

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2019 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 512

BY SENATORS JEFFRIES, WELD, BOSO, AND LINDSAY

[Introduced February 4, 2019; Referred
to the Committee on the Judiciary]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §47-26-1, §47-26-2, and §47-26-3 of the Code of West Virginia,
2 1931, as amended; and to amend said code by adding thereto a new section, designated
3 §47-26-2a, all relating to the regulation of pawnbrokers; removing an exception for certain
4 transactions from the report required of all pawnbrokers; requiring all pawnbrokers to be
5 equipped with certain surveillance equipment and signage; prohibiting pawnbrokers from
6 doing business with certain persons; prohibiting pawnbrokers from purchasing certain
7 items or transacting with certain items from anyone; creating misdemeanor offenses for
8 certain violations; and increasing the penalties for existing criminal offenses related to
9 pawnbrokers.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 26. PAWNBROKERS.

§47-26-1. Definitions.

1 As used in this section:

2 “General-use prepaid gift card” means a card, code or other device that is issued on a
3 prepaid basis in a specified amount which may or may not be increased or reloaded in exchange
4 for payment and which is redeemable upon presentation at multiple unaffiliated merchants for
5 goods or services or usable at an automated teller machine.

6 “Gift certificate” means a card, code or other device that is issued on a prepaid basis in a
7 specific amount that may not be increased or reloaded in exchange for payment and is
8 redeemable upon presentation to a single merchant or an affiliated group of merchants for goods
9 or services.

10 “Store gift card” means a card, code or other device that is issued on a prepaid basis in a
11 specified amount, whether or not that amount may be increased or reloaded, either in exchange
12 for payment or as a means of refunding money which is redeemable upon presentation at a single
13 merchant or an affiliated group of merchants for goods and services.

14 “Pawnbroker” means any person, partnership, association or corporation or employee

15 thereof advancing money in a pawn transaction in exchange for collateral in the property of the
16 pledgor. Pawnbroker does not mean any bank which is regulated by the West Virginia Division of
17 Financial Institutions; the Comptroller of the Currency of the United States; the Federal Deposit
18 Insurance Corporation; the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System or any other
19 federal or state authority; and all affiliates thereof and any bank or savings and loan association
20 whose deposits or accounts are eligible for insurance by the Bank Insurance Fund or the Savings
21 Association Insurance Fund or other fund administered by the Federal Deposit Insurance
22 Corporation all affiliates thereof, any state or federally chartered credit union, and any finance
23 company subject to licensing and regulation by the West Virginia Division of Financial Institutions.

24 (b) "Pawn transaction" means a transaction between a pawnbroker and a pledgor where
25 the pledgor's property is placed in the possession of the pawnbroker as security for money or
26 other valuable consideration provided to the pledgor on the condition that the pledgor may pay a
27 pawn charge and redeem his or her property within a predetermined time frame. Pawn
28 transactions do not include those transactions where securities, titles or printed evidence of
29 indebtedness are used as security for the transaction.

30 (c) "Pledgor" means a person who delivers the pledge into the possession of a
31 pawnbroker.

32 (d) "Purchase" or "purchase transaction" means the transfer and delivering of goods by a
33 person to a pawnbroker by acquisition for value, consignment or trade for other goods. This
34 definition does not include purchases by pawnbrokers of items not used or intended for resale,
35 consignment or trade of the item to another.

§47-26-2. Purchase and Pawn Transaction Records.

1 (a) All pawnbrokers shall make and maintain a transaction report on all purchase or pawn
2 transactions. ~~except for refinance pawn transactions or merchandise bought from a manufacturer~~
3 ~~or wholesaler with an established place of business~~ The required transaction report shall include
4 the following:

5 (1) The date of the transaction;

6 (2) The name of the seller;

7 (3) The name of the clerk who handled the transaction;

8 (4) The corresponding pawn ticket number;

9 (5) The terms of the loan or purchase;

10 (6) A copy of the seller's or pledger's government photo identification and type; *Provided,*

11 That if the seller or pledger does not have a government issued photo identification, the
12 pawnbroker shall have a photograph of the seller or pledger; and

13 (7) A detailed description of the property.

14 (b) For purposes of meeting the requirements of subsection (a) of this section, a detailed
15 description of the property shall include the following:

16 (1) In the case of firearms, the description shall include the brand, model, caliber, type,
17 and serial number;

18 (2) In the case of jewelry, the type of jewelry presented, the karat weight, whether it is
19 made of white gold, yellow gold or other precious metals, and other description of the stones,
20 shape, cut, and oddities, etc. which are sufficient to describe the article of jewelry;

21 (3) In the case of other types of articles and property, the description shall include the type
22 of article, brand, model and serial number on the article, or any other such identifying information
23 or description to which is sufficient to specifically describe the item or property.

24 (c) The seller or pledger shall be required to sign the pawn transaction statement or
25 purchase transaction statement; and a signed statement from the seller or pledger affirming
26 ownership shall appear on the bill of sale or pawn ticket that is completed by the seller or pledger
27 at the time of the transaction.

28 (d) The pawnbroker shall maintain the original of all purchase or pawn transaction
29 statements for three years, and shall make the original copies of the purchase or pawn transaction
30 statements available for inspection by law-enforcement officers and law-enforcement agencies

31 upon request during the posted hours of operation of the business.

32 (e) A pawnbroker shall equip each location at which it conducts pawn transactions with
 33 electronic monitoring/recording equipment that records all public and nonpublic entrances and
 34 exits to the building and all transactions being conducted. The equipment shall consist of video
 35 or digital imaging of a sufficient resolution and clarity to be easily monitored and reviewed on
 36 playback. All business locations shall keep an archive of video for 60 days. A sign of sufficient
 37 size informing a customer of a videotaping shall be located in a conspicuous place on the business
 38 premises.

39 ~~(e)~~ (f) The information required to be collected pursuant to this section is confidential, is
 40 not public record, and should only be disclosed as provided in this section or otherwise provided
 41 by law: *Provided*, That the confidential nature of this information in no way impedes the
 42 pawnbroker's duty to accurately collect and timely provide the information to law enforcement.

§47-26-2a. Prohibitions.

1 A pawnbroker, in the course of business, may not purchase, accept in pawn, receive in
 2 trade or exchange for goods:

3 (1) Articles from a minor;

4 (2) Articles from a person who appears to be intoxicated or under the influence of a
 5 controlled substance at the time of the transaction;

6 (3) Articles that the pawnbroker knows, or has reason to believe, are stolen;

7 (4) A general-use prepaid gift card, store gift card, store credit, merchandise card, gift
 8 certificate, activated phone card or similar items; or

9 (5) Property with serial numbers, personalized inscriptions or initials or other identifying
 10 marks that the pawnbroker knows, or has reason to believe, have been intentionally altered or
 11 rendered illegible.

§47-26-3. Penalties; pawnbroker.

1 A pawnbroker who violates the provisions of this article is guilty of a misdemeanor and,

- 2 upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not less than ~~\$100~~ \$250 and not more than ~~\$200~~ \$1,000
3 for each offense. A pawnbroker convicted of a third violation of this article within a two-year period
4 shall be confined in jail for up to 30 days in addition to the fine assessed.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to better regulate pawnbrokers.

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