

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2016 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4319

BY DELEGATES WELD, MCGEEHAN, J. NELSON, COOPER,

IRELAND, LONGSTRETH, ANDERSON AND FRICH

[Introduced January 28, 2016; Referred
to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and Homeland
Security then Finance.]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §59-1-2a of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating
2 to including in the definition of “veteran” active members of the Guard and Reserve
3 components of the Armed Forces of the United States in order to exempt them from fees
4 charged by the Secretary of State.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

1 That §59-1-2a of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended and
2 reenacted to read as follows:

ARTICLE 1. FEES AND ALLOWANCES.

.§59-1-2a. Annual business fees to be paid to the Secretary of State; filing of annual reports; purchase of data.

1 (a) *Definitions.* -- As used in this section:

2 (1) “Annual report fee” means the fee described in subsection (c) of this section that is to
3 be paid to the Secretary of State each year by corporations, limited partnerships, domestic limited
4 liability companies and foreign limited liability companies. After June 30, 2008, any reference in
5 this code to a fee paid to the Secretary of State for services as a statutory attorney in fact shall
6 mean the annual report fee described in this section.

7 (2) “Business activity” means all activities engaged in or caused to be engaged in with the
8 object of gain or economic benefit, direct or indirect, but does not mean any of the activities of
9 foreign corporations enumerated in subsection (b), section one thousand five hundred one, article
10 fifteen, chapter thirty-one-d of this code, except for the activity of conducting affairs in interstate
11 commerce when activity occurs in this state, nor does it mean any of the activities of foreign limited
12 liability companies enumerated in subsection (a), section one thousand three, article ten, chapter
13 thirty-one-b of this code, except for the activity of conducting affairs in interstate commerce when
14 activity occurs in this state.

15 (3) “Corporation” means a “domestic corporation”, a “foreign corporation” or a “nonprofit
16 corporation”.

17 (4) "Deliver or delivery" means any method of delivery used in conventional commercial
18 practice, including, but not limited to, delivery by hand, mail, commercial delivery and electronic
19 transmission.

20 (5) "Domestic corporation" means a corporation for profit which is not a foreign corporation
21 incorporated under or subject to chapter thirty-one-d of this code.

22 (6) "Domestic limited liability company" means a limited liability company which is not a
23 foreign limited liability company under or subject to chapter thirty-one-b of this code.

24 (7) "Foreign corporation" means a for-profit corporation incorporated under a law other
25 than the laws of this state.

26 (8) "Foreign limited liability company" means a limited liability company organized under
27 a law other than the laws of this state.

28 (9) "Limited partnership" means a partnership as defined by section one, article nine,
29 chapter forty-seven of this code.

30 (10) "Nonprofit corporation" means a nonprofit corporation as defined by section one
31 hundred fifty, article one, chapter thirty-one-e of this code.

32 (11) "Registration fee" means the fee for the issuance of a certificate relating to the initial
33 registration of a corporation, limited partnership, domestic limited liability company or foreign
34 limited liability company described in subdivision (2), subsection (a), section two of this article.
35 The term "initial registration" also means the date upon which the registration fee is paid.

36 (12) "Veteran" means the term as defined by subsection (a), section seven, article one,
37 chapter nine-a of this code. Notwithstanding ~~anything~~ any provision in this code to the contrary, a
38 veteran must be honorably discharged or under honorable conditions, and as described in 38 U.
39 S. C. §101. For purposes of this section, and section two of this article, the term "veteran" includes
40 active members of the Guard and Reserve components of the Armed Forces of the United States.

41 (13) "Veteran-owned business" means a business that meets the following criteria:

42 (A) Is at least fifty-one percent unconditionally owned by one or more veterans; or

43 (B) In the case of a publically owned business, at least fifty-one percent of the stock is
44 unconditionally owned by one or more veterans.

45 (b) *Required payment of annual report fee and filing of annual report.* -- After June 30,
46 2008, no corporation, limited partnership, domestic limited liability company or foreign limited
47 liability company may engage in any business activity in this state without paying the annual report
48 fee and filing the annual report as required by this section.

