

## 1 VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

2 *An Act to amend and reenact § 15.2-1517 of the Code of Virginia, relating to insurance for employees*  
 3 *of certain public school foundations.*

4  
 5 Approved

[S 437]

6 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

7 **1. That § 15.2-1517 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

8 **§ 15.2-1517. Insurance for employees and retired employees of localities and other local**  
 9 **governmental entities; participation by certain volunteers.**

10 A. Any locality may provide group life, accident, and health insurance programs for its officers and  
 11 employees; employees of boards, commissions, agencies, or authorities created by or controlled by such  
 12 locality; ~~or~~ employees of boards, commissions, agencies, or authorities that are political subdivisions of  
 13 the Commonwealth and work in close cooperation with such locality; *or employees of a public school*  
 14 *foundation as defined in subsection A of § 22.1-212.2:2 that provides support exclusively for such*  
 15 *locality.* In addition, any locality that provides such a health insurance program may allow eligible  
 16 members of approved volunteer fire or rescue companies, as determined by the locality, to participate in  
 17 such a health insurance program. Such programs may be through a program of self-insurance, purchased  
 18 insurance, or partial self-insurance and purchased insurance, whichever is determined to be the most cost  
 19 effective. The total cost of such policies or protection may be paid entirely by the locality or shared  
 20 with the employee. The governing body of any locality may provide for its retired officers and retired  
 21 employees, including retired employees of boards, commissions, agencies, or authorities that are political  
 22 subdivisions of the Commonwealth and work in close cooperation with such locality, to be eligible for  
 23 such group life, accident, and health insurance programs. The cost of such insurance for retired officers  
 24 and retired employees may be paid in whole or in part by the locality. The governing body of any  
 25 locality may permit members of approved volunteer fire or rescue companies to participate in its group  
 26 health insurance programs, subject to the eligibility criteria established by the locality. The cost of a  
 27 volunteer's participation in such a health insurance program shall be paid for in full by the participating  
 28 volunteer. Any locality may fund the cost of a volunteer's participation in a mental health treatment and  
 29 counseling program that is offered to individual members of approved volunteer fire or rescue  
 30 companies and is comparable to an employee assistance program offered to paid employees of the  
 31 locality.

32 B. In the event a county or city elects to provide one or more of such programs for its officers and  
 33 employees, it shall provide such programs to the constitutional officers and their employees on the same  
 34 basis as provided to other officers and employees, unless the constitutional officers and employees are  
 35 covered under a state program, and the cost of such local program shall be borne entirely by the locality  
 36 or shared with the employee.

37 C. 1. Except as otherwise provided herein, in the event the governing body of any locality elects to  
 38 provide group accident and health insurance for its officers and employees, including constitutional  
 39 officers and their employees, such programs shall require that upon retirement, or upon the effective date  
 40 of this provision for those who have previously retired, any such individual with (i) at least 15 years of  
 41 continuous employment with the locality or (ii) less than 15 years of continuous employment who has  
 42 retired due to line-of-duty injuries may choose to continue his coverage with the insurer at the retiree's  
 43 expense until such individual attains 65 years of age at the insurer's customary premium rate applicable  
 44 (a) to such policies, (b) to the class of risk to which the person then belongs, and (c) to his age.

45 2. The governing body, when providing this coverage, may further provide that the retiree be rated  
 46 separately from the active employees covered under the group plan offered by such governing body.

47 3. Any locality that has not offered the opportunity to continue group health coverage provided by  
 48 the locality as required by subdivision 1 to its retirees who had retired on or before June 30, 1993, and  
 49 who meet the criteria for such coverage as set forth in subdivision 1, shall do so by July 1, 2000. Any  
 50 retiree from the service of a locality who had retired on or before June 30, 1993, and who meets the  
 51 criteria to continue his group health coverage from the locality under subdivision 1 who has not yet  
 52 elected to continue his group health coverage from the locality shall elect whether to do so by July 1,  
 53 2000.

54 4. Nothing herein shall prohibit a locality from providing group accident and health coverage or  
 55 benefits for its retirees in addition to the coverage required under this section.

56 D. Any locality that offers group health plans to its employees and the employees of constitutional

57 officers and its retirees, as provided by this section or otherwise, may provide in the plan providing such  
58 coverage that any retiree who is participating in a group health plan provided by the locality who  
59 subsequently terminates his participation in such plan may not thereafter rejoin a group health plan  
60 provided by the locality.