

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/SB 52 — Security Services at Places of Worship

by Criminal Justice Committee and Senators Gaetz and Osgood

The bill provides that the licensing requirements for private security services are inapplicable to volunteers who provide armed security services on the premises of a church, mosque, synagogue, or other place of worship.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 111-1

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/SB 156 — Criminal Offenses Against Law Enforcement Officers and Other Personnel

by Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice and Senator Leek

The bill expands law enforcement officers' protection from citizens' use or threatened use of force during an arrest or detention. The bill prohibits a person from using or threatening to use force to resist any arrest or detention, or to resist an officer engaged in the performance of his or her official duties, if the officer was acting in good faith and is known, or reasonably appears, to be a law enforcement officer.

“Acting in good faith” means to make sincere and reasonable efforts to comply with legal requirements, even if the arrest, detention, or other act is later found to have been unlawful.

The bill removes language which specifies a law enforcement officer is not justified in using force if an arrest or execution of a legal duty is unlawful and known by the officer to be unlawful.

The bill adds manslaughter to the list of crimes that a person must be sentenced to life imprisonment without the eligibility of release upon conviction, if such offense was committed against specified officers who were engaged in the performance of their official duties.

The bill amends provisions relating to assault or battery on an officer and resisting a law enforcement officer with violence, to specify that such officer must be engaged in the performance of his or her official duties when the offense is committed. The bill also ranks the 3rd degree felony of battery on a law enforcement officer, firefighter, and other specified personnel, as a level 5 in the Offense Severity Ranking Chart.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 31-4; House 103-8

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

SB 168 — Public Nuisances

by Senator Truenow

The bill authorizes any place or premises that has been used as a gambling house on more than two occasions within a 12-month period to be declared as a public nuisance.

Additionally, the bill revises what an abatement ordinance can include by allowing:

- An increase of daily fines up to \$500 if the nuisance activity is not abated within a year with the consideration of the gravity of the public nuisance and any actions taken by the owner when determining the fine amount.
- The removal of the \$15,000 cap on fines.
- The nuisance abatement board to award attorney fees, if requested, to include fees for the time and labor of any legal assistants who contributed nonclerical, meaningful legal support to the matter.
- The nuisance abatement board to retain jurisdiction over a place or premises for renewing periods of one year until the public nuisance is abated.
- An appropriate entity to foreclose on a lien if the lien remains unpaid three months after filing, and mandate the foreclosure if the public nuisance activity is unabated after two years.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 35-0; House 112-0

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/HB 199 — Veterans Affairs

by Judiciary Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Rep. Maney and others (CS/SB 50 by Criminal Justice Committee and Senator Gaetz)

The bill revises the admissions process for veterans treatment court programs. The bill removes the requirement for a defendant to apply to the state attorney for veterans treatment court, and instead authorizes the court, in consultation with the multidisciplinary team, to determine a defendant's eligibility into the program. Any recommendation of the state attorney must be considered.

Additionally, the bill authorizes a sentencing court to place a defendant into a postadjudicatory veterans treatment court program if the offense was a nonviolent felony and the defendant is a servicemember or veteran, and is otherwise eligible. The defendant must be fully advised of the purpose of the program and agree to enter the program. Satisfactory completion of the program must be a condition of probation or community control. Any violation of probation or community control must be heard by the judge presiding over the veterans treatment court.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 110-0

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/CS/SB 212 — Sexual Offenders and Sexual Predators

by Rules Committee; Judiciary Committee; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senator McClain

The bill amends several statutes relating to persons convicted of committing sexual offenses on or after July 1, 2026, or who change their residence on or after that date to:

- Prohibit a person who was convicted of specified sexual offenses in which the victim was younger than 16 years of age from residing within 1,000 feet of a school, child care facility, park, public swimming pool, or playground. The bill creates criminal penalties for violating this prohibition.
- Prohibit a person who is on probation, community control, or conditional release for committing a specified sexual offense in which the victim was under 18 from:
 - Living within 1,000 feet of a public swimming pool;
 - Working or volunteering at a public swimming pool; or
 - Visiting a public swimming pool, without prior approval.

The bill amends existing provisions relating to loitering and prowling by certain persons, to revise restrictions and prohibited conduct. Specifically, the bill:

- Increases the restricted distance for loitering and prowling by such persons from 300 feet to 500 feet of places where children congregate.
- Revises the prohibition on contact with children to clarify that a person may not knowingly contact, communicate with, or approach with the intent to contact or communicate with a person younger than 18 years of age in any public park, playground, or public swimming pool.
- Clarifies that written notification required by persons who intend to be present at a child care facility or school must include that the person has been convicted of a specified sex offense and intends to be present at the school or child care facility.
- Revises exceptions to the prohibition of certain persons being present at child care facilities or schools, by:
 - Specifying the exception to the crime for picking up or dropping of a child only applies if the person is a parent, grandparent, or legal guardian.
 - Adding an exception to the crime if the person is attending religious services.

The bill authorizes a law enforcement officer to arrest a person without a warrant if there is probable cause to believe the person violated loitering or prowling by certain persons in close proximity to children, by knowingly:

- Contacting, communicating with, or approaching with the intent to contact or communicate with a person younger than 18 years of age in any park building or on real property comprising any park, playground, or public swimming pool; or
- Being present in any child care facility or school containing students in prekindergarten through grade 12 or on real property comprising a child care facility or school containing any students in prekindergarten through grade 12 when the child care facility or school is in operation.

