

By the Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice;  
the Committee on Criminal Justice; and Senator Yarborough

604-03479-25

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A bill to be entitled  
An act relating to assault or battery on a utility  
worker; amending s. 784.07, F.S.; defining the term  
"utility worker"; providing for reclassification of  
certain offenses committed against a utility worker  
engaged in work on critical infrastructure; amending  
ss. 901.15, 943.051, 985.11, and 985.644, F.S.;  
conforming provisions to changes made by the act;  
providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Subsection (2) of section 784.07, Florida  
Statutes, is amended, and paragraph (h) is added to subsection  
(1) of that section, to read:

784.07 Assault or battery of law enforcement officers and  
other specified personnel; reclassification of offenses; minimum  
sentences.—

(1) As used in this section, the term:

(h) "Utility worker" means a person who bears at least one  
patch, emblem, organizational identification, or other clear  
marking that is intended to be plainly visible, that identifies  
the employing or contracting utility, and that clearly  
identifies the person as a utility worker under contract with or  
employed by an entity that owns, operates, leases, or controls a  
plant, property, or facility for the generation, transmission,  
distribution, or furnishing to or for the public, of  
electricity, natural or manufactured gas or propane, water,  
wastewater, telephone, or communications service, including two

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30 or more utilities rendering joint service.

31 (2) Whenever any person is charged with knowingly  
32 committing an assault or battery upon a law enforcement officer,  
33 a firefighter, an emergency medical care provider, hospital  
34 personnel, a railroad special officer, a traffic accident  
35 investigation officer as described in s. 316.640, a nonsworn law  
36 enforcement agency employee who is certified as an agency  
37 inspector, a blood alcohol analyst, or a breath test operator  
38 while such employee is in uniform and engaged in processing,  
39 testing, evaluating, analyzing, or transporting a person who is  
40 detained or under arrest for DUI, a law enforcement explorer, a  
41 traffic infraction enforcement officer as described in s.  
42 316.640, a parking enforcement specialist as defined in s.  
43 316.640, a person licensed as a security officer as defined in  
44 s. 493.6101 and wearing a uniform that bears at least one patch  
45 or emblem that is visible at all times that clearly identifies  
46 the employing agency and that clearly identifies the person as a  
47 licensed security officer, ~~or~~ a security officer employed by the  
48 board of trustees of a community college, or a utility worker  
49 engaged in work on critical infrastructure as defined in s.  
50 812.141(1), while the officer, firefighter, emergency medical  
51 care provider, hospital personnel, railroad special officer,  
52 traffic accident investigation officer, traffic infraction  
53 enforcement officer, inspector, analyst, operator, law  
54 enforcement explorer, parking enforcement specialist, public  
55 transit employee or agent, ~~or~~ security officer, or utility  
56 worker is engaged in the lawful performance of his or her  
57 duties, the offense for which the person is charged shall be  
58 reclassified as follows:

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(a) In the case of assault, from a misdemeanor of the second degree to a misdemeanor of the first degree.

(b) In the case of battery, from a misdemeanor of the first degree to a felony of the third degree. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a person convicted of battery upon a law enforcement officer committed in furtherance of a riot or an aggravated riot prohibited under s. 870.01 shall be sentenced to a minimum term of imprisonment of 6 months.

(c) In the case of aggravated assault, from a felony of the third degree to a felony of the second degree. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any person convicted of aggravated assault upon a law enforcement officer shall be sentenced to a minimum term of imprisonment of 3 years.

(d) In the case of aggravated battery, from a felony of the second degree to a felony of the first degree. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any person convicted of aggravated battery of a law enforcement officer shall be sentenced to a minimum term of imprisonment of 5 years.

Section 2. Subsection (15) of section 901.15, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

901.15 When arrest by officer without warrant is lawful.—A law enforcement officer may arrest a person without a warrant when:

(15) There is probable cause to believe that the person has committed assault upon a law enforcement officer, a firefighter, an emergency medical care provider, public transit employees or agents, or other specified persons ~~officers~~ as provided set ~~forth~~ in s. 784.07 or has committed assault or battery upon any employee of a receiving facility as defined in s. 394.455 who is

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engaged in the lawful performance of his or her duties.

