



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
HOUSE OF DELEGATES
RICHMOND

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COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
MILITIA, POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY (CHAIRMAN)
EDUCATION
APPROPRIATIONS

February 24th, 2014

The Honorable Brian Moran
PO Box 1475
Richmond, Virginia 23218



Dear Secretary Moran,

Attached is Senate Bill 495 as amended by the House Militia, Police, and Public Safety Committee on February 21st, 2014. This bill, patroned by Senator Tommy Norment, reflects the work of the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) over the past year working with a work group of their own creation.

After a thorough hearing by the full committee, it was the judgment of the committee that the bill should be carried over under Rule 22 until next Session. Having listened to the testimony carefully, it was my understanding that the DCJS believes that this section of the Code requires significant reform. It was apparent to me that the Chiefs Association and the Sheriffs' Association agree that we should address improvements in this section of the Code.

That said, there are many businesses in Virginia that provide special conservator of the peace (SCOP) services to both the public and private sector and any reform must ensure a robust participation by all stakeholders, including the SCOP community. I have reservations concerning stakeholder representation in the DCJS effort this year and would hope moving forward, you ensure that any amendment to this Code section be based on actual input from the SCOP community. I am happy to assist you and Senator Norment to that end. It would be my recommendation that you convene a task force that you would chair and permit the public, including all stakeholders, to participate in the work of this group.

Finally, concerning reform, it is my understanding from the testimony I heard that DCJS feels that more than the current 40 hours of training is required to ensure that SCOPS are properly trained to perform their duties. While I believe that 40 hours may be sufficient, as evidenced by the good performance of the SCOP community in Virginia, DCJS could not tell us at the hearing how many hours would be appropriate. Therefore, it

seems to me, more prudent that the immediate work undertaken by the task force would address the training component that DCJS seeks, including associated curricula so that the cost of such an expanded program can be fully appreciated prior to implementing the program through legislation. This may take more than one year to complete but given the scope of this bill, a more deliberate approach is warranted.

Pursuant to your decision, I would also like to suggest a bipartisan representation of legislation for the Militia Police and Public Safety Committee to participate in the work of such task force.

Warm regards,

L. Scott Lingham

cc:

Senator Thomas Norment