

CHAPTER 2024-71

Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 305

An act relating to offenses involving children; amending s. 90.803, F.S.; increasing the maximum age of a child victim of specified acts whose out of court statements may be admissible in certain circumstances; amending s. 775.21, F.S.; providing that a first offense of specified sex trafficking offenses involving minors requires designation of the defendant as a sexual predator; reenacting ss. 16.713(1)(c), 39.0139(3)(a), 39.509(6)(b), 39.806(1)(d) and (n), 61.13(9)(c), 63.089(4)(b), 63.092(3), 68.07(3)(i) and (6), 92.55(1)(b), 320.02(4), 322.141(3), 322.19(1) and (2), 397.487(10)(b), 455.213(3)(b), 489.553(7), and 507.07(9), F.S., relating to the Florida Gaming Control Commission's appointment and employment restrictions, child visitation or other contact, grandparents rights, grounds for termination of parental rights, support of children, proceedings to terminate parental rights pending adoption, report to the court of intended placement by an adoption entity, change of name, special protections in proceedings involving victim or witness under 18, person with intellectual disability, or sexual offense victim, registration required, color or markings of certain licenses or identification cards, change of address or name, voluntary certification of recovery residences, general licensing provisions, administration of part III of ch. 489, F.S., and violations of ch. 507, F.S., respectively, to incorporate amendments made by the act; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subsection (23) of section 90.803, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

90.803 Hearsay exceptions; availability of declarant immaterial.—The provision of s. 90.802 to the contrary notwithstanding, the following are not inadmissible as evidence, even though the declarant is available as a witness:

(23) HEARSAY EXCEPTION; STATEMENT OF CHILD VICTIM.—

(a) Unless the source of information or the method or circumstances by which the statement is reported indicates a lack of trustworthiness, an out-of-court statement made by a child victim with a physical, mental, emotional, or developmental age of 17 ~~16~~ or less describing any act of child abuse or neglect, any act of sexual abuse against a child, the offense of child abuse, the offense of aggravated child abuse, or any offense involving an unlawful sexual act, contact, intrusion, or penetration performed in the presence of, with, by, or on the declarant child, not otherwise admissible, is admissible in evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding if:

1. The court finds in a hearing conducted outside the presence of the jury that the time, content, and circumstances of the statement provide sufficient safeguards of reliability. In making its determination, the court may consider the mental and physical age and maturity of the child, the nature and duration of the abuse or offense, the relationship of the child to the offender, the reliability of the assertion, the reliability of the child victim, and any other factor deemed appropriate; and

2. The child either:

a. Testifies; or

b. Is unavailable as a witness, provided that there is other corroborative evidence of the abuse or offense. Unavailability shall include a finding by the court that the child's participation in the trial or proceeding would result in a substantial likelihood of severe emotional or mental harm, in addition to findings pursuant to s. 90.804(1).

Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (4) of section 775.21, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

775.21 The Florida Sexual Predators Act.—

(4) SEXUAL PREDATOR CRITERIA.—

(a) For a current offense committed on or after October 1, 1993, upon conviction, an offender shall be designated as a “sexual predator” under subsection (5), and subject to registration under subsection (6) and community and public notification under subsection (7) if:

1. The felony is:

a. A capital, life, or first degree felony violation, or any attempt thereof, of s. 787.01 or s. 787.02, where the victim is a minor, or s. 787.06(3)(f) or (g), where the victim is a minor; s. 794.011, s. 800.04, or s. 847.0145, or a violation of a similar law of another jurisdiction; or

b. Any felony violation, or any attempt thereof, of s. 393.135(2); s. 394.4593(2); s. 787.01, s. 787.02, or s. 787.025(2)(c), where the victim is a minor; s. 787.06(3)(b), (d), (f), or (g); former s. 787.06(3)(h); s. 794.011, excluding s. 794.011(10); s. 794.05; former s. 796.03; former s. 796.035; s. 800.04; s. 810.145(8)(b); s. 825.1025; s. 827.071; s. 847.0135, excluding s. 847.0135(6); s. 847.0145; s. 895.03, if the court makes a written finding that the racketeering activity involved at least one sexual offense listed in this sub-subparagraph or at least one offense listed in this sub-subparagraph with sexual intent or motive; s. 916.1075(2); or s. 985.701(1); or a violation of a similar law of another jurisdiction, and the offender has previously been convicted of or found to have committed, or has pled nolo contendere or guilty to, regardless of adjudication, any violation of s. 393.135(2); s. 394.4593(2); s. 787.01, s. 787.02, or s. 787.025(2)(c), where the victim is a minor; s. 787.06(3)(b), (d), (f), or (g); former s. 787.06(3)(h); s. 794.011, excluding s.

