

§ 285. Taking or using papers relating to claims

Whoever, without authority, takes and carries away from the place where it was filed, deposited, or kept by authority of the United States, any certificate, affidavit, deposition, statement of facts, power of attorney, receipt, voucher, assignment, or other document, record, file, or paper prepared, fitted, or intended to be used or presented to procure the payment of money from or by the United States or any officer, employee, or agent thereof, or the allowance or payment of the whole or any part of any claim, account, or demand against the United States, whether the same has or has not already been so used or presented, and whether such claim, account, or demand, or any part thereof has or has not already been allowed or paid; or

Whoever presents, uses, or attempts to use any such document, record, file, or paper so taken and carried away, to procure the payment of any money from or by the United States, or any officer, employee, or agent thereof, or the allowance or payment of the whole or any part of any claim, account, or demand against the United States—

Shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 698; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, § 330016(1)(K), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2147.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., § 92 (Mar. 4, 1909, ch. 321, § 40, 35 Stat. 1096).

Word “employee” was inserted after “officer” in two places to clarify scope of section.

The words “five years” were substituted for “ten years” in the punishment provision to conform to like provisions in similar offenses. (See section 1001 of this title.)

Changes were made in phraseology.

AMENDMENTS

1994—Pub. L. 103-322 substituted “fined under this title” for “fined not more than \$5,000”.

§ 286. Conspiracy to defraud the Government with respect to claims

Whoever enters into any agreement, combination, or conspiracy to defraud the United States, or any department or agency thereof, by obtaining or aiding to obtain the payment or allowance of any false, fictitious or fraudulent claim, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 698; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, § 330016(1)(L), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2147.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., § 83 (Mar. 4, 1909, ch. 321, § 35, 35 Stat. 1095; Oct. 23, 1918, ch. 194, 40 Stat. 1015; June 18, 1934, ch. 587, 48 Stat. 996; Apr. 4, 1938, ch. 69, 52 Stat. 197).

To clarify meaning of “department” the word “agency” was inserted after it. (See definitions of “department” and “agency” in section 6 of this title.)

Words “or any corporation in which the United States of America is a stockholder” were omitted as unnecessary in view of definition of “agency” in section 6 of this title.

Minor changes in phraseology were made.

AMENDMENTS

1994—Pub. L. 103-322 substituted “fined under this title” for “fined not more than \$10,000”.

§ 287. False, fictitious or fraudulent claims

Whoever makes or presents to any person or officer in the civil, military, or naval service of the United States, or to any department or agency thereof, any claim upon or against the United States, or any department or agency thereof, knowing such claim to be false, fictitious, or fraudulent, shall be imprisoned not more than five years and shall be subject to a fine in the amount provided in this title.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 698; Pub. L. 99-562, § 7, Oct. 27, 1986, 100 Stat. 3169.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., § 80 (Mar. 4, 1909, ch. 321, § 35, 35 Stat. 1095; Oct. 23, 1918, ch. 194, 40 Stat. 1015; June 18, 1934, ch. 587, 48 Stat. 996; Apr. 4, 1938, ch. 69, 52 Stat. 197).

Section 80 of title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., was divided into two parts. That portion making it a crime to present false claims was retained as this section. The part relating to false statements is now section 1001 of this title.

To clarify meaning of “department” words “agency” and “or agency” were inserted after it. (See definitions of “department” and “agency” in section 6 of this title.)

Words “or any corporation in which the United States of America is a stockholder” which appeared in two places were omitted as unnecessary in view of definition of “agency” in section 6 of this title.

The words “five years” were substituted for “ten years” to harmonize the punishment provisions of comparable sections involving offenses of the gravity of felonies, but not of such heinous character as to warrant a 10-year punishment. (See sections 914, 1001, 1002, 1005, 1006 of this title.)

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

Minor changes in phraseology were made.

AMENDMENTS

1986—Pub. L. 99-562 substituted “imprisoned not more than five years and shall be subject to a fine in the amount provided in this title” for “fined not more than \$10,000 or imprisoned not more than five years, or both”.

INCREASED PENALTIES FOR FALSE CLAIMS IN DEFENSE PROCUREMENT

Pub. L. 99-145, title IX, § 931(a), Nov. 8, 1985, 99 Stat. 699, provided that: “Notwithstanding sections 287 and 3623 of title 18, United States Code, the maximum fine that may be imposed under such section for making or presenting any claim upon or against the United States related to a contract with the Department of Defense, knowing such claim to be false, fictitious, or fraudulent, is \$1,000,000.”

[Section 931(c) of Pub. L. 99-145 provided that section 931(a) is applicable to claims made or presented on or after Nov. 8, 1985.]

§ 288. False claims for postal losses

Whoever makes, alleges, or presents any claim or application for indemnity for the loss of any registered or insured letter, parcel, package, or other article or matter, or the contents thereof, knowing such claim or application to be false, fictitious, or fraudulent; or

Whoever for the purpose of obtaining or aiding to obtain the payment or approval of any such

claim or application, makes or uses any false statement, certificate, affidavit, or deposition; or

Whoever knowingly and willfully misrepresents, or misstates, or, for the purpose aforesaid, knowingly and willfully conceals any material fact or circumstance in respect of any such claim or application for indemnity—

Shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than one year, or both.

