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HOUSE BILL NO. 1924

Offered January 13, 2025

Prefiled January 6, 2025

A BILL to amend and reenact § 22.1-296.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to school boards; prohibition against hiring or contracting for the services of certain individuals; certain criminal convictions.

Patrons—Ward and Glass

Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 22.1-296.1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 22.1-296.1. Data on convictions for certain crimes and child abuse and neglect required; penalty.

A. As a condition of employment for all of its public school employees, whether full-time or part-time, permanent, or temporary, every school board shall require on its application for employment certification of whether the applicant has been convicted of any violent felony set forth in the definition of barrier crime in subsection A of § 19.2-392.02; crime of violence as defined in § 18.2-288, any offense involving the sexual molestation, physical or sexual abuse, or rape of a child, or the solicitation of any such offense; or any crime of moral turpitude. Any individual making a materially false statement regarding any such offense is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor and, in the case of a teacher, upon conviction, the fact of such conviction is grounds for the Board to revoke his license to teach.

B. No school board shall employ any individual who has been convicted of any violent felony set forth in the definition of barrier crime in subsection A of § 19.2-392.02 crime of violence as defined in § 18.2-288 or any offense involving the sexual molestation of, physical or sexual abuse, or rape of a child, or the solicitation of any such offense.

C. Any school board may employ any individual who has been convicted of any felony that is not a crime of violence as defined in § 18.2-288 and that does not involve a child or any crime of moral turpitude that is not set forth in the definition of barrier crime in subsection A of § 19.2-392.02 and does not involve the sexual molestation, physical or sexual abuse, or rape of a child, or the solicitation of any such offense, provided that in the case of a felony conviction, such individual has had his civil rights restored by the Governor.

D. Every school board shall also require on its application for employment, as a condition of employment requiring direct contact with students, whether full-time or part-time, permanent, or temporary, certification that the applicant has not been the subject of a founded case of child abuse and neglect. Any person making a materially false statement regarding a finding of child abuse and neglect is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor and upon conviction, the fact of such conviction is grounds for the Board to revoke such person's license to teach.

E. As a condition of awarding a contract for the provision of services that require the contractor or his employees to have direct contact with students on school property during regular school hours or during school-sponsored activities, the school board shall require the contractor to provide certification of whether any individual who will provide such services has been convicted of any violent felony set forth in the definition of barrier crime in subsection A of § 19.2-392.02 crime of violence as defined in § 18.2-288; any offense involving the sexual molestation, physical or sexual abuse, or rape of a child, or the solicitation of any such offense; or any crime of moral turpitude.

Any individual making a materially false statement regarding any such offense is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor and, upon conviction, the fact of such conviction is grounds for the revocation of the contract to provide such services and, when relevant, the revocation of any license required to provide such services. School boards shall not be liable for materially false statements regarding the certifications required by this subsection.

This subsection shall not apply to a contractor or his employees providing services to a school division in an emergency or exceptional situation, such as when student health or safety is endangered or when repairs are needed on an urgent basis to ensure that school facilities are safe and habitable, when it is reasonably anticipated that the contractor or his employees will have no direct contact with students.

F. No school board shall award a contract for the provision of services that require the contractor or his employees to have direct contact with students on school property during regular school hours or during school-sponsored activities when any individual who provides such services has been convicted of any violent felony set forth in the definition of barrier crime in subsection A of § 19.2-392.02 crime of violence as defined in § 18.2-288 or any offense involving the sexual molestation, physical or sexual abuse, or rape of a child, or the solicitation of any such offense.

59 G. Any school board may award a contract for the provision of services that require the contractor or his
60 employees to have direct contact with students on school property during regular school hours or during
61 school-sponsored activities when any individual who provides such services has been convicted of any felony
62 *that is not a crime of violence as defined in § 18.2-288 and that does not involve a child or any crime of*
63 *moral turpitude that is not set forth in the definition of barrier crime in subsection A of § 19.2-392.02 and*
64 *does not involve the sexual molestation, physical or sexual abuse, or rape of a child; or the solicitation of any*
65 *such offense*, provided that in the case of a felony conviction, such individual has had his civil rights restored
66 by the Governor.

67 H. For the purposes of this section, "school board" includes the Board of Visitors of the Virginia School
68 for the Deaf and the Blind, which, for the purpose of receiving criminal history record information pertaining
69 to an application for employment from the Central Criminal Records Exchange, shall be a governmental
70 entity.