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SENATE BILL NO. 358

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations
on February 8, 2022)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Stuart)

A BILL to direct the Governor to designate a liaison to address seafood industry workforce needs.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. § 1. The Governor shall designate a liaison to address seafood industry workforce needs. The duties of the liaison shall include (i) promoting and protecting the interests of employees and employers in the seafood industry; (ii) assisting employees and employers in understanding the rights and processes available to them, including rights and processes available pursuant to the laws and regulations governing temporary worker visas; (iii) answering inquiries by telephone and electronic mail; (iv) upon request, providing an employee or employer with referrals to public and private agencies offering assistance in using the procedures and processes available to such employee or employer from the federal government, including all appeal procedures; and (v) reporting annually on the activities of the liaison to the House Committees on Commerce and Energy and Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources and the Senate Committees on Commerce and Labor and Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources by December 1.

The liaison shall carry out his duties with impartiality, shall not serve as an advocate for any person, and shall not provide legal advice. All state agencies shall assist and cooperate with the liaison in the performance of his duties under this section.

The liaison shall maintain the confidentiality of any employment or business records he reviews. All memoranda, work product, and other material contained in the case files of the liaison shall be confidential. Any communication between the liaison and a person receiving assistance under this section made during or in connection with the provision of liaison services, including screening, intake, and scheduling, shall be confidential. Confidential materials and records of communications described in this section shall not be subject to disclosure under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (§ 2.2-3700 et seq. of the Code of Virginia).

The liaison shall be immune from civil liability in performance of the duties specified in this section.