

2026 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE BILL NO. 19

Offered January 14, 2026

Prefiled December 22, 2025

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 16.1-228 and 18.2-308.1:8 of the Code of Virginia, relating to purchase, possession, or transportation of firearm; assault and battery of a family or household member or intimate partner; penalties.

Patron—McClure

Referred to Committee on Public Safety

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 16.1-228 and 18.2-308.1:8 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:
§ 16.1-228. Definitions.

As used in this chapter, U

"Abused or neglected child" means any child:

1 Whose parents or other person responsible

1. Whose parents or other person responsible for his care creates or inflicts, threatens to create or inflict, or allows to be created or inflicted upon such child a physical or mental injury by other than accidental means, or creates a substantial risk of death, disfigurement or impairment of bodily or mental functions, including, but not limited to, a child who is with his parent or other person responsible for his care either (i) during the manufacture or attempted manufacture of a Schedule I or II controlled substance, or (ii) during the unlawful sale of such substance by that child's parents or other person responsible for his care, where such manufacture, or attempted manufacture or unlawful sale would constitute a felony violation of § 18.2-248;

2. Whose parents or other person responsible for his care neglects or refuses to provide care necessary for his health; however, no child who in good faith is under treatment solely by spiritual means through prayer in accordance with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination shall for that reason alone be considered to be an abused or neglected child. Further, a decision by parents who have legal authority for the child or, in the absence of parents with legal authority for the child, any person with legal authority for the child who refuses a particular medical treatment for a child with a life-threatening condition shall not be deemed a refusal to provide necessary care if (i) such decision is made jointly by the parents or other person with legal authority and the child; (ii) the child has reached 14 years of age and is sufficiently mature to have an informed opinion on the subject of his medical treatment; (iii) the parents or other person with legal authority and the child have considered alternative treatment options; and (iv) the parents or other person with legal authority and the child believe in good faith that such decision is in the child's best interest. No child whose parent or other person responsible for his care allows the child to engage in independent activities without adult supervision shall for that reason alone be considered to be an abused or neglected child, provided that (a) such independent activities are appropriate based on the child's age, maturity, and physical and mental abilities and (b) such lack of supervision does not constitute conduct that is so grossly negligent as to endanger the health or safety of the child. Such independent activities include traveling to or from school or nearby locations by bicycle or on foot, playing outdoors, or remaining at home for a reasonable period of time. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to limit the provisions of § 16.1-278.4;

3. Whose parents or other person responsible for his care abandons such child;

4. Whose parents or other person responsible for his care, or an intimate partner of such parent or person, commits or allows to be committed any act of sexual exploitation or any sexual act upon a child in violation of the law;

5. Who is without parental care or guardianship caused by the unreasonable absence or the mental or physical incapacity of the child's parent, guardian, legal custodian, or other person standing in loco parentis;

6. Whose parents or other person responsible for his care creates a substantial risk of physical or mental injury by knowingly leaving the child alone in the same dwelling, including an apartment as defined in § 55.1-2000, with a person to whom the child is not related by blood or marriage and who the parent or other person responsible for his care knows has been convicted of an offense against a minor for which registration is required as a Tier III offender pursuant to § 9.1-902; or

7. Who has been identified as a victim of sex trafficking or severe forms of trafficking as defined in the federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, 22 U.S.C. § 7102 et seq., and in the federal Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015, 42 U.S.C. § 5101 et seq.

If a civil proceeding under this chapter is based solely on the parent having left the child at a hospital or emergency medical services agency, it shall be an affirmative defense that such parent safely delivered the child within 30 days of the child's birth to (i) a hospital that provides 24-hour emergency services, (ii) an

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59 attended emergency medical services agency that employs emergency medical services personnel, or (iii) a
60 newborn safety device located at and operated by such hospital or emergency medical services agency. For
61 purposes of terminating parental rights pursuant to § 16.1-283 and placement for adoption, the court may find
62 such a child is a neglected child upon the ground of abandonment.

