



Fiscal Impact Statement for Proposed Legislation
Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission

House Bill 2123
Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute
(Patron prior to substitute – Maldonado)

LD#: 25107401

Date: 02/13/2025

Topic: Maximum length of protective orders

Fiscal Impact Summary:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Adult Correctional Facilities: \$50,000 * • Local Adult Correctional Facilities: Cannot be determined • Adult Community Corrections Programs: Cannot be determined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juvenile Direct Care: Cannot be determined ** • Juvenile Detention Facilities: Cannot be determined ** <p>** Provided by the Department of Juvenile Justice</p>
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* The estimated amount of the necessary appropriation cannot be determined for periods of imprisonment in state adult correctional facilities; therefore, Chapter 2 of the Acts of Assembly of 2024, Special Session I, requires the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission to assign a minimum fiscal impact of \$50,000.

Pursuant to § 30-19.1:4, fiscal impact statements prepared by the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission only include the estimated increase in operating costs associated with additional state-responsible prison beds and do not reflect any other costs or savings that may be associated with the proposed legislation.

Summary of Proposed Legislation:

The proposal amends § 16.1-279.1 (family abuse protective orders) to extend the maximum duration of a protective order from two years to four years if the court finds that within the previous 10 year the respondent had a permanent protective order issued against him. Any subsequent extensions of the protective will be for a two-year period, as per current *Code*.

Per § 16.1-253.2, many violations of protective orders are punishable as Class 1 misdemeanors.¹ If an individual is convicted of a second offense of violating a protective order within five years of the prior conviction when either offense was based on an act or threat of violence, a mandatory minimum term of confinement of 60 days applies. Any person convicted of a third or subsequent offense of violating a protective order within 20 years (with at least one involving an act or threat of violence) is guilty of a Class 6 felony and must serve a mandatory minimum term of six months. Finally, it is a Class 6 felony if the respondent 1) violates the protective order while knowingly armed with a firearm or other deadly weapon, 2) commits an assault and battery upon any protected party resulting in bodily injury or stalks any protected party, or 3) furtively enters the home of any protected party while the party is present, or by entering and

¹ Violations of protective orders issued pursuant to § 16.1-279.1 are punishable under § 16.1-253.2, if the subject of the protective order violates provisions that prohibit him from: (i) going or remaining upon land, buildings, or premises; (ii) committing further acts of family abuse; or (iii) committing a criminal offense, or which prohibits contact by the subject with the allegedly abused person or family or household members of the allegedly abused person. Otherwise, violations of protective orders issued under § 16.1-279.1 are punishable as contempt of court.

remaining in the home of the protected party until the party arrives.² If the protective order violation does not meet any of the criteria for punishment as a felony or misdemeanor, it is punishable as contempt of court.

Analysis:

According to the General District Court and Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court Case Management Systems (CMS), 5,566 protective orders were issued under § 16.1-279.1 during calendar year 2023.

Data do not exist to estimate the rate at which judges might extend the maximum length of protective orders, as proposed. By authorizing longer durations of protective orders, however, the proposal would provide additional time during which the person subject to the protective order may violate the conditions of the order set by the court. While data are not sufficient to estimate the number of additional protective order violations that may result, individuals who commit violations may be sentenced similarly to those currently convicted under § 16.1-253.2 for protective order violations (see table below).

Offenders Convicted of Protective Order Violations, FY2023-FY2024

Primary Offense	Total Number of Cases	Percent Sentenced to Probation	Percent Sentenced to Jail	Median Jail Sentence	Percent Sentenced to Prison	Median Prison Sentence
Circuit Court - Felony protective order violation - family abuse (§ 16.1-253.2) ^a	98	9.2%	64.3%	6 mos.	26.5%	1.5 yrs.
Juv. & Dom. Relations Court - Misdemeanor protective order violation (§ 16.1-253.2) - orders issued under §§ 16.1-253.1, 16.1-253.4, 16.1-278.14, 16.1-279.1 or 20-13(b) ^b	2,713	19.9%	80.1%	10 dys.	N/A	N/A

Note: Analysis is based on cases in which the specified offense was the primary, or most serious, offense in the sentencing event.

Sources: ^a Supreme Court of Virginia - Circuit Court Case Management System (CMS), FY2023-FY2024;

^b Supreme Court of Virginia – Juvenile & Domestic Relations Case Management System (CMS), FY2023-FY2024.

Impact of Proposed Legislation:

State adult correctional facilities. By authorizing longer durations of protective orders, and therefore extending the time period during which a person subject to the protective order may violate conditions, the proposal potentially expands the applicability of existing felony offenses. In this way, the proposal may increase the future state-responsible (prison) bed space needs of the Commonwealth. Existing databases do not provide sufficient detail to estimate the number of new felony convictions likely to result from enactment of the proposal. As a result, the magnitude of the impact on prison beds cannot be determined.

Local adult correctional facilities. Similarly, the proposal may also increase local-responsible (jail) bed space needs; however, the magnitude of the impact cannot be quantified.

Adult community corrections resources. Because the proposal could result in felony convictions and subsequent supervision requirements for an additional number of offenders, the proposal may increase the need for adult community corrections resources. Since the number of cases that may be affected cannot be determined, the potential impact on community corrections resources cannot be estimated.

Virginia’s Sentencing Guidelines. Currently, felony violations of protective orders punishable under § 16.1-253.2 are not covered by the Sentencing Guidelines when these crimes are the primary, or most

² Under current law, felony offenses punishable under § 16.1-253.2 and § 18.2-60.4 are not eligible for the enhanced sentence credits specified in § 53.1-202.3; therefore, individuals convicted of these felonies will serve a minimum of 85% of the sentence ordered by the court. The proposed legislation does not change the earned sentence credits available to offenders convicted under this section.

serious, offense. Guidelines do not apply if the most serious offense at sentencing is a misdemeanor. Any such convictions may augment the Guidelines recommendation (as additional offenses) if the most serious offense at sentencing is covered by the Guidelines. The felonies in § 16.1-253.2 are defined as violent under § 17.1-805(C) for Guidelines purposes. No adjustment to the Guidelines would be necessary under the proposal.

Juvenile direct care. According to the Department of Juvenile Justice, the impact of the proposal on direct care (juvenile correctional center or alternative commitment placement) bed space needs cannot be determined.

Juvenile detention facilities. The Department of Juvenile Justice reports that the proposal's impact on the bed space needs of juvenile detention facilities cannot be determined.

Pursuant to § 30-19.1:4, the estimated amount of the necessary appropriation cannot be determined for periods of imprisonment in state adult correctional facilities; therefore, Chapter 2 of the Acts of Assembly of 2024, Special Session I, requires the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission to assign a minimum fiscal impact of \$50,000.

Pursuant to § 30-19.1:4, the estimated amount of the necessary appropriation cannot be determined for periods of commitment to the custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice.

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