

Selection of Disability Legislation Passed by the Virginia General Assembly in 2021

HB 1805/SB 1366: Aging services; social need. Requires the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, in providing aging services, to use available resources to provide services to older persons with the greatest economic or social needs. The bill defines "economic need" as need resulting from an income level at or below the poverty line. The bill defines "social need" as need caused by noneconomic factors, including (i) physical and mental disabilities, which include developmental disabilities and human immunodeficiency virus; (ii) language barriers; and (iii) cultural, social, or geographic isolation, including that which is related to a history of discrimination for factors such as racial or ethnic status, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation that can affect an individual's ability to perform normal daily tasks or threatens such individual's capacity to live independently.

HB 1848: Virginia Human Rights Act; discrimination on the basis of disability. Adds discrimination on the basis of disability as an unlawful discriminatory practice under the Virginia Human Rights Act. The bill also requires employers, defined in the bill, to make reasonable accommodation to the known physical and mental impairments of an otherwise qualified person with a disability, if necessary to assist such person in performing a particular job, unless the employer can demonstrate that the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the employer. The bill also prohibits employers from taking any adverse action against an employee who requests or uses a reasonable accommodation, from denying employment or promotion opportunities to an otherwise qualified applicant or employee because such employer will be required to make reasonable accommodation to the applicant or employee, or from requiring an employee to take leave if another reasonable accommodation can be provided to the known limitations related to the disability.

HB 1960/SB 1470: Vehicle registration; special communication needs indicator. Expands eligibility for a special communication needs indicator on a vehicle registration to vehicle owners whose vehicle is regularly occupied by an individual who has a disability that can impair communication. Current law authorizes those vehicle owners who have a disability that can impair communication to apply for such an indicator. The bill authorizes the removal of such indicator by request in writing to the Department of Motor Vehicles.

HB 1971: Virginia Fair Housing Law; reasonable accommodations; disability-related requests for parking. Provides that for the purposes of the Virginia Fair Housing Law, when a person receives a request for accessible parking to accommodate a disability, the person receiving the request shall treat such request as a request for reasonable accommodation.

HB 2018/SB 1297: Emergency order for adult protective services; acts of violence, force, or threat or financial exploitation; penalty. Allows the circuit court, upon a finding that an incapacitated adult has been, within a reasonable period of time, subjected to an act of violence, force, or threat or been subjected to financial exploitation, to include in an emergency order for adult protective services one or more of the following conditions to be imposed on the alleged perpetrator: (i) a prohibition on acts of violence, force, or threat or criminal offenses that may result in injury to person or property; (ii) a prohibition on such other contacts by the alleged perpetrator with the adult or the adult's family or household members as the

court deems necessary for the health and safety of such persons; or (iii) such other conditions as the court deems necessary to prevent (a) acts of violence, force, or threat; (b) criminal offenses that may result in injury to persons or property; (c) communication or other contact of any kind by the alleged perpetrator; or (d) financial exploitation by the alleged perpetrator. The bill provides that any person who violates any such condition is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. Also, the bill provides that hearings on emergency orders for adult protective services shall be held no earlier than 24 hours and no later than 72 hours after the notice required has been given, unless such notice has been waived by the court. Current law just requires such hearing be held no earlier than 24 hours. Lastly, the bill provides that if the court enters an order containing any of the aforementioned conditions, the primary law-enforcement agency providing service and entry of protective orders shall enter the name of the perpetrator into the Virginia Criminal Information Network and the order shall be served forthwith on the perpetrator.

HB 2047/SB 1315: Criminal proceedings; consideration of mental condition and intellectual and developmental disabilities. Permits the admission of evidence by the defendant concerning a defendant's mental condition at the time of an alleged offense, including expert testimony, if such evidence is relevant and is not evidence concerning an ultimate issue of fact and (i) tends to show the defendant did or did not have the intent required for the offense charged and (ii) is otherwise admissible pursuant to the general rules of evidence. The bill provides that to establish a mental condition for such purposes, the defendant must show that his condition existed at the time of the offense and that such condition satisfies the diagnostic criteria for (a) a mental illness, as defined in the bill; (b) an intellectual or developmental disability, as defined in the bill; or (c) an autism spectrum disorder, as defined in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders published by the American Psychiatric Association. If a defendant intends to present such evidence, the bill requires him or his counsel to give notice in writing to the attorney for the Commonwealth within specified time periods. The bill also clarifies that a court, in addition to a magistrate, may enter an emergency custody order in such cases if the criteria required under current law for emergency custody orders are met.

