

TITLE 18 - CRIMES AND CRIMINAL PROCEDURE
PART I - CRIMES
CHAPTER 13 - CIVIL RIGHTS

§ 242. Deprivation of rights under color of law

Whoever, under color of any law, statute, ordinance, regulation, or custom, willfully subjects any person in any State, Territory, Commonwealth, Possession, or District to the deprivation of any rights, privileges, or immunities secured or protected by the Constitution or laws of the United States, or to different punishments, pains, or penalties, on account of such person being an alien, or by reason of his color, or race, than are prescribed for the punishment of citizens, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than one year, or both; and if bodily injury results from the acts committed in violation of this section or if such acts include the use, attempted use, or threatened use of a dangerous weapon, explosives, or fire, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both; and if death results from the acts committed in violation of this section or if such acts include kidnapping or an attempt to kidnap, aggravated sexual abuse, or an attempt to commit aggravated sexual abuse, or an attempt to kill, shall be fined under this title, or imprisoned for any term of years or for life, or both, or may be sentenced to death.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 696; Pub. L. 90–284, title I, § 103(b), Apr. 11, 1968, 82 Stat. 75; Pub. L. 100–690, title VII, § 7019, Nov. 18, 1988, 102 Stat. 4396; Pub. L. 103–322, title VI, § 60006(b), title XXXII, §§ 320103(b), 320201 (b), title XXXIII, § 330016(1)(H), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 1970, 2109, 2113, 2147; Pub. L. 104–294, title VI, §§ 604(b)(14)(B), 607 (a), Oct. 11, 1996, 110 Stat. 3507, 3511.)

Historical and Revision Notes

Based on title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., § 52 (Mar. 4, 1909, ch. 321, § 20, 35 Stat. 1092).

Reference to persons causing or procuring was omitted as unnecessary in view of definition of “principal” in section 2 of this title.

A minor change was made in phraseology.

Amendments

1996—Pub. L. 104–294, § 607(a), substituted “any State, Territory, Commonwealth, Possession, or District” for “any State, Territory, or District”.

Pub. L. 104–294, § 604(b)(14)(B), repealed Pub. L. 103–322, § 320103(b)(1). See 1994 Amendment note below.

1994—Pub. L. 103–322, § 330016(1)(H), substituted “shall be fined under this title” for “shall be fined not more than \$1,000” after “citizens,”.

Pub. L. 103–322, § 320201(b), substituted “any person in any State” for “any inhabitant of any State” and “on account of such person” for “on account of such inhabitant”.

Pub. L. 103–322, § 320103(b)(2)–(5), substituted “bodily injury results from the acts committed in violation of this section or if such acts include the use, attempted use, or threatened use of a dangerous weapon, explosives, or fire, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both; and if death results from the acts committed in violation of this section or if such acts include kidnapping or an attempt to kidnap, aggravated sexual abuse, or an attempt to commit aggravated sexual abuse, or an attempt to kill, shall be fined under this title, or imprisoned for any term of years or for life, or both” for “bodily injury results shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both; and if death results shall be subject to imprisonment for any term of years or for life”.

Pub. L. 103–322, § 320103(b)(1), which provided for amendment identical to Pub. L. 103–322, § 330016(1)(H), above, was repealed by Pub. L. 104–294, § 604(b)(14)(B).

Pub. L. 103–322, § 60006(b), inserted before period at end “, or may be sentenced to death”.

1988—Pub. L. 100–690 inserted “and if bodily injury results shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both;” after “or both;”.

NB: This unofficial compilation of the U.S. Code is current as of Jan. 4, 2012 (see <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/uscpri.html>).

1968—Pub. L. 90–284 provided for imprisonment for any term of years or for life when death results.

Effective Date of 1996 Amendment

Amendment by section 604(b)(14)(B) of Pub. L. 104–294 effective Sept. 13, 1994, see section 604(d) of Pub. L. 104–294, set out as a note under section 13 of this title.