The bill requires a state agency or governmental subdivision to conduct a background check of a person to determine if he or she is a sexual predator or sexual offender prior to a person's appointment or employment, at a public swimming pool.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 31-6; House 103-9

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/HB 277 — Domestic Violence and Protective Injunctions

by Judiciary Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Reps. Tendrich, Nix, and others (CS/CS/SB 682 by Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senators Calatayud and Berman)

Domestic violence means any assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, sexual assault, sexual battery, stalking, aggravated stalking, kidnapping, false imprisonment, or any criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death of one family or household member by another family or household member.

The bill revises several statutes related to domestic violence and protective injunctions including:

- Reclassifying a second or subsequent offense of domestic violence to the next degree;
- Reducing the number of prior convictions for a subsequent offense of a violation of any injunction from two prior convictions to one, before the subsequent offense is reclassified to a third degree felony;
- Requiring an officer who has probable cause to believe that a person has violated a military protective order to notify the agency that entered the military protective order;
- Adding threatening to kill or injure a family pet and the existence of a military protective order to the list of factors a judge may consider when determining whether to grant a domestic violence injunction;
- Increasing the dollar amounts for relocation assistance claims for victims of domestic violence from \$1,500 to \$2,500 for a single claim and increasing the lifetime maximum from \$3,000 to \$5,000; and
- Requiring the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to enter injunctions for dating and sexual violence into the statewide injunction verification database.

Domestic Violence Pilot Programs

The bill creates a domestic violence and violation of protective injunction electronic monitoring pilot program in Pinellas County beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2028. Such program allows the court to order electronic monitoring supervision as a condition of probation if there is a no contact order in place for a defendant charged with a misdemeanor offense of domestic violence or a violation of an injunction for protection against domestic violence, sexual violence, or dating violence. Additionally, the court is required to order electronic monitoring as a condition of probation if the court finds that there is clear and convincing evidence that the defendant poses a threat of violence or physical harm to the victim.

Further, the bill creates a felony domestic violence and violation of protective injunction electronic monitoring pilot program in the Sixth Judicial Circuit beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2028. The court may order electronic monitoring as a condition of probation for a defendant charged with a felony offense of domestic violence or felony violation of a protective injunction. The court must order electronic monitoring if the court finds that there is

clear and convincing evidence that the defendant poses a threat of violence or physical harm to the victim.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-0

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/SB 296 — Victims of Domestic Violence and Dating Violence

by Criminal Justice Committee and Senators Berman, Smith, Sharief, Davis, and Harrell

The bill requires the Division of Telecommunications within the Department of Management Services to consult with Enhanced 911 and Next Generation 911 service providers; state, county, and municipal public safety answering points (PSAPs); and state and local public safety agencies to conduct a feasibility study regarding the creation of a web-based 911 alert system for use by victims of domestic and dating violence which is capable of:

- Ensuring real-time data-sharing between PSAPs and law enforcement agencies.
- Creating a unique telephone number for each user which will connect the user to a PSAP.
- Creating a user-generated numerical code or phrase that can be utilized by the user after contacting a PSAP and that indicated the user's need for immediate law enforcement assistance.
- Transmitting specified data to law enforcement agencies when a user calls from his or her unique telephone number and enters his or her numerical code or phrase.

The bill provides terms, requirements for such alert system, and reporting requirements for the feasibility study.

The bill defines "dating violence" to allow a victim of dating violence to apply to participate in the Attorney General's Address Confidentiality Program.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 35-0; House 113-0

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/SB 298 — Public Records/Victims of Domestic and Dating Violence

by Criminal Justice Committee and Senators Berman, Sharief, and Davis

The bill expands public records exemptions for victims of domestic violence who participate in the Attorney General's Address Confidentiality Program to include victims of dating violence. The Address Confidentiality Program protects the addresses, corresponding telephone numbers, and social security numbers of program participants held by the Attorney General's office. Additionally, the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of program participants contained in voter registration and voting records held by the supervisor of elections and the Department of State are also protected. The information may be disclosed under certain circumstances.

The exemption is repealed on October 2, 2031, unless reenacted by the Legislature.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on the same day as SB 296 or any similar legislation. As filed, SB 296 takes effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 35-0; House 112-0

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/HB 325 — Education and Workforce Development for Inmates

by Education & Employment Committee; Careers & Workforce Subcommittee; and Rep. Kendall and others (SB 1300 by Senator Calatayud)

The bill broadens the Department of Transportation's (DOT) ability to expend funds for a workforce development program offered by private educational providers, for certification and training opportunities within the Florida Transportation Academy (Academy).

The bill expands DOT's commercial licensing program within the Academy to include nonviolent inmates who are proficient in English and have two years or less remaining on their sentence. To facilitate this training in DOC correctional institutions and facilities, the bill allows an inmate to be transported in or operate a state-owned vehicle for the purpose of completing program requirements or demonstrating proficiency. At least one certified correctional officer must be present. The program must include training opportunities for Class A and Class B licenses.

