CHAPTER 201

An Act to amend and reenact § 19.2-48.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to quarters for magistrates; certain minimum standards for security and accessibility.

[H 679]

Approved March 28, 2024

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 19.2-48.1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 19.2-48.1. Quarters for magistrates.

A. The counties and cities served by a magistrate or magistrates shall provide suitable quarters for such magistrates, including a site for any videoconferencing *and other* equipment necessary to provide *secure,* remote access *and the transmission of paperwork* to such magistrates *by the public and law-enforcement officers*. ~~Insofar as possible, such~~ *Such* quarters ~~should~~ *shall* be located in a ~~public~~ facility *open to the public* and ~~should be~~ appropriate to conduct the affairs of a judicial officer as well as provide convenient, *24-hour* access to the public and law-enforcement officers. *Where practicable, such quarters shall be in a courthouse or a law-enforcement office where business is regularly conducted and shall include an entrance, exit, and parking for magistrates that is separate from those for members of the public. Such quarters shall provide for the physical security of the magistrate and shall include controlled access to interior spaces or intrusion detection, a secure physical barrier between the magistrate and members of the public, and a readily accessible duress button that connects the magistrate to local law enforcement.* The county or city shall also provide all furniture and other equipment necessary for the efficient operation of the office.

B. Wherever practical, the office of magistrate shall be located at the county seat. However, offices may be located at other locations in the county, or city adjacent thereto, whenever such additional offices are necessary to effect the efficient administration of justice.