

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 Budget Committee

BILL: SB 514

INTRODUCER: Senator Garcia

SUBJECT: Vehicle Crashes Involving Death

DATE: March 31, 2011

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Dugger	Cannon	CJ	Favorable
2.	Maclure	Maclure	JU	Favorable
3.	Sadberry	Meyer, C.	BC	Pre-meeting
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

The bill provides that a person who is arrested for failure to stop a vehicle at the scene of an accident involving the death of any person and who has previously been convicted of leaving the scene of an accident, racing on highways, driving under the influence (DUI), or felony driving while license suspended, revoked, canceled, or disqualified¹ must be held in custody until first appearance for a bail determination. This change prevents judges who issue warrants for failure to stop a vehicle at the scene of an accident involving death from setting a predetermined bond amount in an arrest warrant. It also prevents local jurisdictions from placing the offense on a bond schedule with predetermined bond amounts.

The bill substantially amends section 316.027 and reenacts section 921.0022, Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Duty to Remain at the Scene of an Accident

Section 316.027(1)(b), F.S., provides that the driver of any vehicle involved in a crash occurring on public or private property that results in the death of any person must immediately stop the vehicle at the scene of the crash (or as close as possible) and remain at the scene until he or she

¹ Under s. 322.34(2), F.S., for example, the first and second convictions of knowingly driving while license suspended, revoked, canceled, or disqualified are classified as second- and first-degree misdemeanors, respectively. However, a third or subsequent conviction under the statute is classified as a third-degree felony.

has fulfilled the requirements of s. 316.062, F.S.² Any person who willfully violates this provision commits a first-degree felony.³

First Appearance and Bond

Section 901.02, F.S., provides that a law enforcement officer may arrest a person who commits a crime if the officer obtains an arrest warrant signed by a judge. At the time of the issuance of the warrant, the judge may set a bond amount⁴ or, in some circumstances,⁵ require that the arrestee be held until first appearance for determination of bail.⁶ A person arrested on a warrant with a predetermined bond amount may immediately bond out of jail following an arrest by posting the bond amount.

Current law requires the state to bring an arrestee before a judge for a first appearance within 24 hours of arrest.⁷ At first appearance, a judge determines if there is probable cause to hold the arrestee, provides the arrestee notice of the charges, and advises the arrestee of his or her rights. If an arrestee is eligible for bail, the judge conducts a hearing in accordance with s. 903.046, F.S.

A law enforcement officer may arrest a person who commits a felony without a warrant if the officer reasonably believes a felony has been committed.⁸ In this case, the arrestee is generally held until first appearance for a determination of probable cause and bail. In some jurisdictions, a bond schedule with predetermined bond amounts for certain offenses is agreed to and provided by judicial officers to the county detention facility. If an arrestee meets the requirements of the bond schedule, the arrestee may bond out of jail for the predetermined bond amount. This eliminates the need for an arrestee to make a first appearance before a judge.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill is named the “Ashley Nicole Valdes Act.” It requires a person who has been arrested for failure to stop a vehicle at the scene of an accident involving death to be held in custody for the court to set bail at first appearance if the person has previously been convicted of leaving the scene of an accident, racing on highways, DUI, or felony driving while his or her license is

² Section 316.062, F.S., provides that a driver of a vehicle involved in a crash resulting in death or injury or damage to any vehicle or other property driven or attended by any person must provide his or her name, address, and vehicle registration number, and also a driver’s license, to a police officer or other person involved in the crash. The driver of any vehicle involved in a crash must report the incident to the nearest police department.

³ A first-degree felony is punishable by imprisonment up to 30 years and a maximum \$10,000 fine under ss. 775.082(3)(b), 775.083(1)(b), and 775.084, F.S.

⁴ A bond amount can also include the amount of “no bond.” A defendant is held with no bond if a warrant is issued for an offense where the defendant has committed a dangerous crime, there is a substantial probability the defendant committed the crime, the facts of the crime indicate the defendant has a disregard for the safety of the community, and the defendant poses such a harm to the community that no conditions of release can reasonably protect the community (e.g., homicide, robbery, sexual battery). Section 907.041(4)(c)5., F.S.

⁵ For example, s. 741.2901(3), F.S., provides that a defendant arrested for domestic violence shall be held in custody until brought before the court for admittance to bail under ch. 903, F.S. At first appearance, the court must consider the safety of the victim if the defendant is released.

⁶ Section 903.046, F.S., provides criteria a judge may consider in determining a bail amount.

⁷ Fla. R. Crim. P. 3.130(a) and s. 903.046, F.S.

⁸ Section 901.15(3), F.S.

suspended, revoked, canceled, or disqualified.⁹ This change prevents judges who issue warrants for failure to stop a vehicle at the scene of an accident involving death from setting a predetermined bond amount in an arrest warrant. It also prevents local jurisdictions from placing the offense on a bond schedule with predetermined bond amounts.

The bill also reenacts s. 921.0022(3)(g), F.S., the Criminal Punishment Code, for the purpose of incorporating the bill's amendments to a reference in that statute.

The bill provides an effective date of October 1, 2011.

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:

The bill may have an impact on those who violate this statute, as they will assume the potential personal financial effects of being held in jail until first appearance for a bail determination (e.g., lost wages).

C. Government Sector Impact:

There may be a potential jail bed impact since defendants arrested under the provisions of the bill will be required to remain in jail until first appearance. However, because first appearance must occur within 24 hours of arrest, any impact is likely to be minimal.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

⁹ Leaving accident scene (ss. 316.027 and 316.061, F.S.); racing on highways (s. 316.191, F.S.); DUI (s. 316.193, F.S.); driving while license is suspended, revoked, canceled, or disqualified (s. 322.34, F.S.).

VII. Related Issues:

None.

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.
