

CHAPTER 2013-249

Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 1355

An act relating to the purchase of firearms by mentally ill persons; amending s. 790.065, F.S.; providing conditions under which a person who has been voluntarily admitted to a mental institution for treatment and has undergone an involuntary examination under the Baker Act may be prohibited from purchasing a firearm; providing requirements for the examining physician; providing for judicial review of certain findings; providing specified notice requirements; providing form and contents of notice; providing requirements with respect to the filing of specified records with the court and presentation of such records to a judge or magistrate; providing lawful authority of a judge or magistrate to review specified records and order that such records be submitted to the Department of Law Enforcement; providing a timeframe for submission of records to the department upon order by a judge or magistrate; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of section 790.065, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

790.065 Sale and delivery of firearms.—

(2) Upon receipt of a request for a criminal history record check, the Department of Law Enforcement shall, during the licensee's call or by return call, forthwith:

(a) Review any records available to determine if the potential buyer or transferee:

1. Has been convicted of a felony and is prohibited from receipt or possession of a firearm pursuant to s. 790.23;

2. Has been convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence, and therefore is prohibited from purchasing a firearm;

3. Has had adjudication of guilt withheld or imposition of sentence suspended on any felony or misdemeanor crime of domestic violence unless 3 years have elapsed since probation or any other conditions set by the court have been fulfilled or expunction has occurred; or

4. Has been adjudicated mentally defective or has been committed to a mental institution by a court or as provided in sub-sub-subparagraph b.(II), and as a result is prohibited by state or federal law from purchasing a firearm.

a. As used in this subparagraph, “adjudicated mentally defective” means a determination by a court that a person, as a result of marked subnormal intelligence, or mental illness, incompetency, condition, or disease, is a danger to himself or herself or to others or lacks the mental capacity to contract or manage his or her own affairs. The phrase includes a judicial finding of incapacity under s. 744.331(6)(a), an acquittal by reason of insanity of a person charged with a criminal offense, and a judicial finding that a criminal defendant is not competent to stand trial.

b. As used in this subparagraph, “committed to a mental institution” means:

(I) Involuntary commitment, commitment for mental defectiveness or mental illness, and commitment for substance abuse. The phrase includes involuntary inpatient placement as defined in s. 394.467, involuntary outpatient placement as defined in s. 394.4655, involuntary assessment and stabilization under s. 397.6818, and involuntary substance abuse treatment under s. 397.6957, but does not include a person in a mental institution for observation or discharged from a mental institution based upon the initial review by the physician or a voluntary admission to a mental institution; or-

(II) Notwithstanding sub-sub-subparagraph (I), voluntary admission to a mental institution for outpatient or inpatient treatment of a person who had an involuntary examination under s. 394.463, where each of the following conditions have been met:

(A) An examining physician found that the person is an imminent danger to himself or herself or others.

(B) The examining physician certified that if the person did not agree to voluntary treatment, a petition for involuntary outpatient or inpatient treatment would have been filed under s. 394.463(2)(i)4., or the examining physician certified that a petition was filed and the person subsequently agreed to voluntary treatment prior to a court hearing on the petition.

(C) Before agreeing to voluntary treatment, the person received written notice of that finding and certification, and written notice that as a result of such finding, he or she may be prohibited from purchasing a firearm, and may not be eligible to apply for or retain a concealed weapon or firearms license under s. 790.06 and the person acknowledged such notice in writing, in substantially the following form:

“I understand that the doctor who examined me believes I am a danger to myself or to others. I understand that if I do not agree to voluntary treatment, a petition will be filed in court to require me to receive involuntary treatment. I understand that if that petition is filed, I have the right to contest it. In the event a petition has been filed, I understand that I can subsequently agree to voluntary treatment prior to a court hearing. I understand that by agreeing to voluntary treatment in either

of these situations, I may be prohibited from buying firearms and from applying for or retaining a concealed weapons or firearms license until I apply for and receive relief from that restriction under Florida law.”

