

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Judiciary Committee

BILL: SB 2076

INTRODUCER: Senator Oelrich

SUBJECT: Hoax Firearms

DATE: April 20, 2009

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Cellon	Cannon	CJ	Favorable
2.	Cellon	Maclure	JU	Favorable
3.			JA	
4.				
5.				
6.				

I. Summary:

The offenses of robbery, home-invasion robbery, and carjacking are first-degree felonies if in the course of committing the offense, the offender carried a firearm or other deadly weapon. Currently, if the offense of robbery, home-invasion robbery, or carjacking is committed with a “hoax firearm,” the offense is treated as if it were committed without a firearm or a weapon. This bill amends these statutes to make the offenses of robbery, home-invasion robbery, and carjacking first-degree felonies if in the course of the offense, the offender carried a “hoax firearm.”

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 812.13, 812.133, 812.135, and 921.0022. The bill creates section 812.129, Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Hoax bomb or hoax weapon of mass destruction

Section 790.165, F.S., makes it a second-degree felony for a person to manufacture, possess, sell, deliver, send, mail, display, use, threaten to use, attempt to use, or conspire to use, or make readily accessible to others, a hoax bomb. The term “hoax bomb” is defined as “any device or object that by its design, construction, content, or characteristics appears to be, or to contain, or is represented to be or to contain, a destructive device or explosive...but is, in fact, an inoperative facsimile or imitation of such a destructive device or explosive, or contains no destructive device or explosive as was represented.”

Section 790.166, F.S., makes it a second-degree felony to, without lawful authority, manufacture, possess, sell, deliver, mail, send, display, use, threaten to use, attempt to use, or conspire to use, or make readily accessible to others, a hoax weapon of mass destruction.¹

Robbery

Section 812.13, F.S., defines the term “robbery” as:

[T]he taking of money or other property which may be the subject of larceny from the person or custody of another, with intent to either permanently or temporarily deprive the person or the owner of the money or other property, when in the course of the taking² there is the use of force, violence, assault, or putting in fear.

If in the course of committing a robbery,³ the offender carries a firearm⁴ or other deadly weapon,⁵ the offense is a first-degree felony punishable by imprisonment for a term of years not exceeding life imprisonment and a fine of up to \$10,000.⁶

If in the course of committing the robbery, the offender carries a weapon⁷ (non-deadly), the offense is a first-degree felony. A first-degree felony generally is punishable by up to 30 years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$10,000.⁸

If in the course of the robbery, the offender did not carry a firearm, deadly weapon or other weapon, the offense is a second-degree felony. A second-degree felony is generally punishable by up to 15 years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$10,000.⁹

¹ The term “hoax weapon of mass destruction” is defined as “any device or object that by its design, construction, content, or characteristics appears to be or to contain, or is represented to be, constitute, or contain, a weapon of mass destruction ... but which is, in fact, an inoperative facsimile, imitation, counterfeit, or representation of a weapon of mass destruction which does not meet the definition of a weapon of mass destruction or which does not actually contain or constitute a weapon, biological agent, toxin, vector, or delivery system prohibited by this section.”

² According to s. 812.13(3)(b), F.S., an act shall be deemed “in the course of the taking” if it occurs either prior to, contemporaneous with, or subsequent to the taking of the property and if it and the act of taking constitute a continuous series of acts or events.

³ According to s. 812.13(3)(a), F.S., an act shall be deemed to be “in the course of committing the robbery” if it occurs in an attempt to commit robbery or in flight after the attempt or commission.

⁴ Florida Standard Jury Instruction 15.1 references the definition of firearm contained in s. 790.001, F.S., which defines the term “firearm” as “any weapon (including a starter gun) which will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; any destructive device; or any machine gun. The term “firearm” does not include an antique firearm unless the antique firearm is used in the commission of a crime.”

⁵ Florida Standard Jury Instruction 15.1 provides that a weapon is a “deadly weapon” if “it is used or threatened to be used in a way likely to produce death or great bodily harm.”

⁶ See ss. 812.13(2)(a), 775.082, and 775.083, F.S.