794.011(10); s. 794.05; former s. 796.03; former s. 796.035; s. 800.04; s. 825.1025; s. 827.071; s. 847.0133; s. 847.0135, excluding s. 847.0135(6); s. 847.0145; s. 895.03, if the court makes a written finding that the racketeering activity involved at least one sexual offense listed in this sub-subparagraph or at least one offense listed in this sub-subparagraph with sexual intent or motive; s. 916.1075(2); or s. 985.701(1); or a violation of a similar law of another jurisdiction;

2. The offender has not received a pardon for any felony or similar law of another jurisdiction that is necessary for the operation of this paragraph; and

3. A conviction of a felony or similar law of another jurisdiction necessary to the operation of this paragraph has not been set aside in any postconviction proceeding.

Section 3. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 775.21, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section 16.713, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

16.713 Florida Gaming Control Commission; appointment and employment restrictions.—

(1) PERSONS INELIGIBLE FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE COMMISSION.—The following persons are ineligible for appointment to the commission:

(c) A person who has been convicted of or found guilty of or pled nolo contendere to, regardless of adjudication, in any jurisdiction, a crime listed in s. 775.21(4)(a)1. or s. 776.08.

Section 4. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 775.21, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section 39.0139, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

39.0139 Visitation or other contact; restrictions.—

(3) PRESUMPTION OF DETRIMENT.—

(a) A rebuttable presumption of detriment to a child is created when:

1. A court of competent jurisdiction has found probable cause exists that a parent or caregiver has sexually abused a child as defined in s. 39.01;

2. A parent or caregiver has been found guilty of, regardless of adjudication, or has entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to, charges under the following statutes or substantially similar statutes of other jurisdictions:

a. Section 787.04, relating to removing minors from the state or concealing minors contrary to court order;

- b. Section 794.011, relating to sexual battery;
- c. Section 798.02, relating to lewd and lascivious behavior;
- d. Chapter 800, relating to lewdness and indecent exposure;
- e. Section 826.04, relating to incest; or
- f. Chapter 827, relating to the abuse of children; or

3. A court of competent jurisdiction has determined a parent or caregiver to be a sexual predator as defined in s. 775.21 or a parent or caregiver has received a substantially similar designation under laws of another jurisdiction.

Section 5. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 775.21, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, paragraph (b) of subsection (6) of section 39.509, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

39.509 Grandparents rights.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a maternal or paternal grandparent as well as a stepgrandparent is entitled to reasonable visitation with his or her grandchild who has been adjudicated a dependent child and taken from the physical custody of the parent unless the court finds that such visitation is not in the best interest of the child or that such visitation would interfere with the goals of the case plan. Reasonable visitation may be unsupervised and, where appropriate and feasible, may be frequent and continuing. Any order for visitation or other contact must conform to the provisions of s. 39.0139.

(6) In determining whether grandparental visitation is not in the child's best interest, consideration may be given to the following:

(b) The designation by a court as a sexual predator as defined in s. 775.21 or a substantially similar designation under laws of another jurisdiction.

Section 6. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 775.21, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, paragraphs (d) and (n) of subsection (1) of section 39.806, Florida Statutes, are reenacted to read:

39.806 Grounds for termination of parental rights.—

(1) Grounds for the termination of parental rights may be established under any of the following circumstances:

(d) When the parent of a child is incarcerated and either:

1. The period of time for which the parent is expected to be incarcerated will constitute a significant portion of the child's minority. When determining whether the period of time is significant, the court shall consider the child's age and the child's need for a permanent and stable home. The period of time begins on the date that the parent enters into incarceration;

2. The incarcerated parent has been determined by the court to be a violent career criminal as defined in s. 775.084, a habitual violent felony offender as defined in s. 775.084, or a sexual predator as defined in s. 775.21; has been convicted of first degree or second degree murder in violation of s. 782.04 or a sexual battery that constitutes a capital, life, or first degree felony violation of s. 794.011; or has been convicted of an offense in another jurisdiction which is substantially similar to one of the offenses listed in this paragraph. As used in this section, the term “substantially similar offense” means any offense that is substantially similar in elements and penalties to one of those listed in this subparagraph, and that is in violation of a law of any other jurisdiction, whether that of another state, the District of Columbia, the United States or any possession or territory thereof, or any foreign jurisdiction; or

