

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2024 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4929

By Delegate Foster

[Introduced January 19, 2024; Referred to the
Committee on Health and Human Resources then the
Judiciary]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §16-3-1, §16-3-2, and §16-3-3 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as
2 amended, all relating to the prevention and control of communicable and other infectious
3 diseases; transferring authority and powers of the State Director of Health to the Secretary
4 of the Department of Health; removing the ability to arrest and detain persons to enforce
5 certain regulations; removing the conditions requiring the county or municipality to pay
6 expenses relating to communicable diseases; removing the penalties for violations; and
7 establishing penalties for persons who fail to stop to have goods inspected for
8 communicable diseases.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

**ARTICLE 3. PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF COMMUNICABLE AND OTHER
INFECTIOUS DISEASES.**

**§16-3-1. ~~State Director~~ Secretary of the Department of Health Authority to quarantine and to
enforce regulations; ~~State Board of Health Authority~~ to issue regulations to control
infectious or contagious diseases.**

1 The ~~State Director of Health~~ Secretary of the Department of Health is empowered to
2 establish and strictly maintain quarantine at such places as he or she may deem proper and forbid
3 and prevent the assembling of the people in any specific place, when the ~~State Director of Health~~
4 Secretary or any county or municipal health officer deems that the public health and safety so
5 demand, and the ~~state board of health~~ Secretary of the Department of Health may adopt rules and
6 regulations to obstruct and prevent the introduction or spread of smallpox or other communicable
7 or infectious diseases into or within the state ~~and the state director of health shall have the power~~
8 ~~to enforce these regulations by detention and arrest, if necessary.~~ The ~~State Director of Health~~
9 ~~shall have power to~~ Secretary may enter into any town, city, factory, railroad train, steamboat or
10 other place whatsoever, and enter upon and inspect private property for the purpose of
11 investigating the sanitary and hygienic conditions and the presence of cases of infectious

12 diseases, and may, at his or her discretion, take charge of any epidemic or endemic conditions,
13 and enforce such regulations as the ~~state board of health~~ Secretary may prescribe. ~~All expenses~~
14 ~~incurred in controlling any endemic or epidemic conditions shall be paid by the county or~~
15 ~~municipality in which such epidemic occurs~~

**§16-3-2. Powers of county and municipal boards of health to establish quarantine; penalty
for violation.**

1 The county board of health of any county may declare quarantine therein, or in any
2 particular district or place therein, whenever in their judgment it is necessary to prevent the spread
3 of any communicable or infectious disease prevalent therein, or to prevent the introduction of any
4 communicable or infectious disease prevailing in any other state, county or place, and of any and
5 all persons and things likely to spread such infection. As soon as such quarantine is established
6 ~~such~~ the board shall, in writing, inform the director of health thereof, the duty of whom it shall be to
7 ascertain, as soon as practicable, the necessity therefor, if any exists, and if the State Director of
8 Health finds that no such necessity exists, the same shall, by the said director, be declared raised.
9 The said county board of health ~~shall have power and authority to~~ may enforce such quarantine
10 until the same is raised as aforesaid, or by themselves, and may confine any such infected person,
11 or any person liable to spread such infection, to the house or premises in which he or she resides,
12 or if he or she has no residence in the county, at a place to be provided by them for the purpose;
13 and if it shall become necessary to do so, they shall summon sufficient guard for the enforcement
14 of their orders in the premises. ~~Every person who shall fail or refuse to comply with any order made~~
15 ~~by such board under this section, and every person summoned as such guard who shall, without a~~
16 ~~lawful excuse, fail or refuse to obey the orders and directions of such board in enforcing said~~
17 ~~quarantine, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not less~~
18 ~~than twenty five nor more than \$200~~ In cases of emergency or actual necessity, and when the
19 county commission or corporate authorities are from any cause unable to meet or to provide for
20 the emergency or the necessity of the case ~~all actual expenditures necessary for local and county~~

21 ~~quarantine, as provided for in this section, shall be certified by the county board of health to the~~
 22 ~~county commission, and the whole, or as much thereof as the said commission may deem right~~
 23 ~~and proper, shall be paid out of the county treasury~~ the board of health of any city, town or village
 24 shall have, within the municipality, the same powers and perform the same duties herein conferred
 25 upon and required of the county board of health in their county. So far as applicable the provisions
 26 of this section shall apply to any quarantine established and maintained by the state director of
 27 health pursuant to §16-3-1 of this code.

§16-3-3. Communicable diseases on vessels or trains; offenses; penalty.

1 The State Department of Health, its agents and employees, and the local boards of health,
 2 in the absence of the state department, its agents and employees, when they have reason to
 3 believe that any steamboat or other watercraft navigating the Ohio river or its tributaries in this
 4 state, or any other of the waters of the state, or bordering thereon, is infected with any
 5 communicable disease, may prevent the landing of such boat or craft at any point in this state.
 6 They may also, if they have reason to believe that any railroad train, coach or other vehicle
 7 passing on or along any railroad in this state, contains any person having a communicable disease
 8 or anything infected with contagious matter, detain such train, coach or vehicle at any station or
 9 point on such railroad where it can be done with safety, for a time sufficient to examine the same,
 10 and if found to be so infected, for a time sufficient to disinfect the same; and if the conductor or
 11 person in charge of such train, coach or vehicle, shall willfully fail or refuse to stop the said train,
 12 coach or vehicle for the time aforesaid, he or she shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, ~~punished~~
 13 ~~as prescribed in section two of this article~~ upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not less than \$25
 14 nor more than \$200.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to update the requirements of the state director of health to quarantine and enforce regulations in a specific place, removing certain penalties, and establishing other penalties for failing to stop a train or other vessel for inspections.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.