

# FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

## BILL ANALYSIS

*This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.*

**BILL #:** [CS/HB 709](#)

**TITLE:** Internet Crimes Against Children Programs

**SPONSOR(S):** Kincart Jonsson

**COMPANION BILL:** [CS/SB 656](#) (Bradley)

**LINKED BILLS:** None

**RELATED BILLS:** None

### Committee References

[Criminal Justice](#)

15 Y, 0 N, As CS

[Justice Budget](#)

14 Y, 0 N

[Judiciary](#)

## SUMMARY

### Effect of the Bill:

The bill revises the requirements related to a current grant program and creates a new funding program, both related to combating online child exploitation. Specifically, the bill:

- Renames the current “Online Sting Operations Grant Program” to the “Internet Crimes Against Children Grant Program,” which supports local law enforcement affiliates in Florida working to combat online child exploitation;
- Expands the uses for which the renamed Internet Crimes Against Children Grant Program funds may be used;
- Creates the “Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Funding Program” within the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) to provide stable funding for task forces related to law enforcement agency efforts to combat Internet crimes against children; and
- Directs funds appropriated to the task force funding program to be distributed between specified task forces and FDLE.

### Fiscal or Economic Impact:

The bill may have an indeterminate positive impact on state and local government revenues to the extent local law enforcement affiliates may receive, and FDLE may retain a portion of, specifically appropriated grant or program funds.

[JUMP TO](#)

[SUMMARY](#)

[ANALYSIS](#)

[RELEVANT INFORMATION](#)

[BILL HISTORY](#)

## ANALYSIS

### EFFECT OF THE BILL:

#### Internet Crimes Against Children Grant Program

The bill renames the current “[Online Sting Operations Grant Program](#)” to the “Internet Crimes Against Children Grant Program” and specifies its purpose is to support local law enforcement affiliates working to combat [online child exploitation](#) and target individuals who prey, or attempt to prey, upon children online, rather than being limited to supporting law enforcement agencies specifically conducting sting operations. (Section [1](#))

The bill requires the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) to annually award funds specifically appropriated to the grant program to local law enforcement affiliates to cover [costs](#) related to combating Internet crimes against children (ICAC). The bill expands the authorized uses of such grant funds, currently limited to covering expenses related to hardware and software, to also include:

- Overtime pay;
- Travel; and
- Investigative or digital forensics training. (Section [1](#))

The bill defines the following terms related to the ICAC Grant Program:

**STORAGE NAME:** h0709c.JUB

**DATE:** 2/5/2026

- “Affiliate” means a local law enforcement agency in this state which has a current memorandum of understanding with an established ICAC task force or which has been designated by FDLE as being in good standing. (Section [1](#))
- “Good standing” means a local law enforcement agency in this state that receives CyberTips from one of the task forces and follows Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program standards in its investigation of Internet crimes against children. (Section [1](#))
- “Internet crimes against children task force” means an ICAC task force located in Florida which is recognized by the United States Department of Justice. (Section [1](#))

### **[Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Funding Program](#)**

Additionally, the bill creates the “Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Funding Program” within FDLE to provide a stable funding source for task forces. Under the bill, program funding must consist of money appropriated by the Legislature, and such funds may only be used to support the administration and activities of law enforcement agencies in their efforts to combat ICAC, including:

- Funding of personnel;
- Overtime pay;
- Training;
- Travel; and
- Technology purchases. (Section [2](#))

The bill defines a “task force” as an Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force program located in Florida which is recognized by the United States Department of Justice. (Section [2](#))

The bill also directs funds appropriated to the program to be distributed in the following amounts:

- Eighty percent, divided equally among task forces; and
- Twenty percent, to FDLE to support efforts to combat ICAC. (Section [2](#))

The bill provides the following legislative findings, in part:

- The ICAC Task Force program, run through the United States Department of Justice, helps state and local law enforcement agencies develop an effective response to technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation and ICAC.
- The Legislature intends to create an account dedicated to:
  - Combating ICAC;
  - Promoting education on Internet safety to minors and to the public; and
  - Rescuing child victims from abuse and exploitation. (Section [2](#))

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2026. (Section [3](#))

### **RULEMAKING:**

The bill authorizes FDLE to adopt rules to implement and administer the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Funding Program, and FDLE has specified existing rulemaking authority under the grant program.