3. The court determines by clear and convincing evidence that continuing the parental relationship with the incarcerated parent would be harmful to the child and, for this reason, that termination of the parental rights of the incarcerated parent is in the best interest of the child. When determining harm, the court shall consider the following factors:

- a. The age of the child.
 - b. The relationship between the child and the parent.
 - c. The nature of the parent’s current and past provision for the child’s developmental, cognitive, psychological, and physical needs.
 - d. The parent’s history of criminal behavior, which may include the frequency of incarceration and the unavailability of the parent to the child due to incarceration.
 - e. Any other factor the court deems relevant.
- (n) The parent is convicted of an offense that requires the parent to register as a sexual predator under s. 775.21.

Section 7. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 775.21, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, paragraph (c) of subsection (9) of section 61.13, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

61.13 Support of children; parenting and time-sharing; powers of court.

(9)

(c) A court may not order visitation at a recovery residence if any resident of the recovery residence is currently required to register as a sexual predator under s. 775.21 or as a sexual offender under s. 943.0435.

Section 8. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 775.21, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, paragraph (b) of subsection (4) of section 63.089, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

63.089 Proceeding to terminate parental rights pending adoption; hearing; grounds; dismissal of petition; judgment.—

(4) FINDING OF ABANDONMENT.—A finding of abandonment resulting in a termination of parental rights must be based upon clear and convincing evidence that a parent or person having legal custody has abandoned the child in accordance with the definition contained in s. 63.032. A finding of abandonment may also be based upon emotional abuse or a refusal to provide reasonable financial support, when able, to a birth mother during her pregnancy or on whether the person alleged to have abandoned the child, while being able, failed to establish contact with the child or accept responsibility for the child's welfare.

(b) The child has been abandoned when the parent of a child is incarcerated on or after October 1, 2001, in a federal, state, or county correctional institution and:

1. The period of time for which the parent has been or is expected to be incarcerated will constitute a significant portion of the child's minority. In determining whether the period of time is significant, the court shall consider the child's age and the child's need for a permanent and stable home. The period of time begins on the date that the parent enters into incarceration;

2. The incarcerated parent has been determined by a court of competent jurisdiction to be a violent career criminal as defined in s. 775.084, a habitual violent felony offender as defined in s. 775.084, convicted of child abuse as defined in s. 827.03, or a sexual predator as defined in s. 775.21; has been convicted of first degree or second degree murder in violation of s. 782.04 or a sexual battery that constitutes a capital, life, or first degree felony violation of s. 794.011; or has been convicted of a substantially similar offense in another jurisdiction. As used in this section, the term "substantially similar offense" means any offense that is substantially similar in elements and penalties to one of those listed in this subparagraph, and that is in violation of a law of any other jurisdiction, whether that of another state, the District of Columbia, the United States or any possession or territory thereof, or any foreign jurisdiction; or

3. The court determines by clear and convincing evidence that continuing the parental relationship with the incarcerated parent would be harmful to the child and, for this reason, termination of the parental rights of the incarcerated parent is in the best interests of the child.

Section 9. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 775.21, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, subsection (3) of section 63.092, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

63.092 Report to the court of intended placement by an adoption entity; at-risk placement; preliminary study.—

(3) PRELIMINARY HOME STUDY.—Before placing the minor in the intended adoptive home, a preliminary home study must be performed by a licensed child-placing agency, a child-caring agency registered under s. 409.176, a licensed professional, or an agency described in s. 61.20(2), unless the adoptee is an adult or the petitioner is a stepparent or a relative. If the adoptee is an adult or the petitioner is a stepparent or a relative, a preliminary home study may be required by the court for good cause shown. The department is required to perform the preliminary home study only if there is no licensed child-placing agency, child-caring agency registered under s. 409.176, licensed professional, or agency described in s. 61.20(2), in the county where the prospective adoptive parents reside. The preliminary home study must be made to determine the suitability of the intended adoptive parents and may be completed before identification of a prospective adoptive minor. If the identified prospective adoptive minor is in the custody of the department, a preliminary home study must be completed within 30 days after it is initiated. A favorable preliminary home study is valid for 1 year after the date of its completion. Upon its completion, a signed copy of the home study must be provided to the intended adoptive parents who were the subject of the home study. A minor may not be placed in an intended adoptive home before a favorable preliminary home study is completed unless the adoptive home is also a licensed foster home under s. 409.175. The preliminary home study must include, at a minimum:

