

## EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1996 AMENDMENT

Amendment by section 604(b)(35) of Pub. L. 104-294 effective Sept. 13, 1994, see section 604(d) of Pub. L. 104-294, set out as a note under section 13 of this title.

**§ 3593. Special hearing to determine whether a sentence of death is justified**

(a) NOTICE BY THE GOVERNMENT.—If, in a case involving an offense described in section 3591, the attorney for the government believes that the circumstances of the offense are such that a sentence of death is justified under this chapter, the attorney shall, a reasonable time before the trial or before acceptance by the court of a plea of guilty, sign and file with the court, and serve on the defendant, a notice—

(1) stating that the government believes that the circumstances of the offense are such that, if the defendant is convicted, a sentence of death is justified under this chapter and that the government will seek the sentence of death; and

(2) setting forth the aggravating factor or factors that the government, if the defendant is convicted, proposes to prove as justifying a sentence of death.

The factors for which notice is provided under this subsection may include factors concerning the effect of the offense on the victim and the victim's family, and may include oral testimony, a victim impact statement that identifies the victim of the offense and the extent and scope of the injury and loss suffered by the victim and the victim's family, and any other relevant information. The court may permit the attorney for the government to amend the notice upon a showing of good cause.

(b) HEARING BEFORE A COURT OR JURY.—If the attorney for the government has filed a notice as required under subsection (a) and the defendant is found guilty of or pleads guilty to an offense described in section 3591, the judge who presided at the trial or before whom the guilty plea was entered, or another judge if that judge is unavailable, shall conduct a separate sentencing hearing to determine the punishment to be imposed. The hearing shall be conducted—

(1) before the jury that determined the defendant's guilt;

(2) before a jury impaneled for the purpose of the hearing if—

(A) the defendant was convicted upon a plea of guilty;

(B) the defendant was convicted after a trial before the court sitting without a jury;

(C) the jury that determined the defendant's guilt was discharged for good cause; or

(D) after initial imposition of a sentence under this section, reconsideration of the sentence under this section is necessary; or

(3) before the court alone, upon the motion of the defendant and with the approval of the attorney for the government.

A jury impaneled pursuant to paragraph (2) shall consist of 12 members, unless, at any time before the conclusion of the hearing, the parties stipulate, with the approval of the court, that it shall consist of a lesser number.

(c) PROOF OF MITIGATING AND AGGRAVATING FACTORS.—Notwithstanding rule 32 of the Fed-

eral Rules of Criminal Procedure, when a defendant is found guilty or pleads guilty to an offense under section 3591, no presentence report shall be prepared. At the sentencing hearing, information may be presented as to any matter relevant to the sentence, including any mitigating or aggravating factor permitted or required to be considered under section 3592. Information presented may include the trial transcript and exhibits if the hearing is held before a jury or judge not present during the trial, or at the trial judge's discretion. The defendant may present any information relevant to a mitigating factor. The government may present any information relevant to an aggravating factor for which notice has been provided under subsection (a). Information is admissible regardless of its admissibility under the rules governing admission of evidence at criminal trials except that information may be excluded if its probative value is outweighed by the danger of creating unfair prejudice, confusing the issues, or misleading the jury. For the purposes of the preceding sentence, the fact that a victim, as defined in section 3510, attended or observed the trial shall not be construed to pose a danger of creating unfair prejudice, confusing the issues, or misleading the jury. The government and the defendant shall be permitted to rebut any information received at the hearing, and shall be given fair opportunity to present argument as to the adequacy of the information to establish the existence of any aggravating or mitigating factor, and as to the appropriateness in the case of imposing a sentence of death. The government shall open the argument. The defendant shall be permitted to reply. The government shall then be permitted to reply in rebuttal. The burden of establishing the existence of any aggravating factor is on the government, and is not satisfied unless the existence of such a factor is established beyond a reasonable doubt. The burden of establishing the existence of any mitigating factor is on the defendant, and is not satisfied unless the existence of such a factor is established by a preponderance of the information.

(d) RETURN OF SPECIAL FINDINGS.—The jury, or if there is no jury, the court, shall consider all the information received during the hearing. It shall return special findings identifying any aggravating factor or factors set forth in section 3592 found to exist and any other aggravating factor for which notice has been provided under subsection (a) found to exist. A finding with respect to a mitigating factor may be made by 1 or more members of the jury, and any member of the jury who finds the existence of a mitigating factor may consider such factor established for purposes of this section regardless of the number of jurors who concur that the factor has been established. A finding with respect to any aggravating factor must be unanimous. If no aggravating factor set forth in section 3592 is found to exist, the court shall impose a sentence other than death authorized by law.

