

§ 2421. Transportation generally

(a) IN GENERAL.—Whoever knowingly transports any individual in interstate or foreign commerce, or in any Territory or Possession of the United States, with intent that such individual engage in prostitution, or in any sexual activity for which any person can be charged with a criminal offense, or attempts to do so, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 10 years, or both.

(b) REQUESTS TO PROSECUTE VIOLATIONS BY STATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General shall grant a request by a State attorney general that a State or local attorney be cross designated to prosecute a violation of this section unless the Attorney General determines that granting the request would undermine the administration of justice.

(2) REASON FOR DENIAL.—If the Attorney General denies a request under paragraph (1), the Attorney General shall submit to the State attorney general a detailed reason for the denial not later than 60 days after the date on which a request is received.

(Added Pub. L. 114–22, title III, §303, May 29, 2015, 129 Stat. 255.)

Editorial Notes**PRIOR PROVISIONS**

A prior section 2421, act June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 812; May 24, 1949, ch. 139, §47, 63 Stat. 96; Pub. L. 99–628, §5(b)(1), Nov. 7, 1986, 100 Stat. 3511; Pub. L. 105–314, title I, §106, Oct. 30, 1998, 112 Stat. 2977, related to transportation of individuals generally, prior to repeal by Pub. L. 114–22, title III, §303, May 29, 2015, 129 Stat. 255.

§ 2421A. Promotion or facilitation of prostitution and reckless disregard of sex trafficking

(a) IN GENERAL.—Whoever, using a facility or means of interstate or foreign commerce or in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce, owns, manages, or operates an interactive computer service (as such term is defined in defined in¹ section 230(f) the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 230(f))), or conspires or attempts to do so, with the intent to promote or facilitate the prostitution of another person shall be fined under this title, imprisoned for not more than 10 years, or both.

(b) AGGRAVATED VIOLATION.—Whoever, using a facility or means of interstate or foreign commerce or in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce, owns, manages, or operates an interactive computer service (as such term is defined in defined in¹ section 230(f) the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 230(f))), or conspires or attempts to do so, with the intent to promote or facilitate the prostitution of another person and—

(1) promotes or facilitates the prostitution of 5 or more persons; or

(2) acts in reckless disregard of the fact that such conduct contributed to sex trafficking, in violation of² 1591(a),

shall be fined under this title, imprisoned for not more than 25 years, or both.

¹ So in original.

² So in original. Probably should be followed by “section”.

(c) CIVIL RECOVERY.—Any person injured by reason of a violation of section 2421A(b) may recover damages and reasonable attorneys’ fees in an action before any appropriate United States district court.

(d) MANDATORY RESTITUTION.—Notwithstanding sections³ 3663 or 3663A and in addition to any other civil or criminal penalties authorized by law, the court shall order restitution for any violation of subsection (b)(2). The scope and nature of such restitution shall be consistent with section 2327(b).

(e) AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE.—It shall be an affirmative defense to a charge of violating subsection (a), or subsection (b)(1) where the defendant proves, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the promotion or facilitation of prostitution is legal in the jurisdiction where the promotion or facilitation was targeted.

(Added Pub. L. 115–164, §3(a), Apr. 11, 2018, 132 Stat. 1253.)

§ 2422. Coercion and enticement

(a) Whoever knowingly persuades, induces, entices, or coerces any individual to travel in interstate or foreign commerce, or in any Territory or Possession of the United States, to engage in prostitution, or in any sexual activity for which any person can be charged with a criminal offense, or attempts to do so, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 20 years, or both.

(b) Whoever, using the mail or any facility or means of interstate or foreign commerce, or within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States knowingly persuades, induces, entices, or coerces any individual who has not attained the age of 18 years, to engage in prostitution or any sexual activity for which any person can be charged with a criminal offense, or attempts to do so, shall be fined under this title and imprisoned not less than 10 years or for life.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 812; Pub. L. 99–628, §5(b)(1), Nov. 7, 1986, 100 Stat. 3511; Pub. L. 100–690, title VII, §7070, Nov. 18, 1988, 102 Stat. 4405; Pub. L. 104–104, title V, §508, Feb. 8, 1996, 110 Stat. 137; Pub. L. 105–314, title I, §102, Oct. 30, 1998, 112 Stat. 2975; Pub. L. 108–21, title I, §103(a)(2)(A), (B), (b)(2)(A), Apr. 30, 2003, 117 Stat. 652, 653; Pub. L. 109–248, title II, §203, July 27, 2006, 120 Stat. 613.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., §399 (June 25, 1910, ch. 395, §3, 36 Stat. 825).

Words “deemed guilty of a felony” were deleted as unnecessary in view of definition of felony in section 1 of this title. (See reviser’s note under section 550 of this title.)

Words “and on conviction thereof shall be” were deleted as surplusage since punishment cannot be imposed until a conviction is secured.

The references to persons causing, procuring, aiding or assisting were omitted as unnecessary as such persons are made principals by section 2 of this title.

Words “Possession of the United States” were inserted twice. (See reviser’s note under section 2421 of this title.)

³ So in original. Probably should be “section”.

Minor changes were made in phraseology.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2006—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 109-248 substituted “not less than 10 years or for life” for “not less than 5 years and not more than 30 years”.

2003—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 108-21, §103(a)(2)(A), substituted “20 years” for “10 years”.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 108-21, §103(a)(2)(B), (b)(2)(A), substituted “and imprisoned not less than 5 years and” for “, imprisoned” and “30 years” for “15 years, or both”.

