

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 1287 Criminal Offenses
SPONSOR(S): Barreiro
TIED BILLS: IDEN./SIM. BILLS: SB 1328

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR
1) Criminal Justice		Kramer	De La Paz
2) Public Safety & Crime Prevention			
3) Appropriations			
4)			
5)			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

HB 1287 provides for increased penalties for offenses committed against an elderly or disabled victim as follows:

- The bill provides for the reclassification of felony offenses committed against an elderly person or disabled adult regardless of whether the offender was aware of the age or infirmity of the victim. Under this provision, a felony committed against an elderly or disabled victim will be reclassified as follows: a third degree felony will be reclassified to a second degree felony; a second degree felony will be reclassified to a first degree felony and a first degree felony will be reclassified to a first degree felony punishable by a life sentence
- The bill also removes language that was adopted during the 2002 session which specifically applied to theft offenses committed against a victim age 65 or older. The bill replaces this language by providing that if the funds, assets, or property involved in a theft from a person 65 years of age or older is valued at \$10,000 or more, the court must impose a mandatory minimum sentence of three years imprisonment.
- The bill also amends the section relating to exploitation of an elderly person or disabled adult to provide that if the funds, assets, or property involved in the exploitation of the elderly person or disabled adult is valued at \$10,000 or more, the court must sentence the offender to a mandatory minimum sentence of three years imprisonment.

It is expected that the sponsor will offer a strike-all amendment. See AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES section for details.

This document does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill sponsor or House of Representatives.

STORAGE NAME: h1287.ps.doc
DATE: March 15, 2003

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. DOES THE BILL:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. Reduce government? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Lower taxes? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Expand individual freedom? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Increase personal responsibility? | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Empower families? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

For any principle that received a "no" above, please explain:

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Reclassification of all felony offenses committed against elderly or disabled: HB 1287 creates section 775.0847 which provides for the reclassification of felony offenses committed upon:

1. a person 65 years of age or older;
2. a person 60 years of age or older¹ who is suffering from the infirmities of aging as manifested by advanced age or organic brain damage, or other physical, mental or emotional dysfunctioning, to the extent that the ability of the person to provide adequately for the person's own care or protection is impaired; or
3. a disabled adult² which is defined as a person 18 years of age or older who suffers from a condition of physical or mental incapacitation due to a developmental disability, organic brain damage, or mental illness, or who has one or more physical or mental limitations that restrict the person's ability to perform the normal activities of daily living

The bill provides that a felony offense committed against a victim listed above will be reclassified as follows:

- A third degree felony will be reclassified to a second degree felony.
- A second degree felony will be reclassified to a first degree felony.
- A first degree felony will be reclassified to a felony of the first degree, punishable by life imprisonment.

The reclassification of these offenses will have the effect of increasing the maximum sentence that a judge can impose for the offense. The maximum sentence for a third degree felony is five years imprisonment; for a second degree felony is fifteen years imprisonment and for a first degree felony is thirty years imprisonment.³

The bill also requires that a felony offense be reclassified regardless of whether the offender knew or had reason to know the age, infirmity or disability of the victim.

Assault or Battery on Victim Age 65 or Older: Currently, section 784.08 provides that when a person is charged with committing assault⁴, aggravated assault⁵, battery⁶ or aggravated battery⁷ against a victim age 65 or older, the assault or battery offense is reclassified as follows:

¹ This definition is contained in s. 825.101(5), F.S.

² This definition is contained in s. 825.101(4), F.S.

³ s. 775.082, F.S.

⁴ An assault is an intentional, unlawful threat by word or act to do violence to the person of another, coupled with an apparent ability to do so, and doing some act which creates a well-founded fear in such other person that such violence is imminent. § 784.011, F.S.

- In the case of assault, from a misdemeanor of the second degree to a misdemeanor of the first degree.
- In the case of battery, from a misdemeanor of the first degree to a felony of the third degree.
- In the case of aggravated assault, from a felony of the third degree to a felony of the second degree.
- In the case of aggravated battery, from a felony of the second degree to a felony of the first degree.

The section also applies a three year minimum mandatory sentence⁸ against an offender who has been convicted of aggravated assault or aggravated battery against an elderly person.

HB 1287 amends this section to remove the reclassification for aggravated assault and aggravated battery offenses committed against an elderly person.

