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HOUSE BILL NO. 602

Offered January 10, 2024

Prefiled January 9, 2024

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 1 of Title 9.1 an article numbered 17, consisting of sections numbered 9.1-194 and 9.1-195, and to repeal § 9.1-116.6 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the Virginia Center for Firearm Violence Intervention and Prevention; Virginia Firearm Violence Intervention and Prevention Fund; creation.*

Patrons—Price and Clark

Referred to Committee on Public Safety

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 1 of Title 9.1 an article numbered 17, consisting of sections numbered 9.1-194 and 9.1-195, as follows:

*Article 17.**Virginia Center for Firearm Violence Intervention and Prevention.***§ 9.1-194. Virginia Center for Firearm Violence Intervention and Prevention created; duties.**

A. From such funds as may be appropriated, the Virginia Center for Firearm Violence Intervention and Prevention (the Center) is hereby established within the Department. The Center shall:

1. Serve as the Commonwealth's primary resource for research, best practices, and strategies for the implementation of firearm violence intervention, community-based intervention, and group violence intervention programs designed to reduce violence in communities;

2. Operate a statewide firearm violence intervention and prevention research center. The Center shall serve as the Commonwealth's clearinghouse for data regarding firearm violence and firearm violence intervention and prevention programs collected by state and local agencies and shall maintain an integrated information system containing data, research, and statistical information regarding firearm violence in the Commonwealth;

3. Facilitate sharing of data regarding firearm violence and firearm violence intervention and prevention programs among state and local agencies, including local health departments, institutions of higher education, research institutions, hospitals and other medical care facilities, community-based organizations, and law-enforcement agencies;

4. In conjunction with the Department of Health, Department of Social Services, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, Department of Education, and Department of Veterans Services, work to enhance programs and strategies designed to address firearm violence, including programs that focus on the prevention of suicide or domestic violence in the populations served by such departments;

5. Facilitate coordination between state agencies, localities, and community-based organizations to develop comprehensive practices for addressing firearm violence and implementing firearm violence intervention and prevention programs;

6. Develop and publish best practices for establishing firearm violence intervention and prevention programs, including street outreach, hospital-based violence intervention, community-based violence intervention, and group violence intervention programs;

7. Provide technical assistance to localities and community-based organizations to support the establishment of firearm violence intervention and prevention programs, including technical assistance on capacity building, obtaining grant funding, and collecting data;

8. Administer the Virginia Firearm Violence Intervention and Prevention Fund (the Fund) established pursuant to § 9.1-195 and provide grants from the Fund to agencies of local government, community-based organizations, and hospitals for the purpose of supporting implementation of evidence-informed firearm violence intervention and prevention efforts, including street outreach, hospital-based violence intervention, community-based violence intervention, and group violence intervention programs;

9. Evaluate state and community-based violence intervention programs and policies that receive funding through the Center;

10. Produce reports and provide analysis and interpretation of statistical information regarding firearm violence, including information on firearm trafficking, crimes involving firearms, mass shootings, suicides, and fatal and nonfatal firearm injuries;

11. Establish training standards and publish and periodically update model policies for law-enforcement personnel containing best practices for (i) the service and execution of substantial risk

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HB602

59 orders and protective orders, (ii) the processes for obtaining a firearm from an individual prohibited
60 from possessing a firearm, and (iii) addressing the different types of firearm violence, including
61 unintentional injuries, mass shootings, domestic violence, suicides, homicides, and community violence;
62 and

63 12. Apply for and accept grants from the United States government or any other source in carrying
64 out the purposes of this article and accept any and all donations, both real and personal, and grants of
65 money from any governmental unit or public agency, or from any institution, person, firm, or
66 corporation, and may receive, utilize, and dispose of the same. Any moneys received pursuant to this
67 section shall be deposited in the state treasury to the account of the Department.

68 B. The Center may require and shall receive from every department, division, board, bureau,
69 commission, authority, or other agency created by the Commonwealth, or to which the Commonwealth is
70 a party, or any political subdivision thereof, cooperation and assistance in the performance of its duties.
71 The Center may also consult and exchange information with local government agencies and interested
72 stakeholders, institutions of higher education, research institutions, hospitals and other medical care
73 facilities, and community-based organizations.

74 C. The Center shall report annually on or before October 1 to the Governor and the General
75 Assembly. The report shall include a summary of activities for the year and any recommendations to
76 address firearm violence within the Commonwealth. The Department shall ensure that such report is
77 available to the public.

78 **§ 9.1-195. Virginia Firearm Violence Intervention and Prevention Fund; purpose; guidelines.**

79 A. There is hereby created in the state treasury a special nonreverting fund to be known as the
80 Virginia Firearm Violence Intervention and Prevention Fund (the Fund). The Fund shall be established
81 on the books of the Comptroller. All moneys accruing to the Fund, including funds appropriated for
82 such purpose and any gifts, donations, grants, bequests, and other funds received on its behalf, shall be
83 paid into the state treasury and credited to the Fund. Interest earned on moneys in the Fund shall
84 remain in the Fund and be credited to it. Any moneys remaining in the Fund, including interest thereon,
85 at the end of each fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund but shall remain in the Fund. Moneys
86 in the Fund shall be used for the purpose of supporting firearm violence intervention and prevention
87 programs. Expenditures and disbursements from the Fund shall be made by the State Treasurer on
88 warrants issued by the Comptroller upon written request signed by the Director of the Department.

89 B. The Fund shall be administered by the Department, and the Department shall adopt guidelines to
90 make funds available to local government agencies, community-based organizations, and hospitals for
91 the purpose of supporting implementation of evidence-informed firearm violence intervention and
92 prevention efforts, including street outreach, hospital-based violence intervention, community-based
93 violence intervention, and group violence intervention programs.

94 C. The Department shall establish a grant procedure to govern funds awarded for this purpose.

95 2. That § 9.1-116.6 of the Code of Virginia is repealed.