Where the amount of such claim or application for indemnity is less than \$1,000 only a fine shall be imposed.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 698; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, §330016(1)(G), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2147; Pub. L. 104-294, title VI, §606(a), Oct. 11, 1996, 110 Stat. 3511.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., §354 (Mar. 4, 1909, ch. 321, §224, 35 Stat. 1133; Aug. 5, 1939, ch. 429, 53 Stat. 1203).

Reference to persons causing, assisting, aiding, or abetting, was omitted as such persons are made principals by section 2 of this title.

Changes in phraseology were made.

AMENDMENTS

1996—Pub. L. 104-294 substituted “\$1,000” for “\$100” in fifth par.

1994—Pub. L. 103-322 substituted “fined under this title” for “fined not more than \$500” in fourth par.

§ 289. False claims for pensions

Whoever knowingly and willfully makes, or presents any false, fictitious or fraudulent affidavit, declaration, certificate, voucher, endorsement, or paper or writing purporting to be such, concerning any claim for pension or payment thereof, or pertaining to any other matter within the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or knowingly or willfully makes or presents any paper required as a voucher in drawing a pension, which paper bears a date subsequent to that upon which it was actually signed or acknowledged by the pensioner; or

Whoever knowingly and falsely certifies that the declarant, affiant, or witness named in such declaration, affidavit, voucher, endorsement, or other paper or writing personally appeared before him and was sworn thereto, or acknowledged the execution thereof—

Shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 699; Pub. L. 102-54, §13(f)(1), June 13, 1991, 105 Stat. 275; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, §330016(1)(L), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2147.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on section 81 of title 18, section 126 of title 38, Pensions, Bonuses, and Veterans' Relief, and section 787 of title 43, Public Lands, all of U.S.C., 1940 ed. (R.S. §4746; July 7, 1898, ch. 578, 30 Stat. 718; Aug. 17, 1912, ch. 301, §1, 37 Stat. 312; July 3, 1930, ch. 863, §2, 46 Stat. 1016).

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

Words “or bounty land”, before “prosecution of any claim for pension”, were omitted as obsolete. (See reviser's note under section 290 of this title.)

Upon authority of 1930 enactment words “Administrator of Veterans' Affairs” were substituted for “Commissioner of Pensions or of the Secretary of the Interior”, which appeared in 1898 enactment.

The fine was changed from “\$500” for “\$10,000” to conform with punishment provision of section 287 of this title.

Minor changes in phraseology were also made.

AMENDMENTS

1994—Pub. L. 103-322 substituted “fined under this title” for “fined not more than \$10,000”.

1991—Pub. L. 102-54 substituted “Secretary of Veterans Affairs” for “Administrator of Veterans' Affairs”.

§ 290. Discharge papers withheld by claim agent

Whoever, being a claim agent, attorney, or other person engaged in the collection of claims for pay, pension, or other allowances for any soldier, sailor, or marine, or for any commissioned officer of the military or naval forces, or for any person who may have been a soldier, sailor, marine, or officer of the regular or volunteer forces of the United States, or for his dependents or beneficiaries, retains, without the consent of the owner or owners thereof, or refuses to deliver or account for the same upon demand duly made by the owner or owners thereof, or by their agent or attorney, the discharge papers of any such soldier, sailor, or marine, or commissioned officer, which may have been placed in his hands for the purpose of collecting said claims, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than six months, or both; and shall be debarred from prosecuting any such claim in any department or agency of the United States.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 699; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, §330016(1)(G), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2147.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on section 100 of title 31, Money and Finance, section 130 of title 38, Pensions, Bonuses, and Veterans' Relief, and section 841 of title 43, Public Lands, all U.S.C., 1940 ed. (May 21, 1872, ch. 178, 17 Stat. 137).

Words “deemed guilty of a misdemeanor” were deleted as unnecessary. (See definition of “misdemeanor” in section 1 of this title.)

Words “and shall upon conviction, be” were omitted as surplusage since punishment can follow only after conviction.

To clarify meaning of “executive department” word “executive” before “department” was deleted and words “or agency” were inserted after it. (See definitions of “department” and “agency” in section 6 of this title.)

Words “bounty”, before “pension”, and “or land warrant”, before “of any such soldier”, were deleted as obsolete. According to regulations, Circular 1151, January 8, 1929, issued by the Secretary of the Interior and the General Land Office (see 43 CFR 131.1-131.2) “warrants for bounty lands were and are issued by the Commissioner of Pensions (Administrator of Veterans' Affairs) for services in wars or battles prior to March 3, 1855 only.” Further, it is stated that “Warrants can not now be ‘located’ upon the public lands. The locating privilege was denied except in the state of Missouri after the passage of the act of March 2, 1889 (25 Stat. 854; 43 U.S.C. §700), and there are no lands known to the General Land Office to be subject to warrant location in Missouri.”

Words “and honorably discharged” were omitted as unnecessary and words “or for his dependents or beneficiaries” were inserted after “United States” so as to embrace an important class of persons who employ at-