Additionally, the bill requires the Correctional Education Program's annual report to include specified information, including but not limited to, the number of inmates who completed career and technical education training and the number of inmates who completed training and were employed within six months after being released from prison.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 36-0; House 112-0

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/HB 359 — Search Warrants

by Judiciary Committee and Reps. Anderson, Gottlieb, and others (CS/SB 442 by Rules Committee and Senator Yarborough)

The bill amends multiple sections of law relating to obtaining search warrants. Specifically, the bill:

- Provides that a judge may authorize a law enforcement officer to appear remotely using audio-video communication technology when seeking a search warrant from the judge.
- Specifies that law enforcement may obtain a search warrant to search an area or areas, using a drone, where evidence that a crime was committed might reasonably be found.
- Expands the circumstances in which a judge may issue a search warrant to authorize this issuance of a warrant to recover a dead body.

Generally, a law enforcement agency must return a search warrant to the issuing court within 10 days, not including the date of issuance. The bill increases the number of days certain search warrants must be returned by to within:

- Twenty days if a search warrant issued to an out-of-state provider for electronic communications data.
- Thirty days if a search warrant is issued to search for and seize specimens from a specific person for DNA analysis and comparison, including blood and saliva samples, or to seize specimens for entry into the DNA database.
- Three hundred sixty five days if a search warrant is issued for a computer, a computer system, or an electronic device, and any data or information contained in such computer, computer system, or electronic device.

The bill specifies a search warrant issued to search for and seize data or information contained in a computer, computer system, or electronic device, the warrant is considered timely executed if the computer, computer system, or electronic device is seized by a law enforcement agency within 10 days of the issuance of the search warrant, not including the date of issuance. A law enforcement agency is not required to complete the analysis or review of data or information contained in a computer, computer system, or electronic device within any specific time if such computer, computer system, or electronic device was timely seized by a law enforcement agency.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 115-0

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/HB 397 — Violations of Pretrial Release Conditions for Violent Crimes

by Judiciary Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Rep. Daley (CS/SB 760 by Criminal Justice Committee and Senator McClain)

This act may be cited as the “Victim Safety in Pretrial Release Act.”

The bill creates a first degree misdemeanor criminal offense when a person willfully violates a no contact order issued as a condition of pretrial release, if the original arrest was for one of the following offenses:

- Murder;
- Manslaughter;
- Assault;
- Aggravated assault;
- Battery;
- Aggravated battery;
- Stalking
- Aggravated stalking;
- Kidnapping;
- False imprisonment;
- Sexual battery;
- Lewd or lascivious offenses committed on or in the presence of persons less than 16;
- Robbery;
- Written or electronic threats to kill or do bodily injury; or
- Any other felony that involves the use or threat of physical force or violence against any individual.

A second or subsequent violation is punishable as a third degree felony. The bill also authorizes a law enforcement officer to arrest a person without a warrant when there is probable cause to believe the person has committed this new crime.

A person who is arrested for this new offense or is on pretrial release for committing one of the above listed offenses and is arrested for a new law violation must be held in custody until his or her first appearance hearing. At such hearing, the court must review the alleged violation and determine whether to order pretrial detention or to grant pretrial release with appropriate conditions. The court must prioritize the safety of the victim and the public, and consider the following factors:

- The nature and severity of the original offense.
- The person’s history of compliance with court orders.
- Any evidence of intent to intimidate, harass, or harm any person.

A law enforcement officer may not be held liable in any civil action for an arrest based on probable cause that the person violated a specified condition of pretrial release.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on October 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 101-8

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

SB 418 — Law Enforcement Officer Interactions with Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder

by Senators Jones and Smith

The bill creates the “Blue Envelope and Blue Card Program” within the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (HSMV) to improve communication between individuals with autism spectrum disorder and law enforcement officers during motor vehicle-related interactions.

The blue envelope is intended to hold a copy of the individual’s important information such as a driver license, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance. The exterior of the blue envelope will identify the individual as having Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), the envelopes will include communication guidelines for officers during interactions with drivers with ASD. The blue card may be digital or a durable wallet sized card and will include communication guidelines for officers during interactions with individuals with ASD. Blue envelopes and blue cards will be available by request from the HSMV or local tax collector beginning January 1, 2027.

The bill creates training for officers relating to individuals with ASD by the Criminal Justice Training Commission to include:

- The nature and manifestation of ASD,
- Techniques for interviewing or interrogating an individual with ASD including legality of statements and protection of rights,
- Techniques for locating an individual with ASD who has run away and is in danger and for returning that individual while causing as little stress as possible to the individual,
- Techniques for recognizing the agency of an individual with ASD while identifying potential abusive or coercive situations,
- De-escalation strategies,
- Techniques for differentiating ASD behaviors from belligerence,
- Impact of officer interactions on ASD individuals, and
- Information on the Blue Envelope and Blue Card Program and “SAFE” designation.

The bill requires that each basic skills course required for law enforcement officers to obtain initial certification include online required training by July 1, 2028. By July 1, 2030, each law enforcement officer must successfully complete such training as part of basic recruit or continued training or education.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 111-0

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/HB 429 — Criteria for Determining Criminal Gang Membership

by Criminal Justice Subcommittee and Reps. Baker, Chamberlin, and others (CS/CS/SB 536 by Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senator Martin)

The bill modifies the definition of a “criminal gang member” as it pertains to criminal investigations, charges against suspected gang members, and the sentencing of criminal gang members, and creates a definition for the term “gang-related language.”