49 (c) *Annual report fee.* -- After June 30, 2008, each corporation, limited partnership,
50 domestic limited liability company and foreign limited liability company engaged in or authorized
51 to do business in this state shall pay an annual report fee of \$25 for the services of the Secretary
52 of State as attorney-in-fact for the corporation, limited partnership, domestic limited liability
53 company or foreign limited liability company and for such other administrative services as may be
54 imposed by law upon the Secretary of State. The fee is due and payable each year after the initial
55 registration of the corporation, limited partnership, domestic limited liability company or foreign
56 limited liability company with the annual report described in subsection (d) of this section on or
57 before the dates specified in subsection (e) of this section. The fee is due and payable each year
58 with the annual report from corporations, limited partnerships, domestic limited liability companies
59 and foreign limited liability companies that paid the registration fee prior to July 1, 2008, on or
60 before the dates specified in subsection (e) of this section. The annual report fees received by
61 the Secretary of State pursuant to this subsection shall be deposited by the Secretary of State in
62 the general administrative fees account established by section two of this article.

63 (d) *Annual report.* --

64 (1) After June 30, 2008, each corporation, limited partnership, domestic limited liability
65 company and foreign limited liability company engaged in or authorized to do business in this
66 state shall file an annual report. The report is due each year after the initial registration of the
67 corporation, limited partnership, domestic limited liability company or foreign limited liability
68 company with the annual report fee described in subsection (c) of this section on or before the

69 dates specified in subsection (e) of this section. The report is due each year from corporations,
70 limited partnerships, domestic limited liability companies and foreign limited liability companies
71 that paid the registration fee prior to July 1, 2008, on or before the dates specified in subsection
72 (e) of this section.

73 (2) (A) The annual report shall be filed with the Secretary of State on forms provided by
74 the Secretary of State for that purpose. The annual report shall, in the case of corporations,
75 contain: (i) The address of the corporations principal office; (ii) the names and mailing addresses
76 of its officers and directors; (iii) the name and mailing address of the person on whom notice of
77 process may be served; (iv) the name and address of the corporations parent corporation and of
78 each subsidiary of the corporation licensed to do business in this state; (v) in the case of limited
79 partnerships, domestic limited liability companies and foreign limited liability companies, similar
80 information with respect to their principal or controlling interests as determined by the Secretary
81 of State or otherwise required by law to be reported to the Secretary of State; (vi) the county or
82 county code in which the principal office address or mailing address of the company is located;
83 (vii) business class code; and (viii) any other information the Secretary of State considers
84 appropriate.

85 (B) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the Secretary of State shall,
86 upon request of any person, disclose, with respect to corporations: (i) The address of the
87 corporations principal office; (ii) the names and addresses of its officers and directors; (iii) the
88 name and mailing address of the person on whom notice of process may be served; (iv) the name
89 and address of each subsidiary of the corporation and the corporations parent corporation; (v) the
90 county or county code in which the principal office address or mailing address of the company is
91 located; and (vi) the business class code. The Secretary of State shall provide similar information
92 with respect to information in its possession relating to limited partnerships domestic limited
93 liability companies and foreign limited liability companies, similar information with respect to their
94 principal or controlling interests.

95 (e) *Annual reports and fees due July 1.* -- Each domestic and foreign corporation, limited
96 partnership, limited liability company and foreign limited liability company shall file with the
97 Secretary of State the annual report and pay the annual report fee by July 1 of each year.

98 (f) *Deposit of fees.* -- The annual report fees received by the Secretary of State pursuant
99 to this section shall be deposited by the Secretary of State in the general administrative fees
100 account established by section two of this article.

101 (g) (1) *Duty to pay.* -- It shall be the duty of each corporation, limited partnership, limited
102 liability company and foreign limited liability company required to pay the annual report fees
103 imposed under this article, to remit them with a properly completed annual report to the Secretary
104 of State, and if it fails to do so it shall be subject to the late fees prescribed in subsection (h) of
105 this article and dissolution or revocation, pursuant to this code: *Provided*, That before dissolution
106 or revocation for failure to pay fees may occur, the Secretary of State shall notify the entity by
107 certified mail, return receipt requested, of its failure to pay, all late fees or bad check fees
108 associated with the failure to pay and the date upon which dissolution or revocation will occur if
109 all fees are not paid in full. The certified mail required by this subdivision shall be postmarked at
110 least thirty days before the dissolution or revocation date listed in the notice.