- (a) An interview with the intended adoptive parents.
- (b) Records checks of the department's central abuse registry, which the department shall provide to the entity conducting the preliminary home study, and criminal records correspondence checks under s. 39.0138 through the Department of Law Enforcement on the intended adoptive parents.
- (c) An assessment of the physical environment of the home.
- (d) A determination of the financial security of the intended adoptive parents.
- (e) Documentation of counseling and education of the intended adoptive parents on adoptive parenting, as determined by the entity conducting the preliminary home study. The training specified in s. 409.175(14) shall only be required for persons who adopt children from the department.
- (f) Documentation that information on adoption and the adoption process has been provided to the intended adoptive parents.
- (g) Documentation that information on support services available in the community has been provided to the intended adoptive parents.
- (h) A copy of each signed acknowledgment of receipt of disclosure required by s. 63.085.

If the preliminary home study is favorable, a minor may be placed in the home pending entry of the judgment of adoption. A minor may not be placed

in the home if the preliminary home study is unfavorable. If the preliminary home study is unfavorable, the adoption entity may, within 20 days after receipt of a copy of the written recommendation, petition the court to determine the suitability of the intended adoptive home. A determination as to suitability under this subsection does not act as a presumption of suitability at the final hearing. In determining the suitability of the intended adoptive home, the court must consider the totality of the circumstances in the home. A minor may not be placed in a home in which there resides any person determined by the court to be a sexual predator as defined in s. 775.21 or to have been convicted of an offense listed in s. 63.089(4)(b)2.

Section 10. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 775.21, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, paragraph (i) of subsection (3) and subsection (6) of section 68.07, Florida Statutes, are reenacted to read:

68.07 Change of name.—

(3) Each petition shall be verified and show:

(i) Whether the petitioner has ever been required to register as a sexual predator under s. 775.21 or as a sexual offender under s. 943.0435.

(6) The clerk of the court must, within 5 business days after the filing of the final judgment, send a report of the judgment to the Department of Law Enforcement on a form to be furnished by that department. If the petitioner is required to register as a sexual predator or a sexual offender pursuant to s. 775.21 or s. 943.0435, the clerk of court shall electronically notify the Department of Law Enforcement of the name change, in a manner prescribed by that department, within 2 business days after the filing of the final judgment. The Department of Law Enforcement must send a copy of the report to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, which may be delivered by electronic transmission. The report must contain sufficient information to identify the petitioner, including the results of the criminal history records check if applicable, the new name of the petitioner, and the file number of the judgment. The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles shall monitor the records of any sexual predator or sexual offender whose name has been provided to it by the Department of Law Enforcement. If the sexual predator or sexual offender does not obtain a replacement driver license or identification card within the required time as specified in s. 775.21 or s. 943.0435, the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles shall notify the Department of Law Enforcement. The Department of Law Enforcement shall notify applicable law enforcement agencies of the predator's or offender's failure to comply with registration requirements. Any information retained by the Department of Law Enforcement and the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles may be revised or supplemented by said departments to reflect changes made by the final judgment. With respect to a person convicted of a felony in another state or of a federal offense, the Department of Law Enforcement must send the report to the respective state's office of law enforcement

records or to the office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The Department of Law Enforcement may forward the report to any other law enforcement agency it believes may retain information related to the petitioner.

Section 11. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 775.21, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 92.55, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

92.55 Special protections in proceedings involving victim or witness under 18, person with intellectual disability, or sexual offense victim.—

(1) For purposes of this section, the term:

(b) “Sexual offense” means any offense specified in s. 775.21(4)(a)1. or s. 943.0435(1)(h)1.a.(I).

Section 12. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 775.21, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, subsection (4) of section 320.02, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

320.02 Registration required; application for registration; forms.—

(4) Except as provided in ss. 775.21, 775.261, 943.0435, 944.607, and 985.4815, the owner of any motor vehicle registered in the state shall notify the department in writing of any change of address within 30 days of such change. The notification shall include the registration license plate number, the vehicle identification number (VIN) or title certificate number, year of vehicle make, and the owner’s full name.

