

176. Seizure, forfeiture, and destruction.
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Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2004—Pub. L. 108-458, title VI, § 6911(b), Dec. 17, 2004, 118 Stat. 3775, added item 175c.

2002—Pub. L. 107-188, title II, § 231(b)(2), June 12, 2002, 116 Stat. 661, substituted “Select agents; certain other agents” for “Possession by restricted persons” in item 175b.

2001—Pub. L. 107-56, title VIII, § 817(3), Oct. 26, 2001, 115 Stat. 386, added item 175b.

1996—Pub. L. 104-201, div. A, title XIV, § 1416(c)(1)(B), Sept. 23, 1996, 110 Stat. 2723, added item 175a.

§ 175. Prohibitions with respect to biological weapons

(a) IN GENERAL.—Whoever knowingly develops, produces, stockpiles, transfers, acquires, retains, or possesses any biological agent, toxin, or delivery system for use as a weapon, or knowingly assists a foreign state or any organization to do so, or attempts, threatens, or conspires to do the same, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned for life or any term of years, or both. There is extraterritorial Federal jurisdiction over an offense under this section committed by or against a national of the United States.

(b) ADDITIONAL OFFENSE.—Whoever knowingly possesses any biological agent, toxin, or delivery system of a type or in a quantity that, under the circumstances, is not reasonably justified by a prophylactic, protective, bona fide research, or other peaceful purpose, shall be fined under this title, imprisoned not more than 10 years, or both. In this subsection, the terms “biological agent” and “toxin” do not encompass any biological agent or toxin that is in its naturally occurring environment, if the biological agent or toxin has not been cultivated, collected, or otherwise extracted from its natural source.

(c) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this section, the term “for use as a weapon” includes the development, production, transfer, acquisition, retention, or possession of any biological agent, toxin, or delivery system for other than prophylactic, protective, bona fide research, or other peaceful purposes.

(Added Pub. L. 101-298, § 3(a), May 22, 1990, 104 Stat. 201; amended Pub. L. 104-132, title V, § 511(b)(1), Apr. 24, 1996, 110 Stat. 1284; Pub. L. 107-56, title VIII, § 817(1), Oct. 26, 2001, 115 Stat. 385; Pub. L. 107-188, title II, § 231(c)(1), June 12, 2002, 116 Stat. 661.)

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2002—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 107-188 substituted “protective, bona fide research, or other peaceful purposes” for “protective bona fide research, or other peaceful purposes”.

2001—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 107-56, § 817(1)(C), added subsec. (b). Former subsec. (b) redesignated (c).

Pub. L. 107-56, § 817(1)(A), substituted “includes” for “does not include” and inserted “other than” after “delivery system for” and “bona fide research” after “protective”.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 107-56, § 817(1)(B), redesignated subsec. (b) as (c).

1996—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 104-132 inserted “or attempts, threatens, or conspires to do the same,” before “shall be fined under this title”.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

SHORT TITLE

Pub. L. 101-298, § 1, May 22, 1990, 104 Stat. 201, provided that: “This Act [enacting this chapter and amending section 2516 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Biological Weapons Anti-Terrorism Act of 1989’.”

PURPOSE AND INTENT

Pub. L. 101-298, § 2, May 22, 1990, 104 Stat. 201, provided that:

“(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act [see Short Title note above] is to—

“(1) implement the Biological Weapons Convention, an international agreement unanimously ratified by the United States Senate in 1974 and signed by more than 100 other nations, including the Soviet Union; and

“(2) protect the United States against the threat of biological terrorism.

“(b) INTENT OF ACT.—Nothing in this Act is intended to restrain or restrict peaceful scientific research or development.”

§ 175a. Requests for military assistance to enforce prohibition in certain emergencies

The Attorney General may request the Secretary of Defense to provide assistance under section 382 of title 10¹ in support of Department of Justice activities relating to the enforcement of section 175 of this title in an emergency situation involving a biological weapon of mass destruction. The authority to make such a request may be exercised by another official of the Department of Justice in accordance with section 382(f)(2) of title 10.¹

(Added Pub. L. 104-201, div. A, title XIV, § 1416(c)(1)(A), Sept. 23, 1996, 110 Stat. 2723.)

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REFERENCES IN TEXT

Section 382 of title 10, referred to in text, was renumbered section 282 of title 10, Armed Forces, by Pub. L. 114-328, div. A, title XII, § 1241(a)(2), Dec. 23, 2016, 130 Stat. 2497.

§ 175b. Possession by restricted persons

(a) OFFENSE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—It shall be unlawful for a restricted person to—

(A) ship, transport, or possess in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce any biological agent or toxin described in paragraph (2); or

(B) receive any biological agent or toxin described in paragraph (2) that has been shipped or transported in interstate or foreign commerce.

(2) AGENTS AND TOXINS COVERED.—A biological agent or toxin described in this paragraph is a biological agent or toxin that—

(A) is listed as a non-overlap or overlap select biological agent or toxin under part 73 of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations, pursuant to section 351A of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 262a); and

¹ See References in Text note below.

(B) is not excluded or exempted under part 73 of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations.

