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HOUSE BILL NO. 980

Offered January 12, 2022

Prefiled January 12, 2022

A BILL to amend and reenact § 2.2-3705.3 of the Code of Virginia, relating to Virginia Freedom of Information Act; exclusions to application of chapter; local administrative investigations; disclosure.

Patrons—Williams Graves, Clark, Maldonado, Scott, D.L. and Shin

Referred to Committee on General Laws

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 2.2-3705.3 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 2.2-3705.3. Exclusions to application of chapter; records relating to administrative investigations.

The following information contained in a public record is excluded from the mandatory disclosure provisions of this chapter but may be disclosed by the custodian in his discretion, except where such disclosure is prohibited by law. Redaction of information excluded under this section from a public record shall be conducted in accordance with § 2.2-3704.01.

1. Information relating to investigations of applicants for licenses and permits, and of all licensees and permittees, made by or submitted to the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority, the Virginia Lottery, the Virginia Racing Commission, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services relating to investigations and applications pursuant to Article 1.1:1 (§ 18.2-340.15 et seq.) of Chapter 8 of Title 18.2, or the Private Security Services Unit of the Department of Criminal Justice Services.

2. Records of active investigations being conducted by the Department of Health Professions or by any health regulatory board in the Commonwealth pursuant to § 54.1-108.

3. Investigator notes, and other correspondence and information, furnished in confidence with respect to an active investigation of individual employment discrimination complaints made to the Department of Human Resource Management, to such personnel of any local public body, including local school boards, as are responsible for conducting such investigations in confidence, or to any public institution of higher education. However, nothing in this subdivision shall prevent the disclosure of information taken from inactive reports in a form that does not reveal the identity of charging parties, persons supplying the information, or other individuals involved in the investigation.

4. Records of active investigations being conducted by the Department of Medical Assistance Services pursuant to Chapter 10 (§ 32.1-323 et seq.) of Title 32.1.

5. Investigative notes and other correspondence and information furnished in confidence with respect to an investigation or conciliation process involving an alleged unlawful discriminatory practice under the Virginia Human Rights Act (§ 2.2-3900 et seq.) or under any local ordinance adopted in accordance with the authority specified in § 2.2-524, or adopted pursuant to § 15.2-965, or adopted prior to July 1, 1987, in accordance with applicable law, relating to local human rights or human relations commissions. However, nothing in this subdivision shall prevent the distribution of information taken from inactive reports in a form that does not reveal the identity of the parties involved or other persons supplying information.

6. Information relating to studies and investigations by the Virginia Lottery of (i) lottery agents, (ii) lottery vendors, (iii) lottery crimes under §§ 58.1-4014 through 58.1-4018, (iv) defects in the law or regulations that cause abuses in the administration and operation of the lottery and any evasions of such provisions, or (v) the use of the lottery as a subterfuge for organized crime and illegal gambling where such information has not been publicly released, published or copyrighted. All studies and investigations referred to under clauses (iii), (iv), and (v) shall be open to inspection and copying upon completion of the study or investigation.

7. Investigative notes, correspondence and information furnished in confidence, and records otherwise exempted by this chapter or any Virginia statute, provided to or produced by or for (i) the Auditor of Public Accounts; (ii) the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission; (iii) an appropriate authority as defined in § 2.2-3010 with respect to an allegation of wrongdoing or abuse under the Fraud and Abuse Whistle Blower Protection Act (§ 2.2-3009 et seq.); (iv) the Office of the State Inspector General with respect to an investigation initiated through the Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline or an investigation initiated pursuant to Chapter 3.2 (§ 2.2-307 et seq.); (v) internal auditors appointed by the head of a state agency or by any public institution of higher education; (vi) the committee or the auditor with respect to an investigation or audit conducted pursuant to § 15.2-825; or (vii) the auditors, appointed by the local governing body of any county, city, or town or a school board, who by charter, ordinance, or

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59 statute have responsibility for conducting an investigation of any officer, department, or program of such
60 body. Information contained in completed investigations shall be disclosed in a form that does not reveal
61 the identity of the complainants or persons supplying information to investigators. Unless disclosure is
62 excluded by this subdivision, the information disclosed shall include the agency involved, the identity of
63 the person who is the subject of the complaint, the nature of the complaint, and the actions taken to
64 resolve the complaint. If an investigation does not lead to corrective action, the identity of the person
65 who is the subject of the complaint may be released only with the consent of the subject person. Local
66 governing bodies shall adopt guidelines to govern the disclosure required by this subdivision.