The bill clarifies that a diagnosis of an intellectual or developmental disability shall be considered by a judicial officer for the purpose of rebuttal of a presumption against bail and that a court may order that a sentencing report prepared by a probation officer contain any diagnosis of an intellectual or developmental disability. The bill also adds to the requirements to be met for qualification as a court-appointed attorney two hours of continuing legal education, which shall cover the representation of individuals with behavioral or mental health disorders and individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Finally, the bill requires the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court to collect data regarding the cases that use the evidence made permissible in the bill and the Joint Subcommittee to Study Mental Health Services in the Commonwealth in the 21st Century to study and make recommendations about the standard of danger to self or others that may be appropriately applied for such persons found not guilty under the provisions of the bill in the issuance of emergency custody orders, involuntary temporary detention orders, or the ordering of other mandatory mental health treatments.

HB 2117/SB 1313: Children's Services Act; special education programs. Requires that funds expended for private special education services under the Children's Services Act only be expended on

educational programs that are licensed by the Board of Education or an equivalent out-of-state licensing agency. The bill also provides that as of July 1, 2022, such funds may only be expended for programs that the Office of Children's Services certify as having reported their tuition rates.

The bill adds children and youth previously placed in approved private school educational programs for at least six months who will receive transitional services in a public school setting to the target population for eligibility for the state pool of funds. The bill provides that state funds shall be allocated for no longer than 12 months for transitional services.

The bill requires the Secretaries of Education and Health and Human Resources, in conjunction with the Office of Children's Services and the Department of Education, to establish a work group with appropriate stakeholders to develop a detailed plan to direct the transfer of Children's Services Act funds currently reserved for children requiring an educational placement in a private special education day school or residential facility to the Department of Education, as well as several other topics. The bill requires that the work group submit its plan and recommendations to the Chairmen of the House Committee on Appropriations and Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations by November 1, 2021, as well as a final plan and recommendations by November 1, 2022.

HB 2140: Department of Human Resource Management, alternative application for employment for persons with a disability. Directs the Department of Human Resource Management to create an alternative application process for the employment of persons with a disability. The process must be noncompetitive in nature and provide state agencies using the process an option for converting positions filled through the noncompetitive process into positions that are normally filled through a competitive process. The bill directs the Department of Human Resource Management to develop and disseminate a policy to implement the provisions of the bill.

HB 2162: Medical care facilities; persons with disabilities; designated support persons. Requires every medical care facility, as defined in the bill, to allow a person with a disability who requires assistance as a result of such disability to be accompanied by a designated support person who will provide support and assistance necessary due to the specifics of the person's disability to the person with a disability during an admission to such medical care facility. The bill (i) defines "person with a disability" and "designated support person"; (ii) provides that a designated support person shall not be subject to restrictions on visitation adopted by the medical care facility but may be required to comply with reasonable requirements of the medical care facility adopted to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability, the designated support person, and staff and other patients of and visitors to the medical care facility; and (iii) authorizes a medical care facility to restrict a designated support person's access to specified areas and movement on the premises of the medical care facility when such restrictions are determined by the medical care facility to be reasonably necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability, the designated support person, and staff and other patients of and visitors to the medical care facility. The bill requires every medical care facility to adopt protocols to inform patients of their right to be accompanied by a designated support person, and to develop and make available to persons with disabilities written information regarding the right of a person with a disability to be accompanied by a designated support person and policies related thereto. The bill contains an emergency

clause and directs the Board of Health to adopt emergency regulations to implement the provisions of the bill.

