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SENATE BILL NO. 152

Offered January 16, 1996

A BILL to amend and reenact § 19.2-353.3 of the Code of Virginia, as it is currently effective and as it may become effective, relating to payment of fines, costs and penalties.

Patrons—Goode, Hawkins and Reasor

Referred to the Committee for Courts of Justice

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 19.2-353.3 of the Code of Virginia, as it is currently effective and as it may become effective, is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 19.2-353.3. Acceptance of checks and credit cards in lieu of money; additional fee.

Notwithstanding the provisions of § 19.2-353, personal checks and credit cards shall be accepted and, in the discretion of the clerk of the court, credit cards may be accepted in lieu of money to collect and secure all fees, fines, restitution, forfeiture, penalties and costs collected for offenses tried in a circuit or district court, including motor vehicle violations, committed against the Commonwealth or against any county, city or town. The Committee on District Courts shall devise a procedure for approving and accepting checks and credit cards that may be accepted by the district courts. Court personnel shall not be held to be guarantors of the payment made in such manner and shall not be personally liable for any sums uncollected. The clerk of the court, in addition to any fees, fines, restitution, forfeiture, penalties or costs, may add to such payment a sum not to exceed four percent of the amount paid as a service charge for the acceptance of a credit card.

If a check is returned unpaid by the financial institution on which it is drawn or notice is received from the credit card issuer that payment will not be made, for any reason, the fine, restitution, forfeiture, penalty or costs shall be treated as unpaid and the court may pursue all available remedies to obtain payment. The clerk of the court to whom the dishonored check or credit card was tendered may impose a fee of twenty dollars or ten percent of the value of the payment, whichever is greater, in addition to the fine and costs already imposed.

The clerk of court may refuse acceptance of checks or, even if credit cards are otherwise accepted by the clerk, credit cards of individuals (i) convicted of a violation of Chapter 6 (§ 18.2-168 et seq.) of Title 18.2 in which a check, credit card, or credit card information was used to commit the offense, (ii) who previously tendered to the court a check which was not ultimately honored or a credit card or credit card information which did not ultimately result in payment by the credit card issuer, (iii) if authorization of payment is not given by the bank or credit card issuer, (iv) if the validity of the check or credit card cannot be verified, or (v) if the payee of the check is other than the court.

§ 19.2-353.3. (Delayed effective date) Acceptance of checks and credit cards in lieu of money.

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