63 "Adoptive home" means the place of residence of any natural person in which a child resides as a member
64 of the household and in which he has been placed for the purposes of adoption or in which he has been
65 legally adopted by another member of the household.

66 "Adult" means a person 18 years of age or older.

67 "Ancillary crime" or "ancillary charge" means any delinquent act committed by a juvenile as a part of the
68 same act or transaction as, or that constitutes a part of a common scheme or plan with, a delinquent act that
69 would be a felony if committed by an adult.

70 "Child," "juvenile," or "minor" means a person who is (i) younger than 18 years of age or (ii) for purposes
71 of the Fostering Futures program set forth in Article 2 (§ 63.2-917 et seq.) of Chapter 9 of Title 63.2, younger
72 than 21 years of age and meets the eligibility criteria set forth in § 63.2-919.

73 "Child in need of services" means (i) a child whose behavior, conduct, or condition presents or results in a
74 serious threat to the well-being and physical safety of the child; (ii) a child who remains away from or deserts
75 or abandons his family or lawful custodian during one occasion and is demonstratively at risk of coercion,
76 exploitation, abuse, or manipulation or has been lured from his parent or lawful custodian by means of
77 trickery or misrepresentation or under false pretenses; or (iii) a child under the age of 14 whose behavior,
78 conduct or condition presents or results in a serious threat to the well-being and physical safety of another
79 person; however, no child who in good faith is under treatment solely by spiritual means through prayer in
80 accordance with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination shall for that
81 reason alone be considered to be a child in need of services, nor shall any child who habitually remains away
82 from or habitually deserts or abandons his family as a result of what the court or the local child protective
83 services unit determines to be incidents of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse in the home be considered a
84 child in need of services for that reason alone.

85 However, to find that a child falls within these provisions, (a) the conduct complained of must present a
86 clear and substantial danger to the child's life or health or to the life or health of another person; (b) the child
87 or his family is in need of treatment, rehabilitation, or services not presently being received; and (c) the
88 intervention of the court is essential to provide the treatment, rehabilitation, or services needed by the child or
89 his family.

90 "Child in need of supervision" means:

91 1. A child who, while subject to compulsory school attendance, is habitually and without justification
92 absent from school, and (i) the child has been offered an adequate opportunity to receive the benefit of any
93 and all educational services and programs that are required to be provided by law and which meet the child's
94 particular educational needs, (ii) the school system from which the child is absent or other appropriate agency
95 has made a reasonable effort to effect the child's regular attendance without success, and (iii) the school
96 system has provided documentation that it has complied with the provisions of § 22.1-258; or

97 2. A child who, without reasonable cause and without the consent of his parent, lawful custodian or
98 placement authority, remains away from or deserts or abandons his family or lawful custodian on more than
99 one occasion or escapes or remains away without proper authority from a residential care facility in which he
100 has been placed by the court, and (i) such conduct presents a clear and substantial danger to the child's life or
101 health, (ii) the child or his family is in need of treatment, rehabilitation or services not presently being
102 received, and (iii) the intervention of the court is essential to provide the treatment, rehabilitation or services
103 needed by the child or his family.

104 "Child welfare agency" means a child-placing agency, child-caring institution or independent foster home
105 as defined in § 63.2-100.

106 "The court" or the "juvenile court" or the "juvenile and domestic relations court" means the juvenile and
107 domestic relations district court of each county or city.

108 "Delinquent act" means (i) an act designated a crime under the law of the Commonwealth, or an ordinance
109 of any city, county, town, or service district, or under federal law, (ii) a violation of § 18.2-308.7, or (iii) a
110 violation of a court order as provided for in § 16.1-292, but does not include an act other than a violation of
111 § 18.2-308.7, which is otherwise lawful, but is designated a crime only if committed by a child.

