

2026 SESSION

INTRODUCED

26102171D

1 **SENATE BILL NO. 260**

2 Offered January 14, 2026

3 Prefiled January 12, 2026

4 *A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Article 1 of Chapter 14 of Title 51.5 a section numbered §*
5 *51.5-129.1, relating to Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services; Senior Isolation Prevention*
6 *Advisory Task Force established; report.*

7 Patron—Stanley

8 Referred to Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services

9 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

10 **1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Article 1 of Chapter 14 of Title 51.5 a section**
11 **numbered § 51.5-129.1 as follows:**

12 **§ 51.5-129.1. Senior Isolation Prevention Advisory Task Force; purpose; membership; duties; report.**

13 *A. There is hereby established the Senior Isolation Prevention Advisory Task Force (the Task Force) for*
14 *the purpose of advising the Commissioner on strategies for reducing social isolation and loneliness among*
15 *seniors and promoting volunteer engagement.*

16 *B. The Task Force shall have a total membership of 15 members that shall include 12 nonlegislative*
17 *citizen members and three ex officio members. Members shall be appointed as follows: six representatives of*
18 *area agencies on aging, of whom each shall represent a different area agency on aging, appointed by the*
19 *Commissioner and six nonlegislative citizen members, of whom at least two shall represent community*
20 *services boards or behavioral health providers, at least two shall represent faith-based organizations or civic*
21 *groups engaged in senior services, and at least one shall represent assisted living or nursing home providers,*
22 *appointed by the Governor. The Commissioner for Aging and Rehabilitative Services or his designee, who*
23 *shall serve as chair, the Commissioner of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services or his designee;*
24 *and the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman or his designee shall serve ex officio with voting privileges.*

25 *C. The Task Force shall have the following powers and duties:*

26 *1. Develop and disseminate, in coordination with the area agencies on aging, educational materials that*
27 *include (i) data on the growing senior population and rates of social isolation in the Commonwealth; (ii)*
28 *information on the physical and mental health consequences of isolation and loneliness; (iii) information on*
29 *food insecurity, housing insecurity, and inadequate behavioral health care access among seniors; (iv)*
30 *guidance for churches, civic organizations, foundations, businesses, and individuals on establishing senior*
31 *visitation and companionship programs; and (v) best practices and model programs for reducing senior*
32 *isolation, including the "Adopt a Senior" campaign model that encourages regular visitation with isolated*
33 *seniors living alone or in assisted living and nursing home facilities. Such materials shall be made available*
34 *on the Department website and shall be distributed to area agencies on aging, local departments of social*
35 *services, senior centers, assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and upon request to any church, civic*
36 *organization, foundation, or individual;*

37 *2. Review and evaluate existing programs and initiatives addressing social isolation among seniors in the*
38 *Commonwealth;*

39 *3. Identify best practices and evidence-based interventions for reducing isolation and loneliness;*

40 *4. Develop recommendations for expanding volunteer visitation and companionship programs, including*
41 *the "Adopt a Senior" model, statewide;*

42 *4. Identify opportunities to coordinate senior isolation prevention efforts with existing behavioral health*
43 *services, food assistance programs, and housing support;*

44 *5. Recommend strategies for engaging churches, civic organizations, foundations, businesses, and*
45 *individuals in senior companionship initiatives;*

46 *6. Assess strategies to reduce barriers related to technology access, broadband connectivity, and*
47 *transportation that contribute to senior isolation;*

48 *7. Develop or recommend brief screening tools that community partners, senior centers, and service*
49 *providers may use to identify seniors at risk for social isolation or loneliness; and*

50 *8. Provide an annual report by December 1 of each year to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the*
51 *Commissioner on its findings and recommendations. Such report shall be posted on the Department's*
52 *website.*

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