***Lawmaking is a legislative power; however, the Legislature may delegate a portion of such power to executive branch agencies to create rules that have the force of law. To exercise this delegated power, an agency must have a grant of rulemaking authority and a law to implement.***

**FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:****STATE GOVERNMENT:**

The bill may have an indeterminate positive impact on state revenues by authorizing FDLE to retain a portion of funds specifically appropriated for the ICAC Task Force Funding Program. Any such impact is subject to legislative appropriation.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT:**

The bill may have an indeterminate positive impact on local government revenues to the extent that some local law enforcement agencies may receive future program or grant funding. Any such impact is subject to legislative appropriation.

**RELEVANT INFORMATION****SUBJECT OVERVIEW:****Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program**

The Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force program is a national network of 61 coordinated task forces, representing over 5,400 federal, state, and local law enforcement, dedicated to investigating, prosecuting and developing effective responses to internet crimes against children (ICAC).<sup>1</sup> The program helps state and local law enforcement agencies develop an effective response to technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation and ICAC, including forensic and investigative components, training and technical assistance, victim services, and community education.<sup>2</sup>

Under federal law, each state or local ICAC task force that is part of the national program of task forces must, in part:

- Consist of state and local investigators, prosecutors, forensic specialists, and education specialists who are dedicated to addressing the goals of such task force;
- Work consistently toward achieving specified statutory purposes;
- Engage in reactive and proactive investigations, conduct digital forensic examinations, and engage effective prosecutions of ICAC;
- Provide forensic, preventive, and investigative assistance to parents, educators, prosecutors, law enforcement, and others concerned with ICAC;
- Develop multijurisdictional, multiagency responses and partnerships to ICAC offenses through ongoing informational, administrative, and technological support to other state and local law enforcement agencies, as a means for such agencies to acquire the necessary knowledge, personnel, and specialized equipment to investigate and prosecute such offenses;
- Participate in nationally coordinated investigations in any case in which the Attorney General determines such participation to be necessary, as permitted by the available resources of such task force;
- Establish or adopt investigative and prosecution standards, consistent with established norms, to which such task force must comply;
- Investigate, and seek prosecution on, tips related to ICAC, with priority being given to investigative leads that indicate the possibility of identifying or rescuing child victims, including investigative leads that indicate a likelihood of seriousness of offense or dangerousness to the community;
- Maintain reports and records;

<sup>1</sup> ICAC Task Force Program, <https://www.icactaskforce.org/> (last visited Jan. 29, 2026).

<sup>2</sup> Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program, <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/programs/internet-crimes-against-children-task-force-program#:~:text=Resources,Overview, and%20prosecute%20ICAC%2Drelated%20cases> (last visit Jan. 29, 2026).

- Seek to comply with national standards regarding the investigation and prosecution of ICAC, as set forth by the Attorney General, to the extent such standards are consistent with the law of the state where the task force is located.<sup>3</sup>

FDLE is currently a partner with the three Florida Internet Crimes Against Children Task Forces and supports the task forces' ongoing efforts to protect children online.<sup>4</sup> FDLE also has seven regional teams that conduct online child exploitation-related investigations and supports the criminal investigations' digital forensics.<sup>5</sup>

In 2025, the Florida Legislature allocated the following amounts from the General Revenue Fund to FDLE:

- \$2,100,000 in nonrecurring funds, for an appropriations project to implement a statewide case management dashboard for the ICAC Task Forces; and
- \$3,000,000 in recurring funds, for grants that provide funding for personnel, overtime, and technology relating to the reduction of internet crimes committed against children.<sup>6</sup>

### **Online Sting Operations Grant Program**

In 2024, the Legislature created [S. 943.0411, F.S.](#), establishing the Online Sting Operations Grant Program within FDLE to award grants to local law enforcement agencies to support the creation of sting operations to target individuals online preying upon children or attempting to prey upon children.<sup>7</sup> FDLE annually awards any funds specifically appropriated to the grant program to local law enforcement agencies to cover expenses related to:

- Computers;
- Electronics;
- Software; and
- Other related necessary supplies.<sup>8</sup>

According to FDLE, unallowable [costs](#) for the program include, but are not limited to:

- Items purchased prior to the start of the grant period;
- Personnel costs;
- Community outreach and education activities;
- Food and beverage; and
- Transportation or travel costs.<sup>9</sup>

The Fiscal Year 2024-2025 General Appropriations Act included \$2,500,000 in nonrecurring funds to implement the Online Sting Operations Grant Program, contingent upon the program becoming law.<sup>10</sup> On July 23, 2025, the remaining unspent balance of \$1,745,246 reverted and was reappropriated for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 for the same purpose. Available funds are distributed based on the operational needs of each agency's investigations as approved by FDLE, not to exceed total appropriated funding.<sup>11</sup> All remaining funds under the program have been obligated to pending applications, and new applications are no longer being accepted.

<sup>3</sup> 34 U.S.C. § 21114 (2008).

<sup>4</sup> FDLE, Agency Analysis of 2026 Senate Bill 656, pg. 2 (Jan. 14, 2026).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> Ch. 2025-198, Laws of Fla. Specific Appropriation Line 1177.

<sup>7</sup> Ch. 2024-72, Laws of Fla.

<sup>8</sup> [S. 943.0411\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> Ch. 2024-231, Laws of Fla. Specific Appropriation Line 1293A.

<sup>11</sup> Florida Department of Law Enforcement Online Sting Operations Grant Program for Local Law Enforcement,

<https://www.fdle.state.fl.us/fdle-grants/open-funding-opportunities/online-sting/fy25-26-online-sting> (last visited Jan. 29, 2026).

## Online Child Exploitation

### *Computer Pornography*

Under [s. 847.0135\(2\), F.S.](#), it is a third degree felony<sup>12</sup> for a person to:

- Knowingly compile, enter into, or transmit by use of computer;
- Make, print, publish, or reproduce by other computerized means;
- Knowingly cause or allow to be entered into or transmitted by use of computer; or
- Buy, sell, receive, exchange, or disseminate,

any notice, statement, or advertisement of any minor's name, telephone number, place of residence, physical characteristics, or other descriptive or identifying information for purposes of facilitating, encouraging, offering, or soliciting sexual conduct of or with any minor, or the visual depiction of such conduct.<sup>13</sup>

### *Certain Uses of Computer Services or Devices Prohibited*

Under [s. 847.0135\(3\), F.S.](#), it is a third degree felony for a person who knowingly uses a computer online service, Internet service, local bulletin board service, or any other device capable of electronic data storage or transmission to:

- Seduce, solicit, lure, or entice, or attempt to seduce, solicit, lure, or entice, a child or another person believed by the person to be a child, to commit any illegal act described in chapter 794 (sexual battery), chapter 800 (lewd or lascivious offenses), or chapter 827 (child sexual performance), F.S., or to otherwise engage in any unlawful sexual conduct with a child or with another person believed by the person to be a child; or
- Solicit, lure, or entice, or attempt to solicit, lure, or entice a parent, legal guardian, or custodian of a child or a person believed to be a parent, legal guardian, or custodian of a child to consent to the participation of such child in any act described in chapter 794, chapter 800, or chapter 827, F.S., or to otherwise engage in any sexual conduct.<sup>14</sup>

### *Traveling to Meet a Minor*

Under [s. 847.0135\(4\), F.S.](#), it is a second degree felony<sup>15</sup> for a person who travels any distance either within Florida, to Florida, or from Florida by any means, who attempts to do so, or who causes another to do so or to attempt to do so for the purpose of engaging in any illegal act described in chapter 794, chapter 800, or chapter 827, F.S., or to otherwise engage in other unlawful sexual conduct with a child or with another person believed by the person to be a child after using a computer online service, Internet service, local bulletin board service, or any other device capable of electronic data storage or transmission to:

- Seduce, solicit, lure, or entice or attempt to seduce, solicit, lure, or entice a child or another person believed by the person to be a child, to engage in any illegal act described in chapter 794, chapter 800, or chapter 827, F.S., or to otherwise engage in other unlawful sexual conduct with a child; or
- Solicit, lure, or entice or attempt to solicit, lure, or entice a parent, legal guardian, or custodian of a child or a person believed to be a parent, legal guardian, or custodian of a child to consent to the participation of such child in any act described in chapter 794, chapter 800, or chapter 827, F.S., or to otherwise engage in any sexual conduct.

