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HOUSE BILL NO. 1506

Offered January 23, 2026

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 47.1-15 and 47.1-16 of the Code of Virginia, relating to notaries; altered documents; name across instruments.

Patron—Phillips

Referred to Committee for Courts of Justice

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 47.1-15 and 47.1-16 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 47.1-15. Prohibitions.

A notary shall not:

1. Notarize a document if the signer is not in the presence of the notary at the time of notarization, unless (i) in the case of an electronic notarization, satisfactory evidence of the identity of the signer is established in accordance with § 47.1-2 or (ii) otherwise authorized by law to do so.

2. Use the official notary title or seal to endorse, promote, denounce, or oppose any product, service, contest, candidate, or other offering.

3. Notarize a signature on a document without notarial certificate wording on the same page as the signature unless the notarial certificate includes the name of each person whose signature is being notarized.

4. Affix an official signature or seal on a notarial certificate that is incomplete or altered.

A notary shall not perform any official act with the intent to deceive or defraud.

A nonattorney notary shall not assist another person in drafting, completing, selecting, or understanding a document or transaction requiring a notarial act. This section does not preclude a notary who is duly qualified, trained, or experienced in a particular industry or professional field from selecting, drafting, completing, or advising on a document or certificate related to a matter within that industry or field or prevent a notary from adding a notarial certificate or electronic notarial certificate to a paper or electronic document at the direction of a principal or lawful authority.

A notary may decline to notarize a document.

Any document notarized prior to July 1, 2008, which does not have the notarial certificate wording on the same page as the signature, but otherwise appears on its face to be properly notarized, shall be deemed validly notarized.

§ 47.1-16. Notarizations to show date of act, official signature and seal, etc.

A. Every notarization shall include the date upon which the notarial act was performed and the county or city and state in which it was performed. Every electronic notarial certificate completed by an electronic notary public commissioned in the Commonwealth shall include the county or city within the Commonwealth where the electronic notary public was physically located at the time of the notarial act. The electronic notarial certificate shall indicate whether the notarization was done in person or by remote online notarization.

B. A notarial act shall be evidenced by a notarial certificate or electronic notarial certificate signed by a notary in a manner that attributes such signature to the notary public identified on the commission.

C. Upon every writing that is the subject of a notarial act, the notary shall, after his certificate, state the date of the expiration of his commission in substantially the following form:

"My commission expires the ___ day of _____, _____"

Near the notary's official signature on the notarial certificate of a paper document, the notary shall affix a sharp, legible, permanent, unaltered, and photographically reproducible image of the official seal, or, to an electronic document, the notary shall attach an official electronic seal.

D. The notary shall attach the official electronic signature and electronic seal to the electronic notarial certificate of an electronic document in a manner that is capable of independent verification and renders any subsequent changes or modifications to the electronic document evident.

E. An electronic notary's electronic signature and electronic seal shall conform to the standards for electronic notarization developed in accordance with § 47.1-6.1.

F. In accordance with the provisions of § 47.1-17, the name associated with the commissioned notary shall be the same on and across such notary's signature, certificate, seal, and any other document or instrument requiring such notary's name and information.