

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: CS/HB 581 Career Offenders
SPONSOR(S): Criminal & Civil Justice Appropriations Committee and Criminal & Civil Justice Policy Council;
Sciotti
TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 1094

	REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR
1)	Public Safety & Domestic Security Policy Committee	8 Y, 0 N	Kramer	Kramer
2)	Criminal & Civil Justice Policy Council	11 Y, 1 N, As CS	Kramer	Havlicak
3)	Criminal & Civil Justice Appropriations Committee	7 Y, 0 N	McAuliffe	Davis
4)				
5)				

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Section 775.261, F.S., creates the Florida Career Offender Registration Act. The act requires offenders who have been sentenced as a habitual violent felony offender, a violent career criminal, a three-time violent felony offender or as a prison releasee reoffender to register with law enforcement as a "career offender". The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) maintains a statewide database containing information regarding career offenders.

The bill makes it a third degree felony for any person who has reason to believe that a career offender is not complying with the requirements of section 775.261, F.S., with the intent to assist the career offender in eluding a law enforcement agency that is seeking to question or to arrest the career offender for his or her noncompliance with the requirements of the section, and who:

- (a) Withholds information from, or does not notify, the law enforcement agency about the career offender's noncompliance with the requirements of the section, and, if known, the whereabouts of the career offender;
- (b) Harbors, or attempts to harbor, or assists another person in harboring or attempting to harbor, the career offender;
- (c) Conceals or attempts to conceal, or assists another person in concealing or attempting to conceal, the career offender; or
- (d) Provides information to the law enforcement agency regarding the career offender that the person knows to be false information.

On February 25, 2009, the Criminal Justice Impact Conference determined that the bill would have an insignificant prison bed impact on the Department of Corrections.

HOUSE PRINCIPLES

Members are encouraged to evaluate proposed legislation in light of the following guiding principles of the House of Representatives

- Balance the state budget.
- Create a legal and regulatory environment that fosters economic growth and job creation.
- Lower the tax burden on families and businesses.
- Reverse or restrain the growth of government.
- Promote public safety.
- Promote educational accountability, excellence, and choice.
- Foster respect for the family and for innocent human life.
- Protect Florida's natural beauty.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Section 775.261, F.S., creates the Florida Career Offender Registration Act. The act requires offenders who have been sentenced under specified sentencing statutes to register as a "career offender". Specifically, the act defines the term "career offender" as a person who is designated as a habitual violent felony offender,¹ a violent career criminal,² a three-time violent felony offender³ or as a prison releasee reoffender⁴. These sentencing statutes have different criteria but, in general, are used to sentence offenders who have been convicted on multiple occasions of certain felony offenses to enhanced sentences.

A career offender released from a sanction⁵ imposed in this state on or after July 1, 2002 is required to register with the sheriff's office in the county in which the career offender establishes or maintains a permanent or temporary residence within 2 working days of establishing the residence. The career offender is required to provide identifying information to the sheriff such as the offender's name, social security number, age, race, date of birth, address. The sheriff provides the information obtained to FDLE. The department maintains a statewide database and a searchable public website with this information.⁶ The career offender is required to update his or her residence information within 2 working days after any change.⁷ Failure to comply with the requirements of the section is a third degree felony.⁸

According to FDLE, as of March 9, 2009, there are 10,758 career offenders in the registry database. Of that number, 8,593 of the career offenders are incarcerated and 2,165 are living in the community.

The bill makes it a third degree felony⁹ for any person who has reason to believe that a career offender is not complying, or has not complied, with the requirements of the section and who, with the intent to assist the career offender in eluding a law enforcement agency that is seeking to find the career

¹ s. 775.084(1)(b), F.S.

² s. 775.084(1)(d), F.S.

³ s. 775.084(1)(c), F.S.

⁴ s. 775.082(9), F.S.

⁵ For the purposes of this section, the term "sanction" includes but is not limited to, a fine, probation, community control, parole, conditional release, control release or incarceration in a state prison, private correctional facility or local detention facility.

⁶ <http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/coflyer/home.asp>

⁷ s. 775.261(4)(d), F.S.

⁸ s. 775.261(8)(a), F.S.

⁹ A third degree felony is punishable by up to five years imprisonment and a \$5,000 fine. See ss. 775.082 and 775.083, F.S.

offender to question the career offender about, or to arrest the career offender for, his or her noncompliance with the requirements of the section, and:

- (a) Withholds information from, or does not notify, the law enforcement agency about the career offender's noncompliance with the requirements of the section, and, if known, the whereabouts of the career offender;
- (b) Harbors, or attempts to harbor, or assists another person in harboring or attempting to harbor, the career offender;
- (c) Conceals or attempts to conceal, or assists another person in concealing or attempting to conceal, the career offender; or
- (d) Provides information to the law enforcement agency regarding the career offender that the person knows to be false information.

The bill provides that this does not apply if the career offender is incarcerated in or is in the custody of a state correctional facility, a private correctional facility, a local jail or a federal correctional facility. Identical language relating to sexual predators and sexual offenders is currently contained in sections 775.21(10)(g), 943.0435(13), and 944.607(12), F.S.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Amending s. 775.261, F.S.; relating to the Florida Career Offender Registration Act.

Section 2. Providing effective date of October 1, 2009.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

On February 25, 2009, the Criminal Justice Impact Conference determined that the bill would have an insignificant prison bed impact on the Department of Corrections.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

See above.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

This bill appears to be exempt from the requirements of Article VII, Section 18 of the Florida Constitution because it is a criminal law.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

On March 17, 2009, the Criminal & Civil Justice Policy Council adopted an amendment which provides that the subsection created by the bill does not apply if the career offender is incarcerated in or is in the custody of a state correctional facility, a private correctional facility, a local jail or a federal correctional facility.