

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2021 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 2229

BY DELEGATE FLEISCHAUER

[Introduced February 10, 2021; Referred to the
Committee on Small Business, Entrepreneurship and
Economic Development then the Judiciary]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §61-3-51 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating
 2 to requiring persons who are in the business of purchasing precious metals and precious
 3 gems to photograph those purchases and to transmit the photographs to law-enforcement
 4 authorities; and lessening the criminal penalty from a felony to a misdemeanor.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 3. CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY.

§61-3-51. Precious metals and gem dealers; records; prohibited acts.

1 (a) Each person, firm or corporation in the business of purchasing precious metals or
 2 precious gems, or both, for any purpose other than personal, family or household use, ~~shall be~~ is
 3 subject to the provisions of this section. Each such purchaser shall secure from the seller of the
 4 precious metal or precious gem sufficient proof of lawful ownership or ~~a sworn~~ an affidavit of
 5 ownership, the original of which shall be retained by the purchaser.

6 (b) Each such purchaser of a precious metal or precious gem shall truly and accurately
 7 list each purchase in a permanent record book clearly showing the kind, character and amount of
 8 metal or gem purchased, any special or unique quality or item of description concerning the metal
 9 or gem purchased; the date of purchase, the full name and residence address and mailing
 10 address of the seller, and any telephone number of the seller. ~~Such~~ The record book shall be
 11 open to inspection by any law-enforcement officer in this state during normal business hours of
 12 the purchaser. If any such purchase is made within a municipality, the purchaser shall report all
 13 the information required by this section in writing to the chief of the police department of the
 14 municipality within 24 hours of the purchase. If any such purchase is made outside of a
 15 municipality, the purchaser shall report all the information required by this section in writing to the
 16 sheriff of the county wherein the purchase was made within 24 hours of the purchase. The
 17 information required by this section shall be preserved for a period of not less than three years.

18 (c) Each purchaser of a precious metal or precious gem shall take digital photographs of
 19 each item of precious metal or gem. The photographs shall be of maximum quality and sufficient

20 number so that a specific item of precious metal or gem is clearly distinguishable from another
21 item of metal or gem of similar size, type and quality. The purchaser shall, in addition to keeping
22 copies in his or her own files, electronically transmit the photographs to the local police
23 department, the sheriff of the county where the transaction occurred and the State Police within
24 24 hours of the transaction.

25 ~~(e)~~ (d) Each such purchaser of a precious metal or precious gem ~~shall~~ may not, for a period
26 of 10 calendar days after the purchase, dispose of such metal or gem, remove such metal or gem
27 from the state or alter in any way the form or substance of such metal or gem.

28 ~~(d)~~ (e) As used in this section, "precious metal" means any gold, silver, platinum or other
29 valuable metal; and "precious gem" means any diamond, pearl, emerald, ruby, sapphire or similar
30 precious stone.

31 ~~(e)~~ (f) Any person, firm or corporation violating any provision of this section ~~shall be~~ is
32 guilty of a ~~felony~~ misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall ~~be confined in the penitentiary~~
33 ~~not less than one nor more than two years, or, in the discretion of the court be confined in jail not~~
34 more than one year or shall be fined not less than \$100 nor more than \$5,000, or both fined and
35 ~~so confined. in either the penitentiary or jail, all in the discretion of the court~~

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to require persons who are in the business of purchasing precious metal and precious gems to photograph those purchases and to transmit the photographs to law-enforcement authorities. The bill also lessens the criminal penalty from a felony to a misdemeanor.

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