1998—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 105-314, §102(1), inserted “or attempts to do so,” before “shall be fined” and substituted “10 years” for “five years”.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 105-314, §102(2), added subsec. (b) and struck out former subsec. (b) which read as follows: “Whoever, using any facility or means of interstate or foreign commerce, including the mail, or within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States, knowingly persuades, induces, entices, or coerces any individual who has not attained the age of 18 years to engage in prostitution or any sexual act for which any person may be criminally prosecuted, or attempts to do so, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 10 years, or both.”

1996—Pub. L. 104-104 designated existing provisions as subsec. (a) and added subsec. (b).

1988—Pub. L. 100-690 substituted “or” for “of” before “foreign commerce”.

1986—Pub. L. 99-628 substituted “and enticement” for “or enticement of female” in section catchline and amended text generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “Whoever knowingly persuades, induces, entices, or coerces any woman or girl to go from one place to another in interstate or foreign commerce, or in the District of Columbia or in any Territory or Possession of the United States, for the purpose of prostitution or debauchery, or for any other immoral purpose, or with the intent and purpose on the part of such person that such woman or girl shall engage in the practice of prostitution or debauchery, or any other immoral practice, whether with or without her consent, and thereby knowingly causes such woman or girl to go and to be carried or transported as a passenger upon the line or route of any common carrier or carriers in interstate or foreign commerce, or in the District of Columbia or in any Territory or Possession of the United States, shall be fined not more than \$5,000 or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.”

§ 2423. Transportation of minors

(a) **TRANSPORTATION WITH INTENT TO ENGAGE IN CRIMINAL SEXUAL ACTIVITY.**—A person who knowingly transports an individual who has not attained the age of 18 years in interstate or foreign commerce, or in any commonwealth, territory or possession of the United States, with intent that the individual engage in prostitution, or in any sexual activity for which any person can be charged with a criminal offense, shall be fined under this title and imprisoned not less than 10 years or for life.

(b) **TRAVEL WITH INTENT TO ENGAGE IN ILLICIT SEXUAL CONDUCT.**—A person who travels in interstate commerce or travels into the United States, or a United States citizen or an alien admitted for permanent residence in the United States who travels in foreign commerce, with a motivating purpose of engaging in any illicit sexual conduct with another person shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 30 years, or both.

(c) **ENGAGING IN ILLICIT SEXUAL CONDUCT IN FOREIGN PLACES.**—Any United States citizen or

alien admitted for permanent residence who travels in foreign commerce or resides, either temporarily or permanently, in a foreign country, and engages in any illicit sexual conduct with another person shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 30 years, or both.

(d) **ANCILLARY OFFENSES.**—Whoever, for the purpose of commercial advantage or private financial gain, arranges, induces, procures, or facilitates the travel of a person knowing that such a person is traveling in interstate commerce or foreign commerce with a motivating purpose of engaging in illicit sexual conduct shall be fined under this title, imprisoned not more than 30 years, or both.

(e) **ATTEMPT AND CONSPIRACY.**—Whoever attempts or conspires to violate subsection (a), (b), (c), or (d) shall be punishable in the same manner as a completed violation of that subsection.

(f) **DEFINITION.**—As used in this section, the term “illicit sexual conduct” means—

(1) a sexual act (as defined in section 2246) with a person under 18 years of age that would be in violation of chapter 109A if the sexual act occurred in the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States;

(2) any commercial sex act (as defined in section 1591) with a person under 18 years of age; or

(3) production of child pornography (as defined in section 2256(8)).

(g) **DEFENSE.**—In a prosecution under this section based on illicit sexual conduct as defined in subsection (f)(2), it is a defense, which the defendant must establish by clear and convincing evidence, that the defendant reasonably believed that the person with whom the defendant engaged in the commercial sex act had attained the age of 18 years.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 812; Pub. L. 95-225, §3(a), Feb. 6, 1978, 92 Stat. 8; Pub. L. 99-628, §5(b)(1), Nov. 7, 1986, 100 Stat. 3511; Pub. L. 103-322, title XVI, §160001(g), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2037; Pub. L. 104-71, §5, Dec. 23, 1995, 109 Stat. 774; Pub. L. 104-294, title VI, §§601(b)(4), 604(b)(33), Oct. 11, 1996, 110 Stat. 3499, 3508; Pub. L. 105-314, title I, §103, Oct. 30, 1998, 112 Stat. 2976; Pub. L. 107-273, div. B, title IV, §4002(c)(1), Nov. 2, 2002, 116 Stat. 1808; Pub. L. 108-21, title I, §§103(a)(2)(C), (b)(2)(B), 105, Apr. 30, 2003, 117 Stat. 652, 653; Pub. L. 109-248, title II, §204, July 27, 2006, 120 Stat. 613; Pub. L. 113-4, title XII, §1211(b), Mar. 7, 2013, 127 Stat. 142; Pub. L. 114-22, title I, §111, May 29, 2015, 129 Stat. 240; Pub. L. 115-392, §14, Dec. 21, 2018, 132 Stat. 5256.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., §400 (June 25, 1910, ch. 395, §4, 36 Stat. 826).

Words “deemed guilty of a felony” were deleted as unnecessary in view of definition of felony in section 1 of this title. (See reviser’s note under section 550 of this title.)

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