Theft: The theft statute provides the following:

A person commits theft if he or she knowingly obtains or uses or endeavors to obtain or to use, the property of another with intent to either temporarily or permanently:

1. Deprive the other person of a right to the property or a benefit from the property or
2. Appropriate the property to his or her own use or to the use of any person not entitled to the use of the property.

s. 812.014, F.S.

Theft of property valued between \$100 and \$300 is considered "petit theft" and is a first degree misdemeanor. Theft of property worth between \$300 and \$20,000 is a third degree felony.⁹ Theft of property worth more than \$20,000 but less than \$100,000 is a second degree felony. Theft of property worth more than \$100,000 is a first degree felony.

During the 2002 session, legislation passed¹⁰ which specifically applied to theft offenses committed against a victim age 65 or older. As a result, section 812.0145, requires the reclassification of penalties for theft when the offender knows or has reason to believe that the victim is over the age of 65, as follows:

⁵ An aggravated assault is an assault with a deadly weapon without intent to kill or with an intent to commit a felony. § 784.021, F.S.

⁶ A battery occurs when a person actually and intentionally touches or strikes another person against the will of the other or intentionally causes bodily harm to another person. § 784.03, F.S.

⁷ An aggravated battery occurs when a person in committing battery intentionally or knowingly causes great bodily harm, permanent disability, or permanent disfigurement; or uses a deadly weapon. Aggravated battery also occurs if the victim of the battery was pregnant at the time of the offense and the offender knew or should have known that the victim was pregnant. § 784.045, F.S.

⁸ This provision is contained in s. 784.08(1), F.S.

⁹ Within the third degree felony theft category, the value of the stolen property is further divided and are assigned different rankings in the offense severity ranking chart of the Criminal Punishment Code. Theft of property valued at more than \$300 and less than \$5,000 is a Level 2 offense. Theft of property valued at \$5,000 but less than \$10,000 is a Level 3 offense. Theft of property worth more than \$10,000 but less than \$20,000 is a Level 4 offense. Thus, while the maximum penalty for a theft of any amount of property between \$300 and \$20,000 would have the same maximum sentence of five years in prison, the lowest permissible sentence would depend on the value of the property.

¹⁰ Chapter 2002-162; Passed as HB 835 by Rep. Gardiner.

1. If the "funds, assets, or property involved in the theft" from a person over 65 are valued at \$50,000 or more, the offense is a first degree felony.
2. If the funds, assets or property involved in the theft from a person over 65 is valued at \$10,000 or more but less than \$50,000, the offense is a second degree felony.
3. If the funds, assets or property involved in the theft from a person over 65 is valued at \$300 or more but less than \$10,000, the offense is a third degree felony.

The chapter law also ranked the newly created theft offenses in the offense severity ranking chart of the Criminal Punishment Code. Theft of between \$300 and \$10,000 was ranked in level 3, theft of between \$10,000 and \$50,000 was ranked in level 5 and theft of more than \$100,000 was ranked in level 7.

HB 1287 removes most of the language that was adopted during the 2002 session relating to theft from an elderly person. The bill replaces this language by providing that if the funds, assets, or property involved in a theft from a person 65 years of age or older is valued at \$10,000 or more, the court must impose a mandatory minimum sentence of three years imprisonment. The bill further provides that the minimum mandatory sentence does not apply to the theft of one or more motor vehicles, regardless of their value.

Exploitation of Elderly or Disabled Adult: Section 825.103 provides penalties for the exploitation of an elderly person or disabled adult as follows:

(1) "Exploitation of an elderly person or disabled adult" means:

(a) Knowingly, by deception or intimidation, obtaining or using, or endeavoring to obtain or use, an elderly person's or disabled adult's funds, assets, or property with the intent to temporarily or permanently deprive the elderly person or disabled adult of the use, benefit, or possession of the funds, assets, or property, or to benefit someone other than the elderly person or disabled adult, by a person who:

1. Stands in a position of trust and confidence with the elderly person or disabled adult;
or
2. Has a business relationship with the elderly person or disabled adult; or

(b) Obtaining or using, endeavoring to obtain or use, or conspiring with another to obtain or use an elderly person's or disabled adult's funds, assets, or property with the intent to temporarily or permanently deprive the elderly person or disabled adult of the use, benefit, or possession of the funds, assets, or property, or to benefit someone other than the elderly person or disabled adult, by a person who knows or reasonably should know that the elderly person or disabled adult lacks the capacity to consent.