The definition of a “criminal gang member” means a person who meets two or more specified criteria. The criteria added or amended by the bill include that a person:

- Admits in person or on an online platform or social media that he or she is a criminal gang member.
- Is identified or claimed by a criminal gang as one of its members.
- Is identified as a criminal gang member by a parent, guardian, or spouse living with the person.
- Has been observed in the company of one or more known criminal gang members two or more times. Observation in a custodial setting requires a willful association. It is the intent of the Legislature to allow this criterion to be used to identify gang members who recruit and organize in jails, prisons, and other detention settings.
- Has authored any communication indicating gang affiliation or gang activity or accepting responsibility for the commission of any crime by a criminal gang member.
- Uses gang-related language in furtherance of criminal gang-related activity on an online platform or social media.

The term “gang-related language,” means any verbal or written statement that signals gang affiliation, supports gang activity, or uses recognized gang codes, symbols, or terminology associated with criminal organizations. Written statements include any digital or electronic statements, including statements made on any online platform or social media.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on October 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 29-9; House 100-7

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/SB 432 — Intoxicating Substances

by Fiscal Policy Committee and Senator Yarborough

Effective July 1, 2026, the bill exempts xylazine animal drug products approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for veterinary purpose from the list of Schedule I controlled substances. The term “xylazine” means the nonopioid tranquilizer methyl benzene compound frequently used in veterinary medicine as an emetic and sedative with analgesic and muscle relaxant properties. The manufacture, importation, distribution, prescribing, or sale of xylazine for human use is not subject to this exception.

The bill provides that it is a first degree felony, with a 3 year mandatory minimum prison term for selling, manufacturing, delivering, or possessing with the intent to sell, manufacture, or deliver certain forms of xylazine.

Additionally, the bill creates a first degree felony for “trafficking in xylazine.” A person may not knowingly sell, purchase, manufacture, deliver, or bring into this state, or knowingly be in actual or constructive possession of, 28 grams or more of xylazine or any salt thereof, or 28 grams or more of any mixture containing any such substance. An offender convicted of such an offense must be sentenced to a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment and fine, the length and amount of which varies depending upon the amount of xylazine involved in the offense. If the quantity involved is:

- Twenty-eight grams or more, but less than 100 grams, such person must be sentenced to a 3 year mandatory minimum term of imprisonment and ordered to pay a fine of \$100,000.
- One-hundred grams or more, but less than 200 grams, such person must be sentenced to a 7 year mandatory minimum term of imprisonment and ordered to pay a fine of \$100,000.
- Two-hundred grams or more, such person must be sentenced to a 25 year mandatory minimum term of imprisonment and ordered to pay a fine of \$500,000.

The bill prohibits licensed retail nicotine products dealers and their employees from possessing, selling, possessing with intent to sell, delivering, or giving, directly or indirectly, nitrous oxide on or from their licensed premises. A violation is a third degree felony. The bill provides exceptions for grocery stores and supermarkets, but such exceptions do not apply to convenience stores. Finished food products using nitrous oxide solely as a propellant are not prohibited. The Department of Business and Professional Regulation is directed to adopt rules to prevent nitrous oxide misuse for intoxication.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor’s signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2026, except where otherwise provided.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 111-0

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/SB 436 — Felony Battery

by Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senator Leek

The bill expands the list of qualifying prior offenses that allow for the reclassification of misdemeanor battery to a third degree felony. Specifically, the bill adds “resisting an officer with violence” to the list of prior convictions that may trigger felony reclassification.

The bill adds battery on a law enforcement officer resulting in bodily injury to the list of qualifying offenses for prison releasee reoffender status. A prison releasee reoffender is a person who committed any of the specified offenses within 3 years of being released from prison. If a court finds a person to be a prison releasee reoffender the defendant is not eligible for sentencing under the sentencing guidelines and must be sentenced to a specified mandatory prison sentence.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 110-1

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/HB 445 — Dangerous Crimes

by Judiciary Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Rep. Greco and others (CS/CS/SB 928 by Rules Committee; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senator Martin)

The bill cited as “Missy’s Law,” provides that the court must remand a person to custody immediately if the person pleads guilty or nolo contendere to, or is found guilty of, regardless of adjudication, a dangerous crime, and requires such person remain in custody pending sentencing.

This provision applies regardless of whether the person intends to appeal or has filed a notice of appeal. The provision does not apply if the plea or finding of guilt that required the person to be remanded to custody under the new offense has been:

- Vacated;
- Reversed on appeal;
- Set aside by judgment of acquittal; or
- Otherwise nullified.

Additionally the bill adds “any violation related to computer pornography or child exploitation,” to the list of dangerous crimes.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 93-20

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/HB 477 — Drug Paraphernalia

by Criminal Justice Subcommittee and Rep. Salzman and others (CS/SB 646 by Fiscal Policy Committee and Senator Gaetz)

The bill amends the definition of “drug paraphernalia,” to exclude narcotic drug testing products that are used to determine whether a controlled substance contains dangerous fentanyl or fentanyl analogues, or xylazine.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 34-0; House 116-0

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/HB 559 — Animal Welfare

by Criminal Justice Subcommittee and Reps. Chaney, López, J., and others (CS/SB 676 by Fiscal Policy Committee and Senators Arrington and Leek)

The bill creates new third degree felony offenses if a person eighteen years of age or older causes or entices a minor to commit, or in the presence of a minor, commits:

- Aggravated animal cruelty;
- Fighting or baiting animals; or
- Sexual activities involving animals.

