

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

§ 245. Federally protected activities

- (a) (1) Nothing in this section shall be construed as indicating an intent on the part of Congress to prevent any State, any possession or Commonwealth of the United States, or the District of Columbia, from exercising jurisdiction over any offense over which it would have jurisdiction in the absence of this section, nor shall anything in this section be construed as depriving State and local law enforcement authorities of responsibility for prosecuting acts that may be violations of this section and that are violations of State and local law. No prosecution of any offense described in this section shall be undertaken by the United States except upon the certification in writing of the Attorney General, the Deputy Attorney General, the Associate Attorney General, or any Assistant Attorney General specially designated by the Attorney General that in his judgment a prosecution by the United States is in the public interest and necessary to secure substantial justice, which function of certification may not be delegated.
- (2) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to limit the authority of Federal officers, or a Federal grand jury, to investigate possible violations of this section.
- (b) Whoever, whether or not acting under color of law, by force or threat of force willfully injures, intimidates or interferes with, or attempts to injure, intimidate or interfere with—
- (1) any person because he is or has been, or in order to intimidate such person or any other person or any class of persons from—
- (A) voting or qualifying to vote, qualifying or campaigning as a candidate for elective office, or qualifying or acting as a poll watcher, or any legally authorized election official, in any primary, special, or general election;
- (B) participating in or enjoying any benefit, service, privilege, program, facility, or activity provided or administered by the United States;
- (C) applying for or enjoying employment, or any perquisite thereof, by any agency of the United States;
- (D) serving, or attending upon any court in connection with possible service, as a grand or petit juror in any court of the United States;
- (E) participating in or enjoying the benefits of any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance; or
- (2) any person because of his race, color, religion or national origin and because he is or has been—
- (A) enrolling in or attending any public school or public college;
- (B) participating in or enjoying any benefit, service, privilege, program, facility or activity provided or administered by any State or subdivision thereof;
- (C) applying for or enjoying employment, or any perquisite thereof, by any private employer or any agency of any State or subdivision thereof, or joining or using the services or advantages of any labor organization, hiring hall, or employment agency;
- (D) serving, or attending upon any court of any State in connection with possible service, as a grand or petit juror;
- (E) traveling in or using any facility of interstate commerce, or using any vehicle, terminal, or facility of any common carrier by motor, rail, water, or air;
- (F) enjoying the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of any inn, hotel, motel, or other establishment which provides lodging to transient guests, or of any restaurant, cafeteria, lunchroom, lunch counter, soda fountain, or other facility which serves the public and which is principally engaged in selling food or beverages for consumption

on the premises, or of any gasoline station, or of any motion picture house, theater, concert hall, sports arena, stadium, or any other place of exhibition or entertainment which serves the public, or of any other establishment which serves the public and

- (i) which is located within the premises of any of the aforesaid establishments or within the premises of which is physically located any of the aforesaid establishments, and
 - (ii) which holds itself out as serving patrons of such establishments; or
- (3) during or incident to a riot or civil disorder, any person engaged in a business in commerce or affecting commerce, including, but not limited to, any person engaged in a business which sells or offers for sale to interstate travelers a substantial portion of the articles, commodities, or services which it sells or where a substantial portion of the articles or commodities which it sells or offers for sale have moved in commerce; or
- (4) any person because he is or has been, or in order to intimidate such person or any other person or any class of persons from—
 - (A) participating, without discrimination on account of race, color, religion or national origin, in any of the benefits or activities described in subparagraphs (1)(A) through (1)(E) or subparagraphs (2)(A) through (2)(F); or
 - (B) affording another person or class of persons opportunity or protection to so participate; or
- (5) any citizen because he is or has been, or in order to intimidate such citizen or any other citizen from lawfully aiding or encouraging other persons to participate, without discrimination on account of race, color, religion or national origin, in any of the benefits or activities described in subparagraphs (1)(A) through (1)(E) or subparagraphs (2)(A) through (2)(F), or participating lawfully in speech or peaceful assembly opposing any denial of the opportunity to so participate— 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. As used in this section, the term “participating lawfully in speech or peaceful assembly” shall not mean the aiding, abetting, or inciting of other persons to riot or to commit any act of physical violence upon any individual or against any real or personal property in furtherance of a riot. Nothing in subparagraph (2)(F) or (4)(A) of this subsection shall apply to the proprietor of any establishment which provides lodging to transient guests, or to any employee acting on behalf of such proprietor, with respect to the enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of such establishment if such establishment is located within a building which contains not more than five rooms for rent or hire and which is actually occupied by the proprietor as his residence.
- (c) Nothing in this section shall be construed so as to deter any law enforcement officer from lawfully carrying out the duties of his office; and no law enforcement officer shall be considered to be in violation of this section for lawfully carrying out the duties of his office or lawfully enforcing ordinances and laws of the United States, the District of Columbia, any of the several States, or any political subdivision of a State. For purposes of the preceding sentence, the term “law enforcement officer” means any officer of the United States, the District of Columbia, a State, or political subdivision of a State, who is empowered by law to conduct investigations of, or make arrests because of, offenses against the United States, the District of Columbia, a State, or a political subdivision of a State.
- (d) For purposes of this section, the term “State” includes a State of the United States, the District of Columbia, and any commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States.

