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SENATE BILL NO. 998

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor
on January 27, 2025)

(Patrons Prior to Substitute—Senators Williams Graves and VanValkenburg [SB 840])

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 40.1-2, 40.1-79.01, and 40.1-80.1 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding sections numbered 40.1-109.1, 40.1-109.2, and 40.1-109.3, relating to child labor; child engaged in the work of content creation; trust account; enforcement.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 40.1-2, 40.1-79.01, and 40.1-80.1 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding sections numbered 40.1-109.1, 40.1-109.2, and 40.1-109.3 as follows:

§ 40.1-2. Definitions.

As used in this title, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the following terms have the following meanings:

"Board" means the Safety and Health Codes Board.

"Business establishment" means any proprietorship, firm, or corporation where people are employed, permitted, or suffered to work, including agricultural employment on a farm.

"Commission" means the Safety and Health Codes Board.

"Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Labor and Industry. Except where the context clearly indicates the contrary, any reference to "Commissioner" shall include his authorized representatives.

"Content" means audiovisual content shared on an online platform in exchange for compensation.

"Content creator" means an individual or individuals 18 years of age or older, including family members, who create video content performed in the Commonwealth in exchange for compensation, and includes any proprietorship, partnership, company, or other corporate entity assuming the name or identity of a particular individual or family for the purposes of the content creation. "Content creator" does not include a child who produces his own video content.

"Department" means the Department of Labor and Industry.

"Domestic service" means services related to the care of an individual in a private home or the maintenance of a private home or its premises, on a permanent or temporary basis, including services performed by individuals such as companions, cooks, waiters, butlers, maids, valets, and chauffeurs. "Domestic service" does not include work that is irregular, uncertain, or incidental in nature and duration.

"Employ" shall include to permit or suffer to work.

"Employee" means any person who, in consideration of wages, salaries, or commissions, may be permitted, required, or directed by any employer to engage in any employment directly or indirectly.

"Employer" means an individual, partnership, association, corporation, legal representative, receiver, trustee, or trustee in bankruptcy doing business in or operating within this Commonwealth who employs another to work for wages, salaries, or on commission and shall include any similar entity acting directly or indirectly in the interest of an employer in relation to an employee.

"Female" or "woman" means a female 18 years of age or over.

"Machinery" means machines, belts, pulleys, motors, engines, gears, vats, pits, elevators, conveyors, shafts, or tunnels, including machinery being operated on farms in connection with the production or harvesting of agricultural products.

"Online platform" means any public-facing website, web application, or digital application, including a mobile application. "Online platform" includes a social network, advertising network, mobile operating system, search engine, email service, or Internet access service.

§ 40.1-79.01. Exemptions from chapter generally.

A. Nothing in this chapter, except the provisions of §§ subsection A of § 40.1-100 A, and §§ 40.1-100.1, 40.1-100.2, and 40.1-103, shall apply to:

1. A child engaged in domestic work when such work is performed in connection with the child's own home and directly for his parent or a person standing in place of his parent;

2. A child employed in occasional work performed outside school hours where such work is in connection with the employer's home but not in connection with the employer's business, trade, or profession;

3. A child 12 or 13 years of age employed outside school hours on farms, in orchards, or in gardens with the consent of his parent or a person standing in place of his parent;

4. A child between the ages of 12 and 18 employed as a page or clerk for either the House of Delegates or the Senate of Virginia;

5. A child participating in the activities of a volunteer emergency medical services agency;

6. A child under 16 years of age employed by his parent in an occupation other than manufacturing; or

7. A child 12 years of age or older employed by an eleemosynary organization or unit of state or local government as a referee for sports programs sponsored by that eleemosynary, state, or local organization or by an organization of referees sponsored by an organization recognized by the United States Olympic Committee under 36 U.S.C. § 220522.

B. Nothing in this chapter, except §§ 40.1-100.1, 40.1-100.2, and 40.1-103, shall be construed to apply to a child employed by his parent or a person standing in place of his parent on farms, in orchards or in gardens owned or operated by such parent or person.

C. *Nothing in this chapter, except subsection A of § 40.1-100 and §§ 40.1-100.1, 40.1-100.2, 40.1-103, and 40.1-109.2, shall apply to a child engaged in the work of content creation as described in § 40.1-109.1.*

§ 40.1-80.1. Employment of children.

A. Except as provided in §§ 40.1-79.01, 40.1-88, 40.1-102, ~~and 40.1-109, 40.1-109.1, and 40.1-109.2~~, no child under ~~sixteen~~ 16 years of age shall be employed, permitted, or suffered to work in, about, or in connection with any gainful occupation more than the number of hours per week or more than the number of hours per day or during the hours of the day that the Commissioner shall determine by regulations to be detrimental to the lives, health, safety, or welfare of children. These regulations shall incorporate the standards contained in regulations promulgated by the ~~United States~~ U.S. Secretary of Labor pursuant to the Fair Labor Standards Act (29 U.S.C. § 201 et seq.) concerning the number of hours per week, hours per day, and the hours of the day that children under the age of ~~sixteen~~ 16 may work in, about, or in connection with, any gainful occupation.

B. No child shall be employed or permitted to work for more than five hours continuously without an interval of at least ~~thirty~~ 30 minutes for a lunch period, and no period of less than ~~thirty~~ 30 minutes shall be deemed to interrupt a continuous period of work.

