

# Virginia State Crime Commission

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## Castration of Sexually Violent Predators

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2006

## **Castration of Sexually Violent Predators**

Senator Hanger introduced Senate Bill 679 during the 2006 Session of the General Assembly to create a voluntary program that would allow prisoners considered to be a "sexually violent predator" to choose physical castration in lieu of involuntary commitment to a state mental facility. This bill was continued in the Senate Health and Education Committee and referred, by letter, to the Commission for further study.

Castration of sexually violent offenders can be achieved by physical means, such as surgically removing the testicles or ovaries, or chemically, by administering hormones or other drugs to lower testosterone levels. Currently, there are nine states (California, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Louisiana, Montana, Oregon, Texas, and Wisconsin) that have castration programs - physical, chemical, or a combination of both. There are a few potential constitutional issues with castration, such as violations of the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment ban on "cruel and unusual" punishment, violation of equal protection requirements, and violation of "due process" requirements. In addition to these legal issues, there are very few comprehensive, controlled studies that address the effectiveness of castration, especially those that focus on recidivism.

The Commission declined to make any recommendations concerning a voluntary castration program without any further data on recidivism rates.