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SENATE BILL NO. 679

Offered January 20, 2022

A *BILL to amend and reenact § 54.1-2820 of the Code of Virginia, relating to Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers; life insurance or annuity preneed funeral contract requirements.*

Patron—Spruill

Referred to Committee on General Laws and Technology

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 54.1-2820 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 54.1-2820. Requirements of preneed funeral contracts.

A. It shall be unlawful for any person residing or doing business within this Commonwealth, to make, either directly or indirectly by any means, a preneed funeral contract unless the contract:

1. Is made on forms prescribed by the Board and is written in clear, understandable language and printed in easy-to-read type, size and style;

2. Identifies the seller, seller's license number and contract buyer and the person for whom the contract is purchased if other than the contract buyer;

3. Contains a complete description of the supplies or services purchased;

4. Clearly discloses whether the price of the supplies and services purchased is guaranteed;

5. States if funds are required to be trusted pursuant to § 54.1-2822, the amount to be trusted, the name of the trustee, the disposition of the interest, the fees, expenses and taxes which may be deducted from the interest and a statement of the buyer's responsibility for taxes owed on the interest;

6. Contains the name, address and telephone number of the Board and lists the Board as the regulatory agency which handles consumer complaints;

7. Provides that any person who makes payment under the contract may terminate the agreement at any time prior to the furnishing of the services or supplies contracted for except as provided pursuant to subsection B; if the purchaser terminates the contract within 30 days of execution, the purchaser shall be refunded all consideration paid or delivered, together with any interest or income accrued thereon; if the purchaser terminates the contract after 30 days, the purchaser shall be refunded any amounts required to be deposited under § 54.1-2822, together with any interest or income accrued thereon;

8. Provides that if the particular supplies and services specified in the contract are unavailable at the time of delivery, the seller shall be required to furnish supplies and services similar in style and at least equal in quality of material and workmanship and the representative of the deceased shall have the right to choose the supplies or services to be substituted;

9. Discloses any penalties or restrictions, including but not limited to geographic restrictions or the inability of the provider to perform, on the delivery of merchandise, services or prearrangement guarantee; and

10. Complies with all disclosure requirements imposed by the Board.

If the contract seller will not be furnishing the supplies and services to the purchaser, the contract seller must attach to the preneed funeral contract a copy of the seller's agreement with the provider.

B. Subject to the requirements of § 54.1-2822, a preneed funeral contract may provide for an irrevocable trust or an amount in an irrevocable trust that is specifically identified as available exclusively for funeral or burial expenses, where:

1. A person irrevocably contracts for funeral goods and services, such person funds the contract by prepaying for the goods and services, and the funeral provider residing or doing business within the Commonwealth subsequently places the funds in a trust; or

2. A person establishes an irrevocable trust naming the funeral provider as the beneficiary; however, such person shall have the right to change the beneficiary to another funeral provider pursuant to § 54.1-2822.

C. If a life insurance or annuity contract is used to fund the preneed funeral contract, the life insurance or annuity contract shall provide either that the face value thereof shall be adjusted annually by a factor equal to the annualized Consumer Price Index as published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor, or a benefit payable at death under such contract that will equal or exceed the sum of all premiums paid for such contract plus interest or dividends, which for the first 15 years shall be compounded annually at a rate of at least five percent. In any event, interest or dividends shall continue to be paid after 15 years. In addition, the Board shall not require the life insurance or annuity contract to provide that (i) the face value thereof shall be adjusted annually by a factor equal to the annualized Consumer Price Index as published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of

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59 *the U.S. Department of Labor or (ii) a benefit payable at death under such contract will equal or*
60 *exceed the sum of all premiums paid for such contract plus interest or dividends. The following must*
61 *also be disclosed as prescribed by the Board:*

62 1. The fact that a life insurance policy or annuity contract is involved or being used to fund the
63 preneed contract;

64 2. The nature of the relationship among the soliciting agent, the provider of the supplies or services,
65 the prearranger and the insurer;

66 3. The relationship of the life insurance policy or annuity contract to the funding of the preneed
67 contract and the nature and existence of any guarantees relating to the preneed contract; and

68 4. The impact on the preneed contract of (i) any changes in the life insurance policy or annuity
69 contract including but not limited to changes in the assignment, beneficiary designation or use of the
70 proceeds, (ii) any penalties to be incurred by the policyholder as a result of failure to make premium
71 payments, (iii) any penalties to be incurred or moneys to be received as a result of cancellation or
72 surrender of the life insurance policy or annuity contract, and (iv) all relevant information concerning
73 what occurs and whether any entitlements or obligations arise if there is a difference between the
74 proceeds of the life insurance policy or annuity contract and the amount actually needed to fund the
75 preneed contract.

76 D. When the consideration consists in whole or in part of any real estate, the contract shall be
77 recorded as an attachment to the deed whereby such real estate is conveyed, and the deed shall be
78 recorded in the clerk's office of the circuit court of the city or county in which the real estate being
79 conveyed is located.

80 E. If any funeral supplies are sold and delivered prior to the death of the subject for whom they are
81 provided, and the seller or any legal entity in which he or a member of his family has an interest
82 thereafter stores these supplies, the risk of loss or damage shall be upon the seller during such period of
83 storage.