⁷ Florida Standard Jury Instruction 15.1 provides that a “weapon” is legally defined to mean “any object that could be used to cause death or inflict serious bodily harm.” See also s. 790.001(13), F.S. (defining term “weapon” to mean “any dirk, knife, metallic knuckles, slungshot, billie, tear gas gun, chemical weapon or device, or other deadly weapon except a firearm or a common pocketknife, plastic knife, or blunt-bladed table knife.”)

⁸ See ss. 812.13(2)(b), 775.082, and 775.083, F.S.

⁹ See ss. 812.13(2)(c), 775.082, and 775.083, F.S.

Carjacking

Section 812.133, F.S., defines the term “carjacking” to mean the “taking of a motor vehicle which may be the subject of larceny from the person or custody of another, with intent to either permanently or temporarily deprive the person or the owner of the motor vehicle, when in the course of the taking, there is the use of force, violence, assault or putting in fear.”

If in the course of committing a carjacking, the offender carries a *firearm or other deadly weapon*, the offense is a first-degree felony punishable by imprisonment for a term of years not exceeding life imprisonment and a fine of up to \$10,000.¹⁰ If in the course of the carjacking, the offender did not carry a firearm, deadly weapon or other weapon, the offense is a first-degree felony.

Home-invasion robbery

Section 812.135, F.S., defines the term “home-invasion robbery” to mean “any robbery that occurs when the offender enters the dwelling with the intent to commit a robbery, and does commit a robbery of the occupants therein.”

If in the course of committing a home-invasion robbery, the offender carries a *firearm or other deadly weapon*, the offense is a first-degree felony punishable by imprisonment for a term of years not exceeding life imprisonment. If in the course of committing the home-invasion robbery, the offender carries a *weapon* (non-deadly), the offense is a first-degree felony. If in the course of the home-invasion robbery, the offender did not carry a firearm, deadly weapon or other weapon, the offense is a first-degree felony.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill creates s. 812.19, F.S., which defines the term “hoax firearm” to mean “any device or object that by its design, construction, content, or characteristics appears to be a firearm as defined in s. 790.001, F.S., but is, in fact, a facsimile or imitation of such firearm.”

Under current law, if the offense of robbery, home-invasion robbery, or carjacking is committed with a “hoax firearm,” the offense is treated as if it were committed without a firearm or a weapon.¹¹ The bill amends the robbery, carjacking, and home-invasion robbery statutes to provide that if during the course of committing one of these offenses, the offender carried a hoax firearm, the offense will be the same degree of felony as if an actual firearm or other deadly weapon was carried. Thus, if a hoax firearm is carried during the course of committing a robbery, a carjacking, or a home-invasion robbery offense, the offense would be a first degree

¹⁰ See ss. 812.13(2)(a), 775.082, and 775.083, F.S.

¹¹ In *Stanley v. State*, 757 So.2d 1275 (Fla. 4th DCA 2000), the state charged the defendant with robbery with a weapon rather than robbery with a firearm for carrying a gun lacking a firing pin during a robbery. The appellate court overturned the conviction, noting that the definition of the term weapon excludes a firearm and that the state did not prove that firearm was used in manner that could cause serious bodily injury or death such as using it as a club. See also, *Tookes v. State*, 842 So.2d 1063 (Fla. 4th DCA 2003)(overturning conviction for robbery with firearm; stating that defendant could not be lawfully found guilty of carrying a firearm if it was a toy or imitation firearm).

felony, punishable by up to a life sentence in the same manner as if an actual firearm or other deadly weapon was carried.¹²

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

At the March 23, 2009, meeting, the Criminal Justice Impact Conference took up SB 2076 for consideration and determined that the bill would have a potentially significant fiscal (prison bed) impact.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

¹² The offense of robbery with a hoax firearm will be ranked in level 9 of the offense severity ranking chart, in the same manner as robbery with a firearm; the offense of carjacking with a hoax firearm will be ranked in level 9 of the offense severity ranking chart, in the same manner as the offense of carjacking with a firearm and the offense of home-invasion robbery with a hoax firearm will be ranked in level 10, in the same manner as the offense of home-invasion robbery with a firearm.

VIII. Additional Information:

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
