

“(2) the impact of many civil monetary penalties has been and is diminished due to the effect of inflation;

“(3) by reducing the impact of civil monetary penalties, inflation has weakened the deterrent effect of such penalties; and

“(4) the Federal Government does not maintain comprehensive, detailed accounting of the efforts of Federal agencies to assess and collect civil monetary penalties.

“(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to establish a mechanism that shall—

“(1) allow for regular adjustment for inflation of civil monetary penalties;

“(2) maintain the deterrent effect of civil monetary penalties and promote compliance with the law; and

“(3) improve the collection by the Federal Government of civil monetary penalties.

#### “DEFINITIONS

“SEC. 3. For purposes of this Act, the term—

“(1) ‘agency’ means an Executive agency as defined under section 105 of title 5, United States Code, and includes the United States Postal Service;

“(2) ‘civil monetary penalty’ means any penalty, fine, or other sanction that—

“(A)(i) is for a specific monetary amount as provided by Federal law; or

“(ii) has a maximum amount provided for by Federal law; and

“(B) is assessed or enforced by an agency pursuant to Federal law; and

“(C) is assessed or enforced pursuant to an administrative proceeding or a civil action in the Federal courts; and

“(3) ‘Consumer Price Index’ means the Consumer Price Index for all-urban consumers published by the Department of Labor.

#### “CIVIL MONETARY PENALTY INFLATION ADJUSTMENT REPORTS

“SEC. 4. The head of each agency shall, not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 [Apr. 26, 1996], and at least once every 4 years thereafter—

“(1) by regulation adjust each civil monetary penalty provided by law within the jurisdiction of the Federal agency, except for any penalty (including any addition to tax and additional amount) under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 [26 U.S.C. 1 et seq.], the Tariff Act of 1930 [19 U.S.C. 1202 et seq.], the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 [29 U.S.C. 651 et seq.], or the Social Security Act [42 U.S.C. 301 et seq.], by the inflation adjustment described under section 5 of this Act; and

“(2) publish each such regulation in the Federal Register.

#### “COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS OF CIVIL MONETARY PENALTIES

“SEC. 5. (a) ADJUSTMENT.—The inflation adjustment under section 4 shall be determined by increasing the maximum civil monetary penalty or the range of minimum and maximum civil monetary penalties, as applicable, for each civil monetary penalty by the cost-of-living adjustment. Any increase determined under this subsection shall be rounded to the nearest—

“(1) multiple of \$10 in the case of penalties less than or equal to \$100;

“(2) multiple of \$100 in the case of penalties greater than \$100 but less than or equal to \$1,000;

“(3) multiple of \$1,000 in the case of penalties greater than \$1,000 but less than or equal to \$10,000;

“(4) multiple of \$5,000 in the case of penalties greater than \$10,000 but less than or equal to \$100,000;

“(5) multiple of \$10,000 in the case of penalties greater than \$100,000 but less than or equal to \$200,000; and

“(6) multiple of \$25,000 in the case of penalties greater than \$200,000.

“(b) DEFINITION.—For purposes of subsection (a), the term ‘cost-of-living adjustment’ means the percentage (if any) for each civil monetary penalty by which—

“(1) the Consumer Price Index for the month of June of the calendar year preceding the adjustment, exceeds

“(2) the Consumer Price Index for the month of June of the calendar year in which the amount of such civil monetary penalty was last set or adjusted pursuant to law.

“SEC. 6. Any increase under this Act in a civil monetary penalty shall apply only to violations which occur after the date the increase takes effect.”

[Pub. L. 104-134, title III, §31001(s)(2), Apr. 26, 1996, 110 Stat. 1321-373, provided that: “The first adjustment of a civil monetary penalty made pursuant to the amendment made by paragraph (1) [amending Pub. L. 101-410, set out above] may not exceed 10 percent of such penalty.”]

[For authority of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to consolidate reports required under the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 1990, Pub. L. 101-410, set out above, to be submitted between Jan. 1, 1995, and Sept. 30, 1997, or to adjust their frequency and due dates, see section 404 of Pub. L. 103-356, set out as a note under section 501 of Title 31, Money and Finance.]

### § 2462. Time for commencing proceedings

Except as otherwise provided by Act of Congress, an action, suit or proceeding for the enforcement of any civil fine, penalty, or forfeiture, pecuniary or otherwise, shall not be entertained unless commenced within five years from the date when the claim first accrued if, within the same period, the offender or the property is found within the United States in order that proper service may be made thereon.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 646, 62 Stat. 974.)

#### HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on title 28, U.S.C., 1940 ed., §791 (R.S. §1047). Changes were made in phraseology.

### § 2463. Property taken under revenue law not releivable

All property taken or detained under any revenue law of the United States shall not be releivable, but shall be deemed to be in the custody of the law and subject only to the orders and decrees of the courts of the United States having jurisdiction thereof.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 646, 62 Stat. 974.)

#### HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on title 28, U.S.C., 1940 ed., §747 (R.S. §934). Changes were made in phraseology.