The bill amends the Offense Severity Ranking Chart to rank new offenses created by the bill and increase the ranking for the offense of fighting or baiting animals.

A juvenile court must order a minor who commits an animal cruelty offense to undergo a psychological evaluation and, if recommended, receive counseling or treatment for a length of time as prescribed by the juvenile court. The minor's parent or guardian, or the state if the minor is a ward of the state, must pay the cost of such evaluation, counseling, or treatment. If the juvenile court makes a finding of indigency and significant financial hardship, it must waive the fee or reduce it to an amount deemed appropriate. If the minor's parent or guardian willfully refuses to follow the recommended treatment for the minor, the juvenile court may hold the parent or guardian in contempt.

Additionally, the bill updates requirements related to the animal abuse database maintained by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) to:

- Specify information that must include an offender's name, all aliases, date of birth, race, county of conviction, charge or charges, case number, disposition, description of any identifying marks and tattoos, and a photograph taken at the time of booking of each individual who has been convicted of, or who has entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to, regardless of adjudication, an offense of animal cruelty.
- Require each clerk of court and county detention facility to provide such information to the FDLE.
- Require the FDLE to post such information for:
 - Three years from the date of conviction, for a first misdemeanor conviction;
 - Five years from the date of conviction, for a first felony conviction; and
 - Ten years from the date of conviction, for any subsequent conviction.
- Provide a process to allow a person whose conviction has been overturned or who has received a sealing of the criminal history record for which his or her information was publicly posted to petition for the removal of his or her information.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on October 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0

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THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

**CS/SB 590 — Statute of Limitations Period for Violations Involving
Required Reports Concerning Children**

by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee and Senator Bradley

The bill tolls the statute of limitations for the offense of failing to make a mandatory report for known or suspected child abuse, including sexual abuse, abandonment, and neglect until a law enforcement agency or other governmental agency, excluding any institution where the violation occurs, is made aware of the violation. The bill applies to any offense that is not otherwise barred from prosecution on or before July 1, 2026.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 111-0

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/SB 656 — Internet Crimes Against Children Programs

by Criminal Justice Committee and Senator Bradley

The bill renames the Online Sting Operations Grant Program within the Department of Law Enforcement, (FDLE) to the Internet Crimes Against Children Grant Program which supports local law enforcement's work to combat online child exploitation. The bill expands the uses of the funds the FDLE must annually award to local law enforcement affiliates to include overtime pay, travel, investigative or digital forensic training, hardware or software.

The bill also creates the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Funding Program within the FDLE. The funding program is meant to provide a stable funding source for the task forces related to law enforcement's efforts to combat internet crimes against children. Funding appropriated to the program must be distributed with eighty percent of appropriated funds divided equally among task forces, and twenty percent to the FDLE to support its efforts in combating Internet crimes against children.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 113-0

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/HB 757 — School Safety

by Budget Committee; Judiciary Committee; and Reps. Salzman, Rizo, and others (CS/CS/SB 896 by Appropriations Committee; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senator Gaetz)

The bill makes numerous changes relating to the safety of Florida’s Postsecondary institutions.

Guardian Program

The bill expands the Chris Hixon, Coach Aaron Feis, and Coach Scott Beigel School Guardian Program to authorize employees and faculty members to serve as school guardians and carry a firearm on campus at the following institutions:

- Public postsecondary educational institutions;
- Workforce education;
- Florida College System Institutions;
- State universities; and
- All other state-supported postsecondary educational institutions.

A county sheriff must establish a guardian program or contract with another sheriff’s office that has established guardian training programs to meet the demand for such training.

Safety on Postsecondary Campuses

The bill creates the “Active Response and Mitigation of On-Campus Risks (ARMOR) Act” that requires:

- The institutions to establish threat management teams, and in collaboration with appropriate public safety agencies, annually conduct a security risk assessment at each campus using the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool.
- The adoption of active assailant plans and annually certify that all faculty, staff and students have completed active assailant preparedness training.
- The adoption and annual review of a family unification plan, in coordination with local law enforcement and local government.
- The training of faculty to detect and respond to mental health issues and connect students with appropriate services.
- Policies and procedures be adopted to support students, faculty, and staff who are victims of violence, attempted violence, or credible threats.
- Public postsecondary educational institutions to post on their websites and around campus mental health awareness and suicide prevention signs.

The bill requires that public postsecondary educational institutions that do not have their own existing public safety reporting “app” as of July 1, 2026 must promote the use of the mobile suspicious activity reporting tool (FortifyFL), by:

- Advertising it on the institution website,
- Installing it on all mobile devices issued by the institution, and
- Bookmarking the website on all computer devices maintained by the institution.