112 "Delinquent child" means a child who has committed a delinquent act or an adult who has committed a
113 delinquent act prior to his eighteenth birthday, except where the jurisdiction of the juvenile court has been
114 terminated under the provisions of § 16.1-269.6.

115 "Department" means the Department of Juvenile Justice and "Director" means the administrative head in
116 charge thereof or such of his assistants and subordinates as are designated by him to discharge the duties
117 imposed upon him under this law.

118 "Driver's license" means any document issued under Chapter 3 (§ 46.2-300 et seq.) of Title 46.2, or the
119 comparable law of another jurisdiction, authorizing the operation of a motor vehicle upon the highways.

120 "Family abuse" means any act involving violence, force, or threat that results in bodily injury or places

121 one in reasonable apprehension of death, sexual assault, or bodily injury and that is committed by a person
122 against such person's family or household member. Such act includes, but is not limited to, any forceful
123 detention, stalking, criminal sexual assault in violation of Article 7 (§ 18.2-61 et seq.) of Chapter 4 of Title
124 18.2, or any criminal offense that results in bodily injury or places one in reasonable apprehension of death,
125 sexual assault, or bodily injury.

126 "Family or household member" means (i) the person's spouse, whether or not such spouse resides in the
127 same home with the person; (ii) the person's former spouse, whether or not such person resides in the same
128 home with the person; (iii) the person's parents, stepparents, children, stepchildren, brothers, sisters,
129 half-brothers, half-sisters, grandparents, and grandchildren, regardless of whether such persons reside in the
130 same home with the person; (iv) the person's mother-in-law, father-in-law, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law,
131 brothers-in-law, and sisters-in-law who reside in the same home with the person; (v) any individual who has a
132 child in common with the person, whether or not the person and that individual have been married or have
133 resided together at any time; (vi) any individual who cohabits or who, within the previous 12 months,
134 cohabited with the person, and any children of either of them then residing in the same home with the person;
135 or (vii) an individual who is a legal custodian of a juvenile; or (viii) the person's intimate partner.

136 "Fictive kin" means persons who are not related to a child by blood or adoption but have an established
137 relationship with the child or his family.

138 "Foster care services" means the provision of a full range of casework, treatment and community services
139 for a planned period of time to a child who is abused or neglected as defined in § 63.2-100 or in need of
140 services as defined in this section and his family when the child (i) has been identified as needing services to
141 prevent or eliminate the need for foster care placement, (ii) has been placed through an agreement between
142 the local board of social services or a public agency designated by the community policy and management
143 team and the parents or guardians where legal custody remains with the parents or guardians, (iii) has been
144 committed or entrusted to a local board of social services or child welfare agency, (iv) has been placed under
145 the supervisory responsibility of the local board pursuant to § 16.1-293, or (v) is living with a relative
146 participating in the Federal-Funded Kinship Guardianship Assistance program set forth in § 63.2-1305 and
147 developed consistent with 42 U.S.C. § 673 or the State-Funded Kinship Guardianship Assistance program set
148 forth in § 63.2-1306.

149 "Independent living arrangement" means placement of (i) a child at least 16 years of age who is in the
150 custody of a local board or licensed child-placing agency by the local board or licensed child-placing agency
151 or (ii) a child at least 16 years of age or a person between the ages of 18 and 21 who was committed to the
152 Department of Juvenile Justice immediately prior to placement by the Department of Juvenile Justice, in a
153 living arrangement in which such child or person does not have daily substitute parental supervision.

154 "Independent living services" means services and activities provided to a child in foster care 14 years of
155 age or older and who has been committed or entrusted to a local board of social services, child welfare
156 agency, or private child-placing agency. "Independent living services" may also mean services and activities
157 provided to a person who (i) was in foster care on his eighteenth birthday and has not yet reached the age of
158 21 years; (ii) is between the ages of 18 and 21 and who, immediately prior to his commitment to the
159 Department of Juvenile Justice, was in the custody of a local board of social services; or (iii) is a child at least
160 16 years of age or a person between the ages of 18 and 21 who was committed to the Department of Juvenile
161 Justice immediately prior to placement in an independent living arrangement. "Independent living services"
162 includes counseling, education, housing, employment, and money management skills development and access
163 to essential documents and other appropriate services to help children or persons prepare for self-sufficiency.