Section 3. Paragraph (b) of subsection (3) of section 943.051, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

943.051 Criminal justice information; collection and storage; fingerprinting.—

(3)

(b) A minor who is charged with or found to have committed the following offenses shall be fingerprinted and the fingerprints shall be submitted electronically to the department, unless the minor is issued a prearrest delinquency citation pursuant to s. 985.12:

1. Assault, as defined in s. 784.011.

2. Battery, as defined in s. 784.03.

3. Carrying a concealed weapon, as defined in s. 790.01(2).

4. Unlawful use of destructive devices or bombs, as defined in s. 790.1615(1).

5. Neglect of a child, as defined in s. 827.03(1)(e).

6. Assault or battery on a law enforcement officer, a firefighter, or other specified persons ~~officers~~, as provided ~~defined~~ in s. 784.07 ~~784.07(2)(a) and (b)~~.

7. Open carrying of a weapon, as defined in s. 790.053.

8. Exposure of sexual organs, as defined in s. 800.03.

9. Unlawful possession of a firearm, as defined in s. 790.22(5).

10. Petit theft, as defined in s. 812.014(3).

11. Cruelty to animals, as defined in s. 828.12(1).

12. Arson, as defined in s. 806.031(1).

13. Unlawful possession or discharge of a weapon or firearm at a school-sponsored event or on school property, as provided

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in s. 790.115.

Section 4. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 985.11, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

985.11 Fingerprinting and photographing.—

(1)

(b) Unless the child is issued a prearrest delinquency citation pursuant to s. 985.12, a child who is charged with or found to have committed one of the following offenses shall be fingerprinted, and the fingerprints shall be submitted to the Department of Law Enforcement as provided in s. 943.051(3)(b):

1. Assault, as defined in s. 784.011.

2. Battery, as defined in s. 784.03.

3. Carrying a concealed weapon, as defined in s. 790.01(2).

4. Unlawful use of destructive devices or bombs, as defined in s. 790.1615(1).

5. Neglect of a child, as defined in s. 827.03(1)(e).

6. Assault on a law enforcement officer, a firefighter, or other specified persons ~~officers~~, as provided ~~defined~~ in s. 784.07 ~~784.07(2)(a)~~.

7. Open carrying of a weapon, as defined in s. 790.053.

8. Exposure of sexual organs, as defined in s. 800.03.

9. Unlawful possession of a firearm, as defined in s. 790.22(5).

10. Petit theft, as defined in s. 812.014.

11. Cruelty to animals, as defined in s. 828.12(1).

12. Arson, resulting in bodily harm to a firefighter, as defined in s. 806.031(1).

13. Unlawful possession or discharge of a weapon or firearm at a school-sponsored event or on school property as defined in

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s. 790.115.

A law enforcement agency may fingerprint and photograph a child taken into custody upon probable cause that such child has committed any other violation of law, as the agency deems appropriate. Such fingerprint records and photographs shall be retained by the law enforcement agency in a separate file, and these records and all copies thereof must be marked "Juvenile Confidential." These records are not available for public disclosure and inspection under s. 119.07(1) except as provided in ss. 943.053 and 985.04(2), but shall be available to other law enforcement agencies, criminal justice agencies, state attorneys, the courts, the child, the parents or legal custodians of the child, their attorneys, and any other person authorized by the court to have access to such records. In addition, such records may be submitted to the Department of Law Enforcement for inclusion in the state criminal history records and used by criminal justice agencies for criminal justice purposes. These records may, in the discretion of the court, be open to inspection by anyone upon a showing of cause. The fingerprint and photograph records shall be produced in the court whenever directed by the court. Any photograph taken pursuant to this section may be shown by a law enforcement officer to any victim or witness of a crime for the purpose of identifying the person who committed such crime.

Section 5. Paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section 985.644, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

985.644 Departmental contracting powers; personnel standards and investigation.—

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(3)(a) All employees of the department and all personnel of contract providers for any program for children, including all owners, operators, employees, persons who have access to confidential juvenile records, and volunteers, must complete:

1. A level 2 employment screening pursuant to chapter 435 before employment. The security background investigation conducted under this section must ensure that, in addition to the disqualifying offenses listed in s. 435.04, no person subject to the background screening provisions of this section has an arrest awaiting final disposition for, been found guilty of, regardless of adjudication, or entered a plea of nolo contendere or guilty to, or been adjudicated delinquent and the record has not been sealed or expunged for, any offense prohibited under the following provisions of state law or similar laws of another jurisdiction:

a. Section 784.07, relating to assault or battery of law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical care providers, public transit employees or agents, or other specified persons ~~officers~~.

b. Section 817.568, relating to criminal use of personal identification information.

2. A national criminal records check by the Federal Bureau of Investigation every 5 years following the date of the person's employment.

Section 6. This act shall take effect October 1, 2025.