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Student Records

When a student enrolls in a Florida College System institution or state university, the student's education records must be transferred to the institution or university if his or her records contain:

- Verified reports of serious or recurrent behavior patterns;
- Any threat assessment report;
- Information required by the Florida-specific behavioral threat assessment instrument; or
- Psychological evaluations, treatment plans, or progress notes.

The bill allows state and local agencies and programs that provide services to students experiencing or at risk of an emotional disturbance or a mental illness, including state universities and Florida College System institutions, to share records or information if reasonably necessary to ensure access to appropriate services for the student or to ensure the safety of the student or others.

Discharging a Firearm

The bill creates a second degree felony if a person discharges any weapon or firearm within 1,000 feet of a school, during school hours or during the time of a sanctioned school activity, unless discharged for lawful defense of himself or herself or another or for a lawful purpose. This new offense does not apply to the discharge of a weapon or firearm on private real property within 1,000 feet of a school by the owner of such property or by a person whose presence on such property has been authorized, licensed, or invited by the owner.

A person arrested for discharging any weapon or firearm within 1,000 feet of a school, during school hours or during the time of a sanctioned school activity must be held in custody until brought before the court for admittance to bail. The crime is ranked as a level 6 in the Offense Severity Ranking Chart.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law, except where otherwise provided.

Vote: Senate 26-10; House 88-20

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/CS/HB 913 — Inmate Services

by Health & Human Services Committee; Justice Budget Subcommittee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Rep. Johnson and others (CS/CS/SB 1012 by Appropriations Committee; Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; and Senator Yarborough)

The bill revises provisions relating to the Contractor-Operated Institutions Inmate Welfare Trust Fund to allow funds to be exclusively expended to provide for, or operate the following, at contractor-operated correctional facilities:

- Programs to aid inmates' reintegration into society.
- Environmental health upgrades for facilities, including fixed capital outlay for repairs and maintenance to improve environmental conditions of correctional facilities.

Additionally, the bill requires maintenance and repair deduction fees from contractor-operated correctional facilities to be deposited into the Contractor-Operated Institutions Inmate Welfare Trust Fund.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 34-0; House 105-0

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/HB 1113 — Pub. Rec./Crime Victims

by Criminal Justice Subcommittee and Rep. Tuck and others (CS/SB 350 by Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee and Senator Grall)

The bill revises a public records exemption for victims of crime to include the name or personal identification number, or any other information or record that could be used to locate, intimidate, harass, or abuse the victim. The bill also creates a new public records exemption for specified identifying information of a person who is the victim's family member, next of kin, and lawful representative.

The bill also creates a tiered public records exemption for the name of an officer who became a victim in the course and scope of his or her employment or official duties. This information will be:

- Confidential and exempt for a period of 72 hours immediately following such incident.
- Exempt for additional 60 days after the 72-hour exemption expires.

At the end of the 60-day period, the officer's name is no longer exempt.

The exemption applies to information held by an agency that regularly generates or receives information about a victim or a victim's family member, next of kin, or lawful representative on or after July 1, 2026, and is repealed on October 2, 2031, unless reenacted by the Legislature.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 33-4; House 106-0

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/HB 1153 — Juvenile Justice

by Judiciary Committee; Justice Budget Subcommittee; and Rep. Cobb and others (CS/SB 1734 by Fiscal Policy Committee and Senators Martin and Truenow)

Juvenile Detention Officers and Juvenile Probation Officers

The bill amends multiple statutes relating to Juvenile Detention Officer and Juvenile Probation Officer benefits, medals, and commemorative service awards.

The bill defines “juvenile detention officer” and “juvenile probation officer” and includes such officers in the definition of “officer” in ch. 943, F.S., subjecting such officers to the same standards and training as other officers. The definition includes all certified supervisory personnel but does not include support personnel employed by the employing agency

The bill adds juvenile detention officers and juvenile probation officers to the definition for “law enforcement, correctional, or correctional probation officers” for purposes of death benefits and commemorative service awards.

Specifically, juvenile detention officers and juvenile probation officers are added to the list of law enforcement officers that the Governor may award a Medal of Heroism. The bill also allows any entity that employs or appoints juvenile detention officers and juvenile probation officers to establish a program to award a Medal of Valor to an officer whose actions are extraordinary and expose the officer to peril beyond the call of duty.

Children and Families in Need of Services

The bill exempts the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) from the prohibition against sheltering an unmarried minor without the consent of the minor’s parent or guardian or without notifying a law enforcement officer.

The bill also revises the circumstances under which a child may be placed in a shelter for the purposes of punishment for contempt of court to include when a child is subject to shelter proceedings under ch. 984, F.S., rather than only when a child is adjudicated in need of services. The bill also revises the definition of “family in need of services” to include legal guardians in addition to parents and custodians.

Juvenile Detention Shared Costs

The bill codifies detention cost sharing. Quarterly, the DJJ must review county juvenile detention payments to ensure that counties fulfill their financial responsibilities. If the DJJ determines that a county has not met its obligations, the DJJ must direct the Department of Revenue (DOR) to deduct the amount owed to the DJJ from the revenue sharing funds provided to the county under

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s. 218.28, F.S. The DOR must transfer the funds withheld into the Shared County/State Juvenile Detention Trust Fund. The DOR must ensure that any reduction in amounts distributed does not reduce the amount necessary for the timely payment of principal and interest or compliance with bond covenants. If the county's monthly distribution must be decreased to comply, the DOR must notify the DJJ of the decrease, and the DJJ must bill the affected county for payment of that amount.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 34-0; House 108-0

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/HB 1159 — Sexual Offenses

by Judiciary Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Rep. Jacques and others (CS/SB 1750 by Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice and Senator Martin)

The bill amends numerous sections of Florida Statutes to replace the term “child pornography” with the term “child sexual abuse material.” The change in terms does not make any substantive changes to the definition of “child pornography” or the elements of any criminal offense relating to child pornography.