111 (2) *Bad check fee.* -- If any corporation, limited partnership, limited liability company or
112 foreign limited liability company submits payment by check or money order for the annual report
113 fee imposed under this article and the check or money order is rejected because there are
114 insufficient funds in the account or the account is closed, the Secretary of State shall assess a
115 bad check fee to the corporation, limited partnership, limited liability company or foreign limited
116 liability company that is equivalent to the service charge paid by the Secretary of State due to the
117 rejected check or money order. The bad check fee assessed under this subdivision shall be
118 deposited into the account or accounts from which the Secretary of State paid the service charge.

119 (h) *Late fees.* --

120 (1) The following late fees shall be in addition to any other penalties and remedies

121 available elsewhere in this code:

122 (A) *Administrative late fee.* -- The Secretary of State shall assess upon each corporation,
123 limited partnership, limited liability company and foreign limited liability company delinquent in the
124 payment of an annual report fee or the filing of an annual report an administrative late fee in the
125 amount of \$50.

126 (B) *Administrative late fees for nonprofit corporations.* -- The Secretary of State shall
127 assess each nonprofit corporation delinquent in the payment of an annual report fee or the filing
128 of an annual report an administrative late fee in the amount of \$25.

129 (2) The Secretary of State shall deposit the first \$25,000 of fees collected under this
130 subsection into the General Administrative Fees Account established in subsection (h), section
131 two of this article and shall deposit any additional fees collected under this section into the General
132 Revenue Fund of the state.

133 (i) *Reports to Tax Commissioner; suspension, cancellation or withholding of business*
134 *registration certificate.* --

135 (1) The Secretary of State shall, within twenty days after the close of each month, make a
136 report to the Tax Commissioner for the preceding month, in which he or she shall set out the
137 name of every business entity to which he or she issued a certificate to conduct business in the
138 State of West Virginia during that month. The report shall set out the names and addresses of all
139 corporations, limited partnerships, limited liability companies and foreign limited liability
140 companies to which he or she issued certificates of change of name or of change of location of
141 principal office, dissolution, withdrawal or merger. If the Secretary of State fails to make the report,
142 it shall be the duty of the Tax Commissioner to report such failure to the Governor. A writ of
143 mandamus shall lie for correction of such failure.

144 (2) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this code to the contrary, upon receipt of notice
145 from the Secretary of State that a corporation, limited partnership, limited liability company and
146 foreign limited liability company is more than thirty days delinquent in the payment of annual report

147 fees or in the filing of an annual report required by this section, the Tax Commissioner may
148 suspend, cancel or withhold a business registration certificate issued to or applied for by the
149 delinquent corporation, limited partnership, limited liability company or foreign limited liability
150 company until the same is paid and filed in the manner provided for the suspension, cancellation
151 or withholding of business registration certificates for other reasons under article twelve, chapter
152 eleven of this code.

153 (j) *Purchase of data.* -- The Secretary of State will provide electronically, for purchase, any
154 data maintained in the Secretary of States Business Organizations Database. For the electronic
155 purchase of the entire Business Organizations Database, the cost is \$12,000. For the purchase
156 of the monthly updates of the Business Organizations Database, the cost is \$1,000 per month.
157 The fees received by the Secretary of State pursuant to this subsection shall be deposited by the
158 Secretary of State in the general administrative fees account established by section two of this
159 article.

160 (k) The Secretary of State is authorized to collect the service fee per transaction, if any,
161 charged for an online service from any customer who purchases data or conducts transactions
162 through an online service.

163 (l) *Rules.* -- The Secretary of State may propose rules for legislative approval, in
164 accordance with the provisions of article three, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code, to implement
165 this article.

166 (m) A veteran-owned business, as defined in paragraph thirteen, subsection (a) of this
167 section, commenced on or after July 1, 2015, is exempt from paying the annual report fee,
168 required by this section, for the first four years after its initial registration: *Provided*, That a veteran-
169 owned business is not exempt from any filing deadlines or other fees required by this section.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to include in the definition of "veteran" active member of
the Guard and Reserve components of the Armed Forces of the United States in order to
exempt them from fees charged by the Secretary of State.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law

and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.