(e) RETURN OF A FINDING CONCERNING A SENTENCE OF DEATH.—If, in the case of—

(1) an offense described in section 3591(a)(1), an aggravating factor required to be considered under section 3592(b) is found to exist;

- (2) an offense described in section 3591(a)(2), an aggravating factor required to be considered under section 3592(c) is found to exist; or
- (3) an offense described in section 3591(b), an aggravating factor required to be considered under section 3592(d) is found to exist,

the jury, or if there is no jury, the court, shall consider whether all the aggravating factor or factors found to exist sufficiently outweigh all the mitigating factor or factors found to exist to justify a sentence of death, or, in the absence of a mitigating factor, whether the aggravating factor or factors alone are sufficient to justify a sentence of death. Based upon this consideration, the jury by unanimous vote, or if there is no jury, the court, shall recommend whether the defendant should be sentenced to death, to life imprisonment without possibility of release or some other lesser sentence.

(f) SPECIAL PRECAUTION TO ENSURE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION.—In a hearing held before a jury, the court, prior to the return of a finding under subsection (e), shall instruct the jury that, in considering whether a sentence of death is justified, it shall not consider the race, color, religious beliefs, national origin, or sex of the defendant or of any victim and that the jury is not to recommend a sentence of death unless it has concluded that it would recommend a sentence of death for the crime in question no matter what the race, color, religious beliefs, national origin, or sex of the defendant or of any victim may be. The jury, upon return of a finding under subsection (e), shall also return to the court a certificate, signed by each juror, that consideration of the race, color, religious beliefs, national origin, or sex of the defendant or any victim was not involved in reaching his or her individual decision and that the individual juror would have made the same recommendation regarding a sentence for the crime in question no matter what the race, color, religious beliefs, national origin, or sex of the defendant or any victim may be.

(Added Pub. L. 103-322, title VI, §60002(a), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 1964; amended Pub. L. 105-6, §2(c), Mar. 19, 1997, 111 Stat. 12; Pub. L. 107-273, div. B, title IV, §4002(e)(8), Nov. 2, 2002, 116 Stat. 1810.)

#### REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, referred to in subsec. (c), are set out in the Appendix to this title.

#### AMENDMENTS

2002—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 107-273 substituted “rule 32” for “rule 32(c)” in first sentence.

1997—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 105-6 inserted “For the purposes of the preceding sentence, the fact that a victim, as defined in section 3510, attended or observed the trial shall not be construed to pose a danger of creating unfair prejudice, confusing the issues, or misleading the jury.”

#### EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1997 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 105-6 applicable to cases pending on Mar. 19, 1997, see section 2(d) of Pub. L. 105-6, set out as an Effective Date note under section 3510 of this title.

### § 3594. Imposition of a sentence of death

Upon a recommendation under section 3593(e) that the defendant should be sentenced to death

or life imprisonment without possibility of release, the court shall sentence the defendant accordingly. Otherwise, the court shall impose any lesser sentence that is authorized by law. Notwithstanding any other law, if the maximum term of imprisonment for the offense is life imprisonment, the court may impose a sentence of life imprisonment without possibility of release.

(Added Pub. L. 103-322, title VI, §60002(a), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 1966.)

### § 3595. Review of a sentence of death

(a) APPEAL.—In a case in which a sentence of death is imposed, the sentence shall be subject to review by the court of appeals upon appeal by the defendant. Notice of appeal must be filed within the time specified for the filing of a notice of appeal. An appeal under this section may be consolidated with an appeal of the judgment of conviction and shall have priority over all other cases.

(b) REVIEW.—The court of appeals shall review the entire record in the case, including—

- (1) the evidence submitted during the trial;
- (2) the information submitted during the sentencing hearing;
- (3) the procedures employed in the sentencing hearing; and
- (4) the special findings returned under section 3593(d).

(c) DECISION AND DISPOSITION.—

(1) The court of appeals shall address all substantive and procedural issues raised on the appeal of a sentence of death, and shall consider whether the sentence of death was imposed under the influence of passion, prejudice, or any other arbitrary factor and whether the evidence supports the special finding of the existence of an aggravating factor required to be considered under section 3592.

(2) Whenever the court of appeals finds that—

(A) the sentence of death was imposed under the influence of passion, prejudice, or any other arbitrary factor;

(B) the admissible evidence and information adduced does not support the special finding of the existence of the required aggravating factor; or

(C) the proceedings involved any other legal error requiring reversal of the sentence that was properly preserved for appeal under the rules of criminal procedure,

the court shall remand the case for reconsideration under section 3593 or imposition of a sentence other than death. The court of appeals shall not reverse or vacate a sentence of death on account of any error which can be harmless, including any erroneous special finding of an aggravating factor, where the Government establishes beyond a reasonable doubt that the error was harmless.

(3) The court of appeals shall state in writing the reasons for its disposition of an appeal of a sentence of death under this section.

(Added Pub. L. 103-322, title VI, §60002(a), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 1967.)

### § 3596. Implementation of a sentence of death

(a) IN GENERAL.—A person who has been sentenced to death pursuant to this chapter shall be