HB 2182: Board of Education; definition of "traumatic brain injury." Requires the Board of Education to amend its regulatory definition of "traumatic brain injury," for the purpose of the provision of special education for children with disabilities, to include an acquired injury to the brain caused by a medical condition, including stroke, anoxia, infectious disease, aneurysm, brain tumors, and neurological insults resulting from medical or surgical treatments. The current regulatory definition of "traumatic brain injury" includes only an acquired brain injury caused by an external physical force.

HB 2230: Supported decision-making agreements; report. Directs the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (the Department) to develop and implement a program to educate individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, and others regarding the availability of supported decision-making agreements, the process by which an individual with an intellectual or developmental disability may enter into a supported decision-making agreement with a supporter, and the rights and responsibilities of principals and supporters who are parties to a supported decision-making agreement, which shall include specific training opportunities, development of model supported decision-making agreements, and development of information about and protocols for preventing, identifying, and addressing abuse and exploitation of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who enter into supported decision-making agreements. The bill directs the Department to collect data regarding the utilization of supported decision-making agreements in the Commonwealth and report such information, together with recommendations to enhance the utilization of supported decision-making agreements, annually to the Governor and the General Assembly by November 1.

HB 2238: Licensed private schools for students with disabilities; accreditation. Directs the Board of Education to require, pursuant to regulation, any private school for students with disabilities that is licensed by the Board, as a condition for renewal of its initial license to operate, to obtain accreditation from an accrediting agency recognized by the Virginia Council for Private Education within three years of the issuance of its initial triennial license by the Board. The bill provides that, notwithstanding the foregoing requirement, any private school for students with disabilities that is licensed to operate by the Board as of July 1, 2021, shall obtain accreditation from an accrediting agency recognized by the Virginia Council for Private Education no later than July 1, 2024.

HB 2299/SB 1288: Department of Education and Board of Education; special education. Requires the Department of Education and the Board of Education to develop new policies and procedures and effect numerous modifications to existing policies and procedures to improve the administration and oversight of special education in the Commonwealth.

HB 2314: Board of Education; regulations; special education; amendment. Requires the Board of Education to amend a certain regulation relating to special education to remove the word "component" following the word "evaluation," thereby ensuring compliance with the relevant federal regulation and clarifying that the parent of a child with a disability has the right to an independent educational evaluation at public expense if the parent disagrees with an evaluation obtained by the local educational agency.

HB 2316: Department of Education and Board of Education; special education and related services for students with disabilities. Requires the Department of Education to update its special education eligibility worksheets as necessary, including clarifying any ambiguity or vagueness in eligibility criteria, and provide to each local school division the appropriate level of guidance on eligibility determinations for special education and related services. The bill requires the Board of Education to amend its regulations to ensure that each education preparation program graduate in a K-12 general education endorsement area demonstrates proficiency in understanding the role of general education teachers on the individualized education program (IEP) team.

SB 1307: Department of Medical Assistance Services; school-based health services; telemedicine. Directs the Board of Medical Assistance Services to amend the state plan for medical assistance services to provide for payment of medical assistance services delivered to Medicaid-eligible students when such services qualify for reimbursement by the Virginia Medicaid program and may be provided by school divisions, regardless of whether the student receiving care has an individualized education program or whether the health care service is included in a student's individualized education program. The bill specifies that such services shall include those covered under the state plan for medical assistance services or by the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment benefit as specified in § 1905(r) of the federal Social Security Act, and shall include a provision for payment of medical assistance for health care services provided through telemedicine services. The bill also requires the Department of Medical Assistance Services to provide technical assistance to the Department of Education and local school divisions to facilitate their understanding of and compliance with federal ordering, referring, and prescribing provider screening and enrollment requirements.

SB 1331: Absentee voting; accessibility for voters with a visual impairment or print disability. Requires the Department of Elections to make available to all localities a tool to allow voters with a visual impairment or print disability to electronically and accessibly receive and mark absentee ballots using screen reader assistive technology. On receipt of an application for an absentee ballot from an applicant who indicates that he will require assistance due to a visual impairment or print disability, the general registrar is required to offer to provide to the applicant the ballot marking tool with screen reader assistive technology.