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

(Added Pub. L. 90–284, title I, § 101(a), Apr. 11, 1968, 82 Stat. 73; amended Pub. L. 100–690, title VII, § 7020(a), Nov. 18, 1988, 102 Stat. 4396; Pub. L. 101–647, title XII, § 1205(b), Nov. 29, 1990, 104 Stat. 4830; Pub. L. 103–322, title VI, § 60006(c), title XXXII, § 320103(c), title XXXIII, § 330016(1)(H), (L), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 1971, 2109, 2147; Pub. L. 104–294, title VI, § 604(b)(14)(C), (37), Oct. 11, 1996, 110 Stat. 3507, 3509.)

Amendments

1996—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 104–294 amended Pub. L. 103–322, § 320103(c). See 1994 Amendment notes below.

1994—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 103–322, § 330016(1)(L), substituted “shall be fined under this title” for “shall be fined not more than \$10,000” before “, or imprisoned not more than ten years” in concluding provisions.

Pub. L. 103–322, § 330016(1)(H), substituted “shall be fined under this title” for “shall be fined not more than \$1,000” before “, or imprisoned not more than one year” in concluding provisions.

Pub. L. 103–322, § 320103(c)(4)–(6), in concluding provisions, inserted “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,” after “death results” and substituted “shall be fined under this title or imprisoned for any term of years or for life, or both” for “shall be subject to imprisonment for any term of years or for life”.

Pub. L. 103–322, § 320103(c)(3), which provided for amendment identical to Pub. L. 103–322, § 330016(1)(L), above, was repealed by Pub. L. 104–294, § 604(b)(14)(C).

Pub. L. 103–322, § 320103(c)(2), as amended by Pub. L. 104–294, § 604(b)(37), inserted “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” after “bodily injury results” in concluding provisions.

Pub. L. 103–322, § 320103(c)(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)(C).

Pub. L. 103–322, § 60006(c), in concluding provisions, inserted “, or may be sentenced to death” before “. As used in this section”.

1990—Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 101–647 added subsec. (d).

1988—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 100–690 substituted “, the Deputy” for “or the Deputy” and inserted “, the Associate Attorney General, or any Assistant Attorney General specially designated by the Attorney General” after “Deputy Attorney General”.

Effective Date of 1996 Amendment

Amendment by 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.

Fair Housing

Section 101(b) of Pub. L. 90–284 provided that: “Nothing contained in this section [enacting this section] shall apply to or affect activities under title VIII of this Act [sections 3601 to 3619 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare].”

Riots or Civil Disturbances, Suppression and Restoration of Law and Order; Acts or Omissions of Enforcement Officers and Members of Military Service Not Subject to This Section

Section 101(c) of Pub. L. 90–284 provided that: “The provisions of this section [enacting this section] shall not apply to acts or omissions on the part of law enforcement officers, members of the National Guard, as defined in section 101 (9) of title 10, United States Code, members of the organized militia of any State or the District of Columbia, not covered by such section 101 (9), or members of the Armed Forces of the United States, who are engaged in suppressing a riot or civil disturbance or restoring law and order during a riot or civil disturbance.”