67 8. The names, *property and email* addresses, and telephone numbers of complainants furnished in
68 confidence *to a local governing body* with respect to an investigation of ~~individual~~ (i) zoning
69 enforcement complaints ~~or complaints relating to the~~; (ii) Uniform Statewide Building Code (§ 36-97 et
70 seq.) ~~or the complaints~~; (iii) Statewide Fire Prevention Code (§ 27-94 et seq.) ~~made to a local governing~~
71 ~~body complaints~~; (iv) *local code complaints pertaining to public health and safety and nuisances,*
72 *§§ 15.2-900, 15.2-901, 15.2-904, 15.2-906, 15.2-907, 15.2-908, and 15.2-921; and (v) local code*
73 *complaints pertaining to waste and recycling pursuant to Article 2 (§ 15.2-927 et seq.) of Chapter 9 of*
74 *Title 15.2.*

75 9. Records of active investigations being conducted by the Department of Criminal Justice Services
76 pursuant to Article 4 (§ 9.1-138 et seq.), Article 4.1 (§ 9.1-150.1 et seq.), Article 11 (§ 9.1-185 et seq.),
77 and Article 12 (§ 9.1-186 et seq.) of Chapter 1 of Title 9.1.

78 10. Information furnished to or prepared by the Board of Education pursuant to subsection D of
79 § 22.1-253.13:3 in connection with the review or investigation of any alleged breach in security,
80 unauthorized alteration, or improper administration of tests by local school board employees responsible
81 for the distribution or administration of the tests. However, this section shall not prohibit the disclosure
82 of such information to (i) a local school board or division superintendent for the purpose of permitting
83 such board or superintendent to consider or to take personnel action with regard to an employee or (ii)
84 any requester, after the conclusion of a review or investigation, in a form that (a) does not reveal the
85 identity of any person making a complaint or supplying information to the Board on a confidential basis
86 and (b) does not compromise the security of any test mandated by the Board.

87 11. Information contained in (i) an application for licensure or renewal of a license for teachers and
88 other school personnel, including transcripts or other documents submitted in support of an application,
89 and (ii) an active investigation conducted by or for the Board of Education related to the denial,
90 suspension, cancellation, revocation, or reinstatement of teacher and other school personnel licenses
91 including investigator notes and other correspondence and information, furnished in confidence with
92 respect to such investigation. However, this subdivision shall not prohibit the disclosure of such (a)
93 application information to the applicant at his own expense or (b) investigation information to a local
94 school board or division superintendent for the purpose of permitting such board or superintendent to
95 consider or to take personnel action with regard to an employee. Information contained in completed
96 investigations shall be disclosed in a form that does not reveal the identity of any complainant or person
97 supplying information to investigators. The completed investigation information disclosed shall include
98 information regarding the school or facility involved, the identity of the person who was the subject of
99 the complaint, the nature of the complaint, and the actions taken to resolve the complaint. If an
100 investigation fails to support a complaint or does not lead to corrective action, the identity of the person
101 who was the subject of the complaint may be released only with the consent of the subject person. No
102 personally identifiable information regarding a current or former student shall be released except as
103 permitted by state or federal law.

104 12. Information provided in confidence and related to an investigation by the Attorney General under
105 Article 1 (§ 3.2-4200 et seq.) or Article 3 (§ 3.2-4204 et seq.) of Chapter 42 of Title 3.2, Article 10 (§
106 18.2-246.6 et seq.) of Chapter 6 or Chapter 13 (§ 18.2-512 et seq.) of Title 18.2, or Article 1
107 (§ 58.1-1000) of Chapter 10 of Title 58.1. However, information related to an investigation that has been
108 inactive for more than six months shall, upon request, be disclosed provided such disclosure is not
109 otherwise prohibited by law and does not reveal the identity of charging parties, complainants, persons
110 supplying information, witnesses, or other individuals involved in the investigation.

111 13. Records of active investigations being conducted by the Department of Behavioral Health and
112 Developmental Services pursuant to Chapter 4 (§ 37.2-400 et seq.) of Title 37.2.