(D) A judge or a magistrate has, pursuant to sub-sub-subparagraph c.(II), reviewed the record of the finding, certification, notice, and written acknowledgement classifying the person as an imminent danger to himself or herself or others, and ordered that such record be submitted to the department.

c. In order to check for these conditions, the department shall compile and maintain an automated database of persons who are prohibited from purchasing a firearm based on court records of adjudications of mental defectiveness or commitments to mental institutions.

(I) Except as provided in sub-sub-subparagraph (II), clerks of court shall submit these records to the department within 1 month after the rendition of the adjudication or commitment. Reports shall be submitted in an automated format. The reports must, at a minimum, include the name, along with any known alias or former name, the sex, and the date of birth of the subject.

(II) For persons committed to a mental institution pursuant to sub-sub-subparagraph b.(II), within 24 hours after the person’s agreement to voluntary admission, a record of the finding, certification, notice, and written acknowledgement must be filed by the administrator of the receiving or treatment facility, as defined in s. 394.455, with the clerk of the court for the county in which the involuntary examination under s. 394.463 occurred. No fee shall be charged for the filing under this sub-sub-subparagraph. The clerk must present the records to a judge or magistrate within 24 hours after receipt of the records. A judge or magistrate is required and has the lawful authority to review the records ex parte and, if the judge or magistrate determines that the record supports the classifying of the person as an imminent danger to himself or herself or others, to order that the record be submitted to the department. If a judge or magistrate orders the submittal of the record to the department, the record must be submitted to the department within 24 hours.

d. A person who has been adjudicated mentally defective or committed to a mental institution, as those terms are defined in this paragraph, may petition the circuit court that made the adjudication or commitment, or the court that ordered that the record be submitted to the department pursuant to sub-sub-subparagraph c.(II), for relief from the firearm disabilities imposed by such adjudication or commitment. A copy of the petition shall be served on the state attorney for the county in which the person was adjudicated or committed. The state attorney may object to and present evidence relevant to the relief sought by the petition. The hearing on the petition may be open or closed as the petitioner may choose. The petitioner may present evidence and subpoena witnesses to appear at the hearing on the petition. The petitioner may confront and cross-examine witnesses called by the state attorney. A record of the hearing shall be made by a certified

court reporter or by court-approved electronic means. The court shall make written findings of fact and conclusions of law on the issues before it and issue a final order. The court shall grant the relief requested in the petition if the court finds, based on the evidence presented with respect to the petitioner's reputation, the petitioner's mental health record and, if applicable, criminal history record, the circumstances surrounding the firearm disability, and any other evidence in the record, that the petitioner will not be likely to act in a manner that is dangerous to public safety and that granting the relief would not be contrary to the public interest. If the final order denies relief, the petitioner may not petition again for relief from firearm disabilities until 1 year after the date of the final order. The petitioner may seek judicial review of a final order denying relief in the district court of appeal having jurisdiction over the court that issued the order. The review shall be conducted de novo. Relief from a firearm disability granted under this sub-subparagraph has no effect on the loss of civil rights, including firearm rights, for any reason other than the particular adjudication of mental defectiveness or commitment to a mental institution from which relief is granted.

e. Upon receipt of proper notice of relief from firearm disabilities granted under sub-subparagraph d., the department shall delete any mental health record of the person granted relief from the automated database of persons who are prohibited from purchasing a firearm based on court records of adjudications of mental defectiveness or commitments to mental institutions.

f. The department is authorized to disclose data ~~the collected pursuant to this subparagraph~~ data to agencies of the Federal Government and other states for use exclusively in determining the lawfulness of a firearm sale or transfer. The department is also authorized to disclose this any ~~collected~~ data to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for purposes of determining eligibility for issuance of a concealed weapons or concealed firearms license and for determining whether a basis exists for revoking or suspending a previously issued license pursuant to s. 790.06(10). When a potential buyer or transferee appeals a nonapproval based on these records, the clerks of court and mental institutions shall, upon request by the department, provide information to help determine whether the potential buyer or transferee is the same person as the subject of the record. Photographs and any other data that could confirm or negate identity must be made available to the department for such purposes, notwithstanding any other provision of state law to the contrary. Any such information that is made confidential or exempt from disclosure by law shall retain such confidential or exempt status when transferred to the department.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2013.

Approved by the Governor June 28, 2013.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 28, 2013.