### § 2464. Security; special bond

(a) Except in cases of seizures for forfeiture under any law of the United States, whenever a warrant of arrest or other process in rem is issued in any admiralty case, the United States marshal shall stay the execution of such process, or discharge the property arrested if the process has been levied, on receiving from the respondent or claimant of the property a bond or stipulation in double the amount claimed by the libellant, with sufficient surety, to be approved by the judge of the district court where the case is pending, or, in his absence, by the collector of the port, conditioned to answer the decree of the

court in such case. Such bond or stipulation shall be returned to the court, and judgment or decree thereon, against both the principal and sureties, may be secured at the time of rendering the decree in the original case. The owner of any vessel may deliver to the marshal a bond or stipulation, with sufficient surety, to be approved by the judge of the district court, conditioned to answer the decree of such court in all or any cases that are brought thereafter in such court against the vessel. Thereupon the execution of all such process against such vessel shall be stayed so long as the amount secured by such bond or stipulation is at least double the aggregate amount claimed by libellants in such suits which are begun and pending against such vessel. Similar judgments or decrees and remedies may be had on such bond or stipulation as if a special bond or stipulation had been filed in each of such suits.

(b) The court may make necessary orders to carry this section into effect, particularly in giving proper notice of any such suit. Such bond or stipulation shall be indorsed by the clerk with a minute of the suits wherein process is so stayed. Further security may be required by the court at any time.

(c) If a special bond or stipulation in the particular case is given under this section, the liability as to said case on the general bond or stipulation shall cease. The parties may stipulate the amount of the bond or stipulation for the release of a vessel or other property to be not more than the amount claimed in the libel, with interest, plus an allowance for libellant's costs. In the event of the inability or refusal of the parties to so stipulate, the court shall fix the amount, but if not so fixed then a bond shall be required in the amount prescribed in this section.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 646, 62 Stat. 974.)

#### HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on title 28, U.S.C., 1940 ed., § 754 (R.S. § 941; Mar. 3, 1899, ch. 441, 30 Stat. 1354; Aug. 3, 1935, ch. 431, § 3, 49 Stat. 513).

Changes were made in phraseology.

#### TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

All offices of collector of customs, comptroller of customs, surveyor of customs, and appraiser of merchandise of Bureau of Customs of Department of the Treasury to which appointments were required to be made by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate were ordered abolished, with such offices to be terminated not later than Dec. 31, 1966, by Reorg. Plan No. 1, of 1965, eff. May 25, 1965, 30 F.R. 7035, 79 Stat. 1317, set out in the Appendix to Title 5, Government Organization and Employees. All functions of the offices eliminated were already vested in the Secretary of the Treasury by Reorg. Plan No. 26 of 1950, eff. July 31, 1950, 15 F.R. 4935, 64 Stat. 1280, set out in the Appendix to Title 5.

#### § 2465. Return of property to claimant; liability for wrongful seizure; attorney fees, costs, and interest

(a) Upon the entry of a judgment for the claimant in any proceeding to condemn or forfeit property seized or arrested under any provision of Federal law—

(1) such property shall be returned forthwith to the claimant or his agent; and

(2) if it appears that there was reasonable cause for the seizure or arrest, the court shall cause a proper certificate thereof to be entered and, in such case, neither the person who made the seizure or arrest nor the prosecutor shall be liable to suit or judgment on account of such suit or prosecution, nor shall the claimant be entitled to costs, except as provided in subsection (b).

(b)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), in any civil proceeding to forfeit property under any provision of Federal law in which the claimant substantially prevails, the United States shall be liable for—

(A) reasonable attorney fees and other litigation costs reasonably incurred by the claimant;

(B) post-judgment interest, as set forth in section 1961 of this title; and

(C) in cases involving currency, other negotiable instruments, or the proceeds of an interlocutory sale—

(i) interest actually paid to the United States from the date of seizure or arrest of the property that resulted from the investment of the property in an interest-bearing account or instrument; and

(ii) an imputed amount of interest that such currency, instruments, or proceeds would have earned at the rate applicable to the 30-day Treasury Bill, for any period during which no interest was paid (not including any period when the property reasonably was in use as evidence in an official proceeding or in conducting scientific tests for the purpose of collecting evidence), commencing 15 days after the property was seized by a Federal law enforcement agency, or was turned over to a Federal law enforcement agency by a State or local law enforcement agency.

(2)(A) The United States shall not be required to disgorge the value of any intangible benefits nor make any other payments to the claimant not specifically authorized by this subsection.

(B) The provisions of paragraph (1) shall not apply if the claimant is convicted of a crime for which the interest of the claimant in the property was subject to forfeiture under a Federal criminal forfeiture law.

(C) If there are multiple claims to the same property, the United States shall not be liable for costs and attorneys fees associated with any such claim if the United States—

(i) promptly recognizes such claim;

(ii) promptly returns the interest of the claimant in the property to the claimant, if the property can be divided without difficulty and there are no competing claims to that portion of the property;

(iii) does not cause the claimant to incur additional, reasonable costs or fees; and

(iv) prevails in obtaining forfeiture with respect to one or more of the other claims.

(D) If the court enters judgment in part for the claimant and in part for the Government, the court shall reduce the award of costs and attorney fees accordingly.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 646, 62 Stat. 975; Pub. L. 106-185, § 4(a), Apr. 25, 2000, 114 Stat. 211.)