

INVASION OF PRIVACY BY MAILING OF SEXUALLY
ORIENTED ADVERTISEMENTS

Pub. L. 91-375, § 14, Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 786, provided that:

“(a) [Congressional findings] The Congress finds—

“(1) that the United States mails are being used for the indiscriminate dissemination of advertising matter so designed and so presented as to exploit sexual sensationalism for commercial gain;

“(2) that such matter is profoundly shocking and offensive to many persons who receive it, unsolicited, through the mails;

“(3) that such use of the mails constitutes a serious threat to the dignity and sanctity of the American home and subjects many persons to an unconscionable and unwarranted intrusion upon their fundamental personal right to privacy;

“(4) that such use of the mail reduces the ability of responsible parents to protect their minor children from exposure to material which they as parents believe to be harmful to the normal and healthy ethical, mental, and social development of their children; and

“(5) that the traffic in such offensive advertisements is so large that individual citizens will be helpless to protect their privacy or their families without stronger and more effective Federal controls over the mailing of such matter.

“(b) [Congressional Determination of Public Policy] On the basis of such findings, the Congress determines that it is contrary to the public policy of the United States for the facilities and services of the United States Postal Service to be used for the distribution of such materials to persons who do not want their privacy invaded in this manner or to persons who wish to protect their minor children from exposure to such material.”

Provisions of section 14 of Pub. L. 91-375 effective within 1 year after Aug. 12, 1970, on date established therefor by the Board of Governors and published by it in the Federal Register, see section 15(a) of Pub. L. 91-375, set out as an Effective Date not preceding section 101 of this title.

§ 3011. Judicial enforcement

(a) Whenever the Postal Service believes that any person is mailing or causing to be mailed any sexually oriented advertisement in violation of section 3010 of this title, it may request the Attorney General to commence a civil action against such person in a district court of the United States. Upon a finding by the court of a violation of that section, the court may issue an order including one or more of the following provisions as the court deems just under the circumstances:

(1) a direction to the defendant to refrain from mailing any sexually oriented advertisement to a specific addressee, to any group of addressees, or to all persons;

(2) a direction to any postmaster to whom sexually oriented advertisements originating with such defendant are tendered for transmission through the mails to refuse to accept such advertisements for mailing; or

(3) a direction to any postmaster at the office at which registered or certified letters or other letters or mail arrive, addressed to the defendant or his representative, to return the registered or certified letters or other letters or mail to the sender appropriately marked as being in response to mail in violation of section 3010 of this title, after the defendant, or his representative, has been notified and given reasonable opportunity to examine such letters or mail and to obtain delivery of mail

which is clearly not connected with activity alleged to be in violation of section 3010 of this title.

(b) The statement that remittances may be made to a person named in a sexually oriented advertisement is prima facie evidence that such named person is the principal, agent, or representative of the mailer for the receipt of remittances on his behalf. The court is not precluded from ascertaining the existence of the agency on the basis of any other evidence.

(c) In preparation for, or during the pendency of, a civil action under subsection (a) of this section, a district court of the United States, upon application therefor by the Attorney General and upon a showing of probable cause to believe the statute is being violated, may enter a temporary restraining order or preliminary injunction containing such terms as the court deems just, including, but not limited to, provisions enjoining the defendant from mailing any sexually oriented advertisement to any person or class of persons, directing any postmaster to refuse to accept such defendant's sexually oriented advertisements for mailing, and directing the detention of the defendant's incoming mail by any postmaster pending the conclusion of the judicial proceedings. Any action taken by a court under this subsection does not affect or determine any fact at issue in any other proceeding under this section.

(d) A civil action under this section may be brought in the judicial district in which the defendant resides, or has his principal place of business, or in any judicial district in which any sexually oriented advertisement mailed in violation of section 3010 has been delivered by mail according to the direction thereon.

(e) Nothing in this section or in section 3010 shall be construed as amending, preempting, limiting, modifying, or otherwise in any way affecting section 1461 or 1463 of title 18 or section 3007 or 3008 of this title.

(Pub. L. 91-375, Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 750; Pub. L. 106-168, title I, § 105(b)(2)(B), Dec. 12, 1999, 113 Stat. 1811.)

AMENDMENTS

1999—Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 106-168 substituted “3007” for “3006, 3007.”

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1999 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 106-168 effective 120 days after Dec. 12, 1999, see section 111 of Pub. L. 106-168, set out as a note under section 3001 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective first day of sixth month which begins after Aug. 12, 1970, see section 15(b) of Pub. L. 91-375, set out as a note preceding section 101 of this title.

§ 3012. Civil penalties

(a) Any person—

(1) who, through the use of the mail, evades or attempts to evade the effect of an order issued under section 3005(a)(1) or 3005(a)(2) of this title;

(2) who fails to comply with an order issued under section 3005(a)(3) of this title; or

(3) who (other than a publisher described by section 3007(b) of this title) has actual knowl-