### *Possessing Child Pornography*

Section [827.071\(4\)-\(5\), F.S.](#) prohibits a person from:

<sup>12</sup> A third degree felony is punishable by up to five years in prison and a \$5,000 fine. [Ss. 775.082, 775.083, or 775.084, F.S.](#)

<sup>13</sup> The fact that an undercover operative or law enforcement officer was involved in the detection and investigation of such an offense does not constitute a defense to a prosecution. [S. 847.0135\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>14</sup> A person who misrepresents his or her age in violating this subsection commits a second degree felony. Each separate use of a computer online service, Internet service, local bulletin board service, or any other device capable of electronic data storage or transmission wherein an offense described in this section is committed may be charged as a separate offense.

<sup>15</sup> A second degree felony is punishable by up to 15 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. [Ss. 775.082, 775.083, or 775.084, F.S.](#)

- Possessing with the intent to promote any photograph, motion picture, exhibition, show, representation, or other presentation which, in whole or in part, includes any child pornography, punishable as a second degree felony.
- Knowingly possessing, controlling, or intentionally viewing a photograph, motion picture, exhibition, show, representation, image, data, computer depiction, or other presentation which, in whole or in part, the person knows to include child pornography,<sup>16</sup> punishable as a third degree felony.<sup>17</sup>

### *Transmitting Child Pornography*

Under [s. 847.0137, F.S.](#), a person commits a third degree felony if he or she:

- Is in this state and knew or reasonably should have known that he or she was transmitting child pornography to another person in this state or in another jurisdiction; or
- Is in any jurisdiction and knew or reasonably should have known that he or she was transmitting child pornography to any person in this state.<sup>18</sup>

### **RECENT LEGISLATION:**

YEAR	BILL #/SUBJECT	HOUSE/SENATE SPONSOR(S)	OTHER INFORMATION
2024	<a href="#">HB 1131</a> - Online Sting Operations Grant Program	Temple/ <i>Ingoglia</i>	Became law on April 10, 2024 and implementation began on July 1, 2024.

### **BILL HISTORY**

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
<a href="#">Criminal Justice Subcommittee</a>	15 Y, 0 N, As CS	1/28/2026	Hall	Butcher
THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defined the term “good standing” for purposes of determining whether a specified law enforcement agency is eligible to receive specified grant funds related to Internet crimes against children.</li> <li>Removed specified language related to legislative findings.</li> </ul>			
<a href="#">Justice Budget Subcommittee</a>	14 Y, 0 N	2/5/2026	Keith	Saag
<a href="#">Judiciary Committee</a>				

<sup>16</sup> “Child pornography” means:

- Any image depicting a minor engaged in sexual conduct; or
- Any image that has been created, altered, adapted, or modified by electronic, mechanical, or other means, to portray an identifiable minor engaged in sexual conduct. [S. 827.071\(1\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>17</sup> The possession, control, or intentional viewing of each such photograph, motion picture, exhibition, show, image, data, computer depiction, representation, or presentation is a separate offense. If such photograph, motion picture, exhibition, show, representation, image, data, computer depiction, or other presentation includes child pornography depicting more than one child, then each such child in each such photograph, motion picture, exhibition, show, representation, image, data, computer depiction, or other presentation that is knowingly possessed, controlled, or intentionally viewed is a separate offense. [S. 827.071\(5\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>18</sup> “Transmit” means the act of sending and causing to be delivered, including the act of providing access for receiving and causing to be delivered, any image, information, or data over or through any medium, including the Internet or an interconnected network, by use of any electronic equipment or other device. [S. 847.0137\(1\), F.S.](#)

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**THIS BILL ANALYSIS HAS BEEN UPDATED TO INCORPORATE ALL OF THE CHANGES DESCRIBED ABOVE.**

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