The bill also amends multiple Florida laws to increase penalties, provide mandatory minimum sentencing and revise crimes related to sex offenses.

Reclassification

The bill revises the circumstances that triggers reclassification for sexual performance by a child, computer pornography, transmission of pornography by electronic device or equipment, and transmission of materials harmful to minors by electronic device or equipment. A violation of one of the above offenses must be reclassified to the next higher degree if the offender:

- Possesses 10 or more, images of any form of child pornography, regardless of content; and
- The content of at least one image contains one or more of the following:
 - A child who is younger than the age 12.
 - Sadomasochistic abuse involving a child.
 - Sexual battery involving a child.
 - Sexual bestiality involving a child.
 - Any motion picture, film, video, or computer-generated motion picture, film, or video involving a child, regardless of length and regardless of whether the motion picture, film, video, or computer-generated motion picture, film, or video contains sound.

Mandatory Minimum Sentences

The bill increases mandatory minimum prison sentences for specified sexual offenses committed by persons previously convicted, or had an adjudication withheld, of a specified sexual offense. Specifically mandatory minimums were enhanced for the following offenses:

- Lewd or lascivious molestation was increased from 10 years to 15 years.
- Use of a child in sexual performance was increased from 20 years to 30 years.
- Soliciting or buying of minors was increased from 20 years to 30 years.

Sexual Performance of a Child

The bill creates the crime of aggravated use of a child younger than 12 years of age in a sexual performance, which is a life felony. A person commits this crime if, knowing the character and content thereof, he or she employs, authorizes, or induces a child younger than 12 to engage

in a sexual performance. A person who was 18 years of age or older at the time of the offense must be sentenced to a mandatory minimum term of 25 years imprisonment.

The crime of use of a child in a sexual performance is increased from a second degree felony to a first degree felony. A person who was 18 years of age or older at the time of the offense must be sentenced to a mandatory minimum term of 15 years imprisonment.

The bill provides a mandatory minimum sentence for the second degree felony crime of promoting a sexual performance by a child. A person who is 18 years of age who is convicted of this offense must be sentenced to a mandatory minimum term of 5 years of imprisonment.

However, a court is not required to impose a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment for offenses relating to sexual performance of a child if the court makes the following written findings related to the sexual performance that forms the basis of the violation:

- The child depicted in the image was 14 years of age or older at the time the image was created;
- The image was created with the depicted child's permission;
- The offender was not more than 4 years older than the depicted child at the time the image was created; and
- The offender did not transmit the image to any third party.

Generated Child Sexual Abuse Material

The bill creates a second degree felony for a person who knew or reasonably should have known that he or she was transmitting generated child sexual abuse material to another person in this state or in another jurisdiction.

Additionally, the crime of generated child sexual abuse material is increased from a third degree felony to a second degree felony.

Sexual Activities Involving Animals

The bill increases the offense of knowingly engaging in sexual conduct with an animal and causing, aiding, or abetting another person to engage in sexual contact with an animal from a third-degree felony to a second-degree felony.

Additionally, the bill requires a court to issue an order prohibiting a person convicted under this section from harboring, owning, possessing, or exercising control over any animal for a minimum of five years after the date of conviction, whereas current law authorizes such an order for up to five years.

Obscenity

The bill increases the crime of possession of a child-like sex doll from a first degree misdemeanor to a third degree felony. A second or subsequent offense is a second degree felony.

Transmission of child sexual abuse material

The bill increases the crime of transmitting child sexual abuse material from a third degree felony to a second degree felony. A person who is 18 years of age or older at the time of the offense must be sentenced to a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment of 5 years.

Additionally, the bill specifies that a person may not be prosecuted for providing a link, access credential, or other information, in good faith, to a law enforcement agency, prosecuting authority, or authorized forensic examiner for the purpose of reporting suspected child sexual abuse material, cooperating with an investigation, preserving evidence, or seeking lawful removal of content.

The bill provides that a court is not required to impose a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment for the offense of transmitting child sexual abuse material if the court makes the following written findings related to the image that forms the basis of the violation:

- The child depicted in the image was 14 years of age or older at the time the image was created;
- The image was created with the depicted child's permission;
- The offender was not more than 4 years older than the depicted child at the time the image was created; and
- The offender did not transmit the image to any third party.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 105-0

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/SB 1332 — Career Offender Registration

by Fiscal Policy Committee and Senator Martin

The bill makes multiple changes to the Florida Career Offender Registration Act, to make the registration requirements for career offenders similar to those for sexual offenders and sexual predators.