164 "Intake officer" means a juvenile probation officer appointed as such pursuant to the authority of this
165 chapter.

166 "Intimate partner" means an individual who, within the previous 12 months, was in a romantic, dating, or
167 sexual relationship with the person as determined by the length, nature, frequency, and type of interaction
168 between the individuals involved in the relationship.

169 "Jail" or "other facility designed for the detention of adults" means a local or regional correctional facility
170 as defined in § 53.1-1, except those facilities utilized on a temporary basis as a court holding cell for a child
171 incident to a court hearing or as a temporary lock-up room or ward incident to the transfer of a child to a
172 juvenile facility.

173 "The judge" means the judge or the substitute judge of the juvenile and domestic relations district court of
174 each county or city.

175 "This law" or "the law" means the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Law embraced in this
176 chapter.

177 "Legal custody" means (i) a legal status created by court order which vests in a custodian the right to have
178 physical custody of the child, to determine and redetermine where and with whom he shall live, the right and
179 duty to protect, train and discipline him and to provide him with food, shelter, education and ordinary
180 medical care, all subject to any residual parental rights and responsibilities or (ii) the legal status created by
181 court order of joint custody as defined in § 20-107.2.

182 "Permanent foster care placement" means the place of residence in which a child resides and in which he

183 has been placed pursuant to the provisions of §§ 63.2-900 and 63.2-908 with the expectation and agreement
184 between the placing agency and the place of permanent foster care that the child shall remain in the
185 placement until he reaches the age of majority unless modified by court order or unless removed pursuant to
186 § 16.1-251 or 63.2-1517. A permanent foster care placement may be a place of residence of any natural
187 person or persons deemed appropriate to meet a child's needs on a long-term basis.

188 "Qualified individual" means a trained professional or licensed clinician who is not an employee of the
189 local board of social services or licensed child-placing agency that placed the child in a qualified residential
190 treatment program and is not affiliated with any placement setting in which children are placed by such local
191 board of social services or licensed child-placing agency.

192 "Qualified residential treatment program" means a program that (i) provides 24-hour residential placement
193 services for children in foster care; (ii) has adopted a trauma-informed treatment model that meets the clinical
194 and other needs of children with serious emotional or behavioral disorders, including any clinical or other
195 needs identified through assessments conducted pursuant to clause (viii) of this definition; (iii) employs
196 registered or licensed nursing and other clinical staff who provide care, on site and within the scope of their
197 practice, and are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week; (iv) conducts outreach with the child's family
198 members, including efforts to maintain connections between the child and his siblings and other family;
199 documents and maintains records of such outreach efforts; and maintains contact information for any known
200 biological family and fictive kin of the child; (v) whenever appropriate and in the best interest of the child,
201 facilitates participation by family members in the child's treatment program before and after discharge and
202 documents the manner in which such participation is facilitated; (vi) provides discharge planning and
203 family-based aftercare support for at least six months after discharge; (vii) is licensed in accordance with 42
204 U.S.C. § 671(a)(10) and accredited by an organization approved by the federal Secretary of Health and
205 Human Services; and (viii) requires that any child placed in the program receive an assessment within 30
206 days of such placement by a qualified individual that (a) assesses the strengths and needs of the child using an
207 age-appropriate, evidence-based, validated, and functional assessment tool approved by the Commissioner of
208 Social Services; (b) identifies whether the needs of the child can be met through placement with a family
209 member or in a foster home or, if not, in a placement setting authorized by 42 U.S.C. § 672(k)(2), including a
210 qualified residential treatment program, that would provide the most effective and appropriate level of care
211 for the child in the least restrictive environment and be consistent with the short-term and long-term goals
212 established for the child in his foster care or permanency plan; (c) establishes a list of short-term and
213 long-term mental and behavioral health goals for the child; and (d) is documented in a written report to be
214 filed with the court prior to any hearing on the child's placement pursuant to § 16.1-281, 16.1-282,
215 16.1-282.1, or 16.1-282.2.