(2) (a) If the funds, assets, or property involved in the exploitation of the elderly person or disabled adult is valued at \$100,000 or more, the offender commits a felony of the first degree.

(b) If the funds, assets, or property involved in the exploitation of the elderly person or disabled adult is valued at \$20,000 or more, but less than \$100,000, the offender commits a felony of the second degree.

(c) If the funds, assets, or property involved in the exploitation of an elderly person or disabled adult is valued at less than \$20,000, the offender commits a felony of the third degree.

HB 1287 amends this section to provide that if the funds, assets, or property involved in the exploitation of the elderly person or disabled adult is valued at \$10,000 or more, the court must sentence the offender to a mandatory minimum sentence of three years imprisonment.

C. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1: Providing that act may be cited as "The Seniors' Safety Act of 2003".

Section 2: Creating s. 775.0847, F.S.; provides for reclassification of felony offenses committed against a person over the age of 65 or disabled adult.

Section 3: Amending s. 784.08, F.S.; relating to assault or battery on persons 65 years of age or older.

Section 4: Amending s. 812.0145, F.S.; relating to theft from persons 65 years of age or older; provides three year minimum mandatory sentence for theft from a person 65 years of age or older

Section 5: Amending s. 825.103; relating to exploitation of an elderly person or disabled adult; provides three year minimum mandatory sentence if property involved is valued at \$10,000 or more.

Section 6: Providing effective date.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

The Criminal Justice Impact Conference has determined that this bill may potentially have a large impact on the prison bed population at the Department of Corrections. The bill provides for the reclassification of all felony offenses committed against an elderly or disabled victim, regardless of whether the offender knew the age, infirmity or disability of the victim. It is not possible to determine how many felonies are committed against a victim age 65 or older in Florida each year. However, approximately 17.5 percent of the state population of 16.9 million is age 65 or older. The bill also requires the imposition of a mandatory minimum three year prison sentence for the offense of theft against an elderly person and the offense of exploitation of an elderly person or disabled adult.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

The 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:

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

Chapter law 2002-162 ranked the offenses relating to theft against the elderly in the offense severity ranking chart of the Criminal Punishment Code. Theft of between \$300 and \$10,000 was ranked in level 3, theft of between \$10,000 and \$50,000 was ranked in level 5 and theft of more than \$100,000 was ranked in level 7. HB 1287 removes the language in section 812.0145 which created these theft offenses but does not remove the offenses from the offense severity ranking chart.

HB 1287 amends section 784.08 to remove the reclassification for aggravated assault and aggravated battery offenses committed against an elderly person. Presumably, this is done in order to avoid these offenses being reclassified under this section and reclassified again under the newly created section 775.0847 which provides for the reclassification of all felonies committed against an elderly person or disabled adult. However, section 784.08 provides for the reclassification of the offense of battery on an elderly person from a first degree misdemeanor to a third degree felony. It may be possible for this offense to be further reclassified under the newly created section to a second degree felony. Additionally, although the bill removes the requirement that aggravated battery and aggravated assault offenses be reclassified, it does not remove the provision requiring the imposition of a three year minimum mandatory sentence for these offenses.

Section 825.103 prohibits exploitation of an elderly person or disabled adult. It provides that if the value of the property involved is \$20,000 or more, the offense is a third degree felony. HB 1287 provides that a judge must impose a minimum mandatory sentence for a violation of this section if the value of the property involved is \$10,000 or more. However, because the minimum threshold for a violation of section 825.103 is \$20,000, an offender could not be convicted of this offense if the property involved was valued at \$10,000. These amounts should be reconciled.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

It is expected that the sponsor will offer a strike-all amendment that will alter the provisions of the current section of statute which prohibits theft from an elderly person. The amendment provides for a three year minimum mandatory sentence for theft of more than \$50,000 from an elderly victim. The amendment also provides for a three year minimum mandatory sentence for exploitation of the elderly when the amount of property involved is valued at \$20,000 or more and a five year minimum mandatory sentence when the amount of property involved is valued at \$50,000 or more. The amendment will remove the provision of the bill which would have required the reclassification of all felony offenses committed against an elderly person.