Registration

Specifically the bill revises the initial registration of an offender by:

- Requiring an offender complete his or her initial registration in person at a sheriff's office within 48 hours of release or establishing a residence;
- Expanding the list of required information to include employment vehicles, professional licenses, and immigration status;
- Requiring an offender whose place of residence is a motor vehicle, trailer, mobile home or manufactured home, vessel, live-aboard vessel, or houseboat to report specified information to the sheriff's office than directly to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE);
- Clarifying an offender released on or after July 1, 2002, is deemed to be released upon conviction, if no sanction is imposed

Career offenders are required to annually submit any changes to his or her required registration information. The bill also includes continuing reporting requirements for an offender who must within 48 hours report:

- Any change in the offender's permanent or temporary residence;
- Establishing an instate travel residence;
- Vacating a permanent, temporary, or transient residence without establishing another;
- That he or she remains at a permanent, temporary, or transient residence after reporting his or her intent to vacate such residence;
- Before leaving Florida, report intentions of establishing a permanent, temporary, or transient residence in another state;
- A failure to secure or update a driver license or ID card with the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) any name change or change in permanent, temporary, or transient residence;
- Any change in vehicles owned;
- All changes to home and cellular telephone numbers, including added or deleted numbers, and all changes to employment information, including the creation of a new business if self employed.

Local law enforcement agencies, working with the FDLE, must verify, at least annually, the addresses of career offenders who are not under the Department of Corrections (DOC) supervision and allows them to verify the addresses of those who are under the DOC supervision.

Local law enforcement must report any failure by a career offender to comply with registration requirements to the FDLE.

The DOC who is about to release a career offender from its custody must provide the offender's registration information to the FDLE. An offender who is under the supervision of the DOC, but is not incarcerated, must provide the DOC with the career offender registration information within three days of his or her supervision.

If a career offender is in the custody of a local jail, the jail must notify the FDLE within three business days of the offender's intake and again upon release.

If the career offender is under federal supervision, the responsible federal agency may forward to the FDLE any registration information and may indicate whether the information is restricted to law enforcement use or may be used by the FDLE for public notification.

Relief from Registration

A career offender may be considered for removal of the registration requirement if at least 20 years have passed since lawful release from confinement, supervision, or sanction, whichever is later, and the offender has had no arrests during that period. Eligible offenders may petition the criminal division of the circuit court where the career offender designation was originally imposed. Notice of hearing must be given to the state attorney in the circuit in which the petition is filed. The state attorney and the FDLE may present evidence in opposition to the relief.

License Designation

The bill requires career offenders to have "775.261, F.S.," printed on the front of their driver license or ID card. If they have not already received an updated card with this marking, they must report in person at a DHSMV driver license office within 48 hours during their birth month to obtain a renewed or updated card containing the required notation.

Community and Public Notification

The FDLE must maintain current online information for each registered career offender and to provide hotline access for law enforcement to obtain immediate locator and criminal characteristics information. The career offender registration list is a public record, and the FDLE may release this information by any appropriate means.

Penalties

The bill provides additional career offender registration violations to include:

- Failure to make a required report in connection with vacating a permanent residence; and
- Failure to respond to address verification correspondence or knowingly providing false registration information.

The bill specifies that a career offender who commits any act or omission in violation of the the registration requirements may be prosecuted in the county:

- Where the act or omission was committed.
- Of the last registered address of the offender.
- In which the conviction occurred for the offense or offenses that meet the criteria for designating a person as an offender.
- In which he or she was designated an offender.
- Where the offender was released from incarceration.
- Of the intended address of the offender as reported by the offender before his or her release from incarceration.

Each instance of failure to register or report changes to the required information specified constitutes a separate third degree felony.

The bill increases the offense for assisting a career offender in noncompliance from a first degree misdemeanor to a third degree felony.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on October 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 36-1; House 105-4

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/HB 1525 — Lewd or Lascivious Acts

by Judiciary Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Reps. Bankson, Yarkosky, and others (CS/CS/SB 1742 by Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senator Martin)

The bill creates a third degree felony offense of indecent exposure of sexual organs while observing a child. A person commits this offense if that person, while observing a child under 16 years of age for the purpose of his or her own sexual arousal or gratification:

- Intentionally exposes his or her sexual organs in a lewd or lascivious manner; or
- Intentionally performs any sexual act that does not involve actual physical or sexual contact with the child, including, but not limited to, sadomasochistic abuse, sexual bestiality, masturbation, or the simulation of any act involving sexual activity.

It is not a requirement that the person being observed be aware of any specific conduct on the part of the offender or see the offender's sexual organs.

The bill provides an exception for a mother breastfeeding her baby, and an individual who is merely nude in a place provided or set apart for that purpose.

Additionally, the bill repeals s. 800.02, F.S., relating to unnatural lascivious acts.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on October 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 108-0

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

SB 7004 — OGSR/Conviction Integrity Unit Reinvestigation Information

by Criminal Justice Committee

The bill saves from repeal the public records exemption for information and materials generated by a conviction integrity unit while it is reinvestigating cases of previously convicted persons to review plausible claims of actual innocence.

The exemption is subject to the Open Government Sunset Review Act and will repeal October 2, 2026, unless saved from repeal by the Legislature. The bill removes the scheduled repeal, thereby maintaining the exempt status of information and materials generated by a conviction integrity unit while it is reinvestigating a case.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 35-0; House 106-0