216 "Residual parental rights and responsibilities" means all rights and responsibilities remaining with the
217 parent after the transfer of legal custody or guardianship of the person, including but not limited to the right
218 of visitation, consent to adoption, the right to determine religious affiliation and the responsibility for support.

219 "Secure facility" or "detention home" means a local, regional or state public or private locked residential
220 facility that has construction fixtures designed to prevent escape and to restrict the movement and activities of
221 children held in lawful custody.

222 "Shelter care" means the temporary care of children in physically unrestricting facilities.

223 "State Board" means the State Board of Juvenile Justice.

224 "Status offender" means a child who commits an act prohibited by law which would not be criminal if
225 committed by an adult.

226 "Status offense" means an act prohibited by law which would not be an offense if committed by an adult.

227 "Violent juvenile felony" means any of the delinquent acts enumerated in subsection B or C of
228 § 16.1-269.1 when committed by a juvenile 14 years of age or older.

229 **§ 18.2-308.1:8. Purchase, possession, or transportation of firearm following an assault and battery
230 of a family or household member or intimate partner; penalties.**

231 A. 1. Any person who knowingly and intentionally purchases, possesses, or transports any firearm
232 following a misdemeanor conviction for an offense that occurred on or after July 1, 2021, for (i) the offense
233 of assault and battery of a family or household member or (ii) an offense substantially similar to clause (i)
234 under the laws of any other state or of the United States is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

235 2. Any person who knowingly and intentionally purchases, possesses, or transports any firearm following
236 a misdemeanor conviction for an offense that occurred on or after July 1, 2026, for (i) the offense of assault
237 and battery against an intimate partner or (ii) an offense substantially similar to clause (i) under the laws of
238 any other state or of the United States is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

239 B. For the purposes of this section, "family":

240 "Family or household member" means (i) the person's spouse, whether or not he resides in the same home
241 with the person; (ii) the person's former spouse, whether or not he resides in the same home with the person;
242 or (iii) any individual who has a child in common with the person, whether or not the person and that
243 individual have been married or have resided together at any time; or (iv) any individual who cohabits or
244 who, within the previous 12 months, cohabitated with the person.

245 *"Intimate partner" means the same as that term is defined in § 16.1-228.*

246 C. Any person prohibited from purchasing, possessing, or transporting a firearm pursuant to subsection A
247 shall be prohibited from purchasing, possessing, or transporting a firearm for three years following the date of
248 the conviction at which point the person convicted of such offense shall no longer be prohibited from
249 purchasing, possessing, or transporting a firearm pursuant to subsection A. Such person shall have his
250 firearms rights restored, unless such person receives another disqualifying conviction, is subject to a
251 protective order that would restrict his rights to carry a firearm, or is otherwise prohibited by law from
252 purchasing, possessing, or transporting a firearm.

253 **2. That the provisions of this act may result in a net increase in periods of imprisonment or**
254 **commitment. Pursuant to § 30-19.1:4 of the Code of Virginia, the estimated amount of the necessary**
255 **appropriation cannot be determined for periods of imprisonment in state adult correctional facilities;**
256 **therefore, Chapter 725 of the Acts of Assembly of 2025 requires the Virginia Criminal Sentencing**
257 **Commission to assign a minimum fiscal impact of \$50,000. Pursuant to § 30-19.1:4 of the Code of**
258 **Virginia, the estimated amount of the necessary appropriation cannot be determined for periods of**
259 **commitment to the custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice.**