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HOUSE BILL NO. 1654

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the House Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns
on January 24, 2025)
(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Helmer)

A BILL to amend and reenact § 35.1-15.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to short-term rental properties; human trafficking awareness training.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 35.1-15.1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 35.1-15.1. Required human trafficking training.

A. As used in this section:

"Accommodations" means the same as that term is defined in § 58.1-602.

"Accommodations intermediary" means the same as that term is defined in § 58.1-602.

"Accommodations provider" means the same as that term is defined in § 58.1-602. No person licensed as a real estate licensee pursuant to Article 1 (§ 54.1-2100 et seq.) of Chapter 21 of Title 54.1 who manages a short-term rental property shall be considered an accommodations provider.

"Employee" means any person employed by a hotel an accommodations provider that (i) has frequent or regular interactions with guests, such as front desk staff, hotel porters, hotel concierge, restaurant waiting and bartending staff, or room service staff; (ii) is in a management position; or (iii) has access to the guest's room, including housekeeping staff.

"Hotel" does not include a short-term rental property as that term is defined in § 58.1-3510.4 15.2-983.

B. Every hotel proprietor shall require its employees to complete a The Department of Criminal Justice Services shall make available an online training course or approve an alternate online or in-person training course on recognizing and reporting instances of suspected human trafficking pursuant to § 9.1-102 at no cost to any (i) accommodations provider that furnishes accommodations in a short-term rental property or (ii) employee of an accommodations provider. Such training course shall be an online course provided by the Department of Criminal Justice Services at no cost to the hotel proprietor and its employees pursuant to § 9.1-102 or an alternative online or in-person training course approved by the Department of Criminal Justice Services. The Department of Criminal Justice Services shall approve or disapprove of the use of any alternative online or in-person training course within 60 days of the submission of such training course for approval.

C. Every accommodations provider shall require its employees to complete the training course required by this section. Each hotel such employee shall complete the required training course described in subsection B required by this section within six months of being employed by a hotel an accommodations provider and thereafter at least once during each consecutive period of two calendar years commencing with the date on which he last completed the required training course, for as long as he is employed by a hotel such accommodations provider.

D. If an accommodations provider is using an accommodations intermediary, the accommodations intermediary shall comply with all of the following requirements:

1. Notify the accommodations provider of the training requirements of this section;

2. Allow accommodations providers listed on its platform to certify digitally or in writing that they have completed an approved training course required by this section. For any preexisting listing on July 1, 2026, an accommodations provider shall have until January 1, 2027, to complete the training; and

3. Provide information on the methods used to notify accommodations providers of the requirements of this section upon request of the Department of Health.

E. In the event an accommodations provider is found by a court of competent jurisdiction to have been the site of human trafficking, the court may order the closure of such accommodations for a period not to exceed six months.

HOUSE SUBSTITUTE

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