Section 13. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 775.21, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, subsection (3) of section 322.141, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

322.141 Color or markings of certain licenses or identification cards.—

(3) All licenses for the operation of motor vehicles or identification cards originally issued or reissued by the department to persons who are designated as sexual predators under s. 775.21 or subject to registration as sexual offenders under s. 943.0435 or s. 944.607, or who have a similar designation or are subject to a similar registration under the laws of another jurisdiction, shall have on the front of the license or identification card the following:

(a) For a person designated as a sexual predator under s. 775.21 or who has a similar designation under the laws of another jurisdiction, the marking “SEXUAL PREDATOR.”

(b) For a person subject to registration as a sexual offender under s. 943.0435 or s. 944.607, or subject to a similar registration under the laws of another jurisdiction, the marking “943.0435, F.S.”

Section 14. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 775.21, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, subsections (1) and (2) of section 322.19, Florida Statutes, are reenacted to read:

322.19 Change of address or name.—

(1) Except as provided in ss. 775.21, 775.261, 943.0435, 944.607, and 985.4815, whenever any person, after applying for or receiving a driver license or identification card, changes his or her legal name, that person must within 30 days thereafter obtain a replacement license or card that reflects the change.

(2) If a person, after applying for or receiving a driver license or identification card, changes the legal residence or mailing address in the application, license, or card, the person must, within 30 calendar days after making the change, obtain a replacement license or card that reflects the change. A written request to the department must include the old and new addresses and the driver license or identification card number. Any person who has a valid, current student identification card issued by an educational institution in this state is presumed not to have changed his or her legal residence or mailing address. This subsection does not affect any person required to register a permanent or temporary address change pursuant to s. 775.13, s. 775.21, s. 775.25, or s. 943.0435.

Section 15. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 775.21, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, paragraph (b) of subsection (10) of section 397.487, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

397.487 Voluntary certification of recovery residences.—

(10)

(b) A certified recovery residence may not allow a minor child to visit a parent who is a resident of the recovery residence at any time if any resident of the recovery residence is currently required to register as a sexual predator under s. 775.21 or as a sexual offender under s. 943.0435.

Section 16. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 775.21, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, paragraph (b) of subsection (3) of section 455.213, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

455.213 General licensing provisions.—

(3)

(b)1. A conviction, or any other adjudication, for a crime more than 5 years before the date the application is received by the applicable board may not be grounds for denial of a license specified in paragraph (a). For purposes of this paragraph, the term “conviction” means a determination of guilt that

is the result of a plea or trial, regardless of whether adjudication is withheld. This paragraph does not limit the applicable board from considering an applicant's criminal history that includes a crime listed in s. 775.21(4)(a)1. or s. 776.08 at any time, but only if such criminal history has been found to relate to the practice of the applicable profession.

2. The applicable board may consider the criminal history of an applicant for licensure under subparagraph (a)3. if such criminal history has been found to relate to good moral character.

Section 17. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 775.21, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, subsection (7) of section 489.553, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

489.553 Administration of part; registration qualifications; examination.—

(7) Notwithstanding any other law, a conviction, or any other adjudication, for a crime more than 5 years before the date the application is received by the department or other applicable authority may not be grounds for denial of registration. For purposes of this subsection, the term "conviction" means a determination of guilt that is the result of a plea or trial, regardless of whether adjudication is withheld. This subsection does not limit a board from considering an applicant's criminal history that includes any crime listed in s. 775.21(4)(a)1. or s. 776.08 at any time, but only if such criminal history has been found to relate to the practice of the applicable profession, or any crime if it has been found to relate to good moral character.

Section 18. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 775.21, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, subsection (9) of section 507.07, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

507.07 Violations.—It is a violation of this chapter:

(9) For a mover or a moving broker to knowingly refuse or fail to disclose in writing to a customer before a household move that the mover, or an employee or subcontractor of the mover or moving broker, who has access to the dwelling or property of the customer, including access to give a quote for the move, has been convicted of a felony listed in s. 775.21(4)(a)1. or convicted of a similar offense of another jurisdiction, regardless of when such felony offense was committed.

Section 19. This act shall take effect July 1, 2024.

Approved by the Governor April 10, 2024.

Filed in Office Secretary of State April 10, 2024.