§ 40.1-109.1. Child engaged in the work of content creation; criteria.

A. A child under the age of 16 is considered engaged in the work of content creation when the following criteria are met at any time during the previous 12-month period:

1. At least 30 percent of the content creator's compensated video content produced within a 30-day period included the likeness, name, or photograph of the child. Content percentage is measured by the percentage of time the likeness, name, or photograph of the child or, if more than one child regularly appears in the creator's content, any of the children visually appears or is the subject of an oral narrative in a video segment as compared to the total length of the segment; and

2. The number of views received per video segment on any online platform met the online platform's threshold for the generation of compensation or the content creator received actual compensation for video content equal to or greater than \$0.10 per view.

B. With the exception of § 40.1-109.2, the provisions of this chapter shall not apply to a child engaged in the work of content creation.

C. All content creators whose content features a child under the age of 16 engaged in the work of content creation shall maintain the following records and shall provide them to the child and the holder of the trust account required pursuant to § 40.1-109.2 on an ongoing basis:

1. The name and documentary proof of the age of the child engaged in the work of content creation;

2. The number of videos that generated compensation as described in subsection A during the reporting period;

3. The total number of minutes of the video content that the content creator received compensation for during the reporting period;

4. The total number of minutes each child was featured in video content during the reporting period;

5. The total compensation generated from video content featuring a child during the reporting period; and

6. The amount deposited into the trust account for the benefit of the child engaged in the work of content creation, as required by § 40.1-109.2.

D. If a content creator whose video content features a child under the age of 16 engaged in the work of content creation fails to maintain the records as provided in subsection C, the child, or his parent or guardian on behalf of such child, may commence a civil action to enforce the provisions of this section. No action shall be commenced under this section more than two years after the date on which the child engaged in the work of content creation attained 18 years of age.

E. A child who is under 14 years of age is prohibited from engaging in the work of content creation as described in subsection A. If a child under 14 years of age is featured in any video by a (i) content creator or (ii) child 14 years of age or older engaged in the work of content creation as the producer, creator, and publisher of such video, the child shall receive 100 percent of the proceeds of the content creator's compensation for the video content such child appeared in, less any amount owed to another child who appeared in the video content. If more than one child under 14 years of age appeared in the video content, the proceeds of the compensation shall be split equally among them.

§ 40.1-109.2. Child engaged in the work of content creation; trust account.

A. A child engaged in the work of content creation as described in subsection A of § 40.1-109.1 shall be

compensated by the content creator. The content creator shall set aside gross earnings on the video content that includes the likeness, name, or photograph of the child in a trust account to be preserved for the benefit of the child upon attaining 18 years of age or having been declared emancipated, according to the following distribution:

1. Where only one child meets the content threshold described in § 40.1-109.1, the percentage of total gross earnings on any video segment including the likeness, name, or photograph of the child that is equal to or greater than half of the content percentage that includes the child as described in § 40.1-109.1; or

2. Where more than one child meets the content threshold described in § 40.1-109.1 and a video segment includes more than one of those children, the percentage described in subdivision 1 for all children in any segment shall be equally divided among the children, regardless of differences in percentage of content provided by the individual children.

B. A trust account required under this section shall provide, at a minimum, the following:

1. That the funds in the account shall be available only to the child engaged in the work of content creation;

2. That the account shall be held by a financial institution, corporate fiduciary, or trust company;

3. That the funds in the account shall become available to the child engaged in the work of content creation upon the child attaining the age of 18 years or when the child is declared emancipated; and

4. That the account meets the requirements of the Virginia Uniform Transfers to Minors Act (§ 64.2-1900 et seq.).

C. If a content creator knowingly or recklessly violates this section, a child engaged in the work of content creation as described in subsection A of § 40.1-109.1, or his parent or guardian on behalf of such child, may commence an action to enforce the provisions of this section regarding the trust account. The court may award, to a child who prevails in any action brought in accordance with this section, the following damages: (i) compensatory damages; (ii) punitive damages; and (iii) the costs of the action, including reasonable attorney fees and costs. No action shall be commenced under this section more than two years after the date on which the child engaged in the work of content creation attained 18 years of age.

D. This section does not affect any right or remedy available under any other provision of law.

E. Nothing in this section shall be construed to have any effect on a party that is neither the content creator nor the child engaged in the work of content creation.

§ 40.1-109.3. Enforcement; civil cause of action; violations.

A. Whenever the Attorney General has reasonable cause to believe that any person has engaged in, is engaging in, or is about to engage in any violation of § 40.1-109.1 or 40.1-109.2, the Attorney General is empowered to issue a civil investigative demand. The provisions of § 59.1-9.10 shall apply mutatis mutandis to civil investigative demands issued pursuant to this subsection.

B. Notwithstanding any contrary provision of law, the Attorney General may cause an action to be brought in the appropriate circuit court in the name of the Commonwealth to enjoin any violation of § 40.1-109.1 or 40.1-109.2. The circuit court having jurisdiction may enjoin such violation notwithstanding the existence of an adequate remedy at law. In any action brought pursuant to this subsection, it shall not be necessary that damages be proved.

C. Along with the civil action provided in subsection C of § 40.1-109.2, a child engaged in the work of content creation, or his parent or guardian on behalf of such child, may commence a civil action against a content creator for damages, injunctive relief, and any other relief the court finds just and equitable to enforce § 40.1-109.1 or 40.1-109.2.