or telephone communication system, that an

182 alternative transportation provider is available to provide transportation, willing to provide transportation,
183 and able to provide transportation in a safe manner, the magistrate shall designate such alternative
184 transportation provider to provide transportation of the person. If no alternative transportation provider is
185 available to provide transportation, willing to provide transportation, and able to provide transportation
186 in a safe manner, the magistrate shall designate the primary law-enforcement agency and jurisdiction
187 designated to execute the temporary detention order to provide transportation of the person.

188 When transportation is ordered to be provided by an alternative transportation provider, the
189 magistrate shall order the specified law-enforcement agency to execute the order, to take the person into
190 custody, and to transfer custody of the person to the alternative transportation provider identified in the
191 order. The primary law-enforcement agency may transfer custody of the person to the alternative
192 transportation provider immediately upon execution of the temporary detention order based on the
193 availability of alternative transportation providers. The alternative transportation provider shall maintain
194 custody of the person from the time custody is transferred to the alternative transportation provider by
195 the primary law-enforcement agency until such time as custody of the person is transferred to the
196 temporary detention facility, including during any period prior to the initiation of transportation of the
197 person from the facility to which he was transported pursuant to § 37.2-808 and while transportation is
198 being provided pursuant to this section.

199 In such cases, a copy of the temporary detention order shall accompany the person being transported
200 pursuant to this section at all times and shall be delivered by the alternative transportation provider to
201 the temporary detention facility. The temporary detention facility shall return a copy of the temporary
202 detention order to the court designated by the magistrate as soon as is practicable. Delivery of an order
203 to a law-enforcement officer or alternative transportation provider and return of an order to the court
204 may be accomplished electronically or by facsimile.

205 The order may include transportation of the person to such other medical facility as may be
206 necessary to obtain further medical evaluation or treatment prior to placement as required by a physician
207 at the admitting temporary detention facility. Nothing herein shall preclude a law-enforcement officer or
208 alternative transportation provider from obtaining emergency medical treatment or further medical
209 evaluation at any time for a person in his custody as provided in this section. Such medical evaluation
210 or treatment shall be conducted immediately in accordance with state and federal law.

211 C. If an alternative transportation provider providing transportation or maintaining custody of a
212 person who is the subject of a temporary detention order becomes unable to continue providing
213 transportation or maintaining custody of the person at any time after taking custody of the person, the
214 primary law-enforcement agency for the jurisdiction in which the alternative transportation provider is
215 located at the time he becomes unable to continue providing transportation or maintaining custody shall
216 take custody of the person and shall transport the person to the facility of temporary detention. In such
217 cases, a copy of the temporary detention order shall accompany the person being transported and shall
218 be delivered to and returned by the temporary detention facility in accordance with the provisions of
219 subsection B.

220 D. In cases in which an alternative facility of temporary detention is identified and the
221 law-enforcement agency or alternative transportation provider identified to provide transportation in
222 accordance with subsection B continues to have custody of the person, the local law-enforcement agency
223 or alternative transportation provider shall transport the person to the alternative facility of temporary
224 detention identified by the employee or designee of the community services board. In cases in which an
225 alternative facility of temporary detention is identified and custody of the person has been transferred
226 from the law-enforcement agency or alternative transportation provider that provided transportation in
227 accordance with subsection B to the initial facility of temporary detention, the employee or designee of
228 the community services board shall request, and a magistrate may enter an order specifying, an
229 alternative transportation provider or, if no alternative transportation provider is available, willing, and
230 able to provide transportation in a safe manner, the local law-enforcement agency for the jurisdiction in
231 which the person resides or, if the nearest boundary of the jurisdiction in which the person resides is
232 more than 50 miles from the nearest boundary of the jurisdiction in which the person is located, the
233 law-enforcement agency of the jurisdiction in which the person is located, to provide transportation.

234 E. The magistrate may change the transportation provider specified in a temporary detention order at
235 any time prior to the initiation of transportation of a person who is the subject of a temporary detention
236 order pursuant to this section. If the designated transportation provider is changed by the magistrate at
237 any time after the temporary detention order has been executed but prior to the initiation of
238 transportation, the transportation provider having custody of the person shall transfer custody of the
239 person to the transportation provider subsequently specified to provide transportation. For the purposes
240 of this subsection, "transportation provider" includes both a law-enforcement agency and an alternative
241 transportation provider.

242 F. A law-enforcement officer may lawfully go to or be sent beyond the territorial limits of the
243 county, city, or town in which he serves to any point in the Commonwealth for the purpose of executing

244 any temporary detention order pursuant to this section. Law-enforcement agencies may enter into
245 agreements to facilitate the execution of temporary detention orders and provide transportation.

246 G. No person who provides alternative transportation pursuant to this section shall be liable to the
247 person being transported for any civil damages for ordinary negligence in acts or omissions that result
248 from providing such alternative transportation.

249 H. For purposes of this section:

250 "Law-enforcement agency" includes an auxiliary police force established pursuant to § 15.2-1731.

251 "Law-enforcement officer" includes an auxiliary police officer appointed or provided for pursuant to
252 §§ 15.2-1731 and 15.2-1733.

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