(3) PENALTY.—Whoever knowingly violates this section shall be fined as provided in this title, imprisoned not more than 10 years, or both, but the prohibition contained in this section shall not apply with respect to any duly authorized United States governmental activity.

(b) TRANSFER TO UNREGISTERED PERSON.—

(1) SELECT AGENTS.—Whoever transfers a select agent to a person who the transferor knows or has reasonable cause to believe is not registered as required by regulations under subsection (b) or (c) of section 351A of the Public Health Service Act shall be fined under this title, or imprisoned for not more than 5 years, or both.

(2) CERTAIN OTHER BIOLOGICAL AGENTS AND TOXINS.—Whoever transfers a biological agent or toxin listed pursuant to section 212(a)(1) of the Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002 to a person who the transferor knows or has reasonable cause to believe is not registered as required by regulations under subsection (b) or (c) of section 212 of such Act shall be fined under this title, or imprisoned for not more than 5 years, or both.

(c) UNREGISTERED FOR POSSESSION.—

(1) SELECT AGENTS.—Whoever knowingly possesses a biological agent or toxin where such agent or toxin is a select agent for which such person has not obtained a registration required by regulations under section 351A(c) of the Public Health Service Act shall be fined under this title, or imprisoned for not more than 5 years, or both.

(2) CERTAIN OTHER BIOLOGICAL AGENTS AND TOXINS.—Whoever knowingly possesses a biological agent or toxin where such agent or toxin is a biological agent or toxin listed pursuant to section 212(a)(1) of the Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002 for which such person has not obtained a registration required by regulations under section 212(c) of such Act shall be fined under this title, or imprisoned for not more than 5 years, or both.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “select agent” means a biological agent or toxin to which subsection (a) applies. Such term (including for purposes of subsection (a)) does not include any such biological agent or toxin that is in its naturally-occurring environment, if the biological agent or toxin has not been cultivated, collected, or otherwise extracted from its natural source.

(2) The term “restricted person” means an individual who—

(A) is under indictment for a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding 1 year;

(B) has been convicted in any court of a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding 1 year;

(C) is a fugitive from justice;

(D) is an unlawful user of any controlled substance (as defined in section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802));

(E) is an alien illegally or unlawfully in the United States;

(F) has been adjudicated as a mental defective or has been committed to any mental institution;

(G)(i) is an alien (other than an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence) who is a national of a country as to which the Secretary of State, pursuant to section 6(j)¹ of the Export Administration Act of 1979 (50 U.S.C. App. 2405(j)), section 620A of chapter 1 of part M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2371), or section 40(d) of chapter 3 of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2780(d)), has made a determination (that remains in effect) that such country has repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism, or (ii) acts for or on behalf of, or operates subject to the direction or control of, a government or official of a country described in this subparagraph;

(H) has been discharged from the Armed Services of the United States under dishonorable conditions; or

(I) is a member of, acts for or on behalf of, or operates subject to the direction or control of, a terrorist organization as defined in section 212(a)(3)(B)(vi) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(3)(B)(vi)).

(3) The term “alien” has the same meaning as in section 101(a)(3) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(3)).

(4) The term “lawfully admitted for permanent residence” has the same meaning as in section 101(a)(20) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(20)).

(Added Pub. L. 107–56, title VIII, §817(2), Oct. 26, 2001, 115 Stat. 385; amended Pub. L. 107–188, title II, §231(a), (b)(1), (c)(2), June 12, 2002, 116 Stat. 660, 661; Pub. L. 107–273, div. B, title IV, §4005(g), Nov. 2, 2002, 116 Stat. 1813; Pub. L. 108–458, title VI, §6802(c), (d)(1), Dec. 17, 2004, 118 Stat. 3767; Pub. L. 116–31, §2, July 25, 2019, 133 Stat. 1034.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Section 351A of the Public Health Service Act, referred to in subsecs. (b)(1) and (c)(1), is classified to section 262a of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare.

Section 212 of the Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002, referred to in subsecs. (b)(2) and (c)(2), is classified to section 8401 of Title 7, Agriculture.

Section 6(j) of the Export Administration Act of 1979, referred to in subsec. (d)(2)(G)(i), was classified to section 2405(j) of the former Appendix to Title 50, War and National Defense, prior to editorial reclassification and renumbering as section 4605(j) of Title 50, and was repealed by Pub. L. 115–232, div. A, title XVII, §1766(a), Aug. 13, 2018, 132 Stat. 2232. For provisions similar to those of former section 4605(j) of Title 50, see section 4813(c) of Title 50, as enacted by Pub. L. 115–232.

AMENDMENTS

2019—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 116–31, §2(1), inserted subsec. heading; added pars. (1) and (2); redesignated former par. (2) as (3), inserted par. heading and realigned margin; and struck out former par. (1) which prohibited the shipment, transportation, or possession of certain biological agents or toxins.

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 116–31, §2(2), inserted heading.

¹ See References in Text note below.

2004—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 108-458, § 6802(d)(1), substituted “as a non-overlap or overlap select biological agent or toxin in sections 73.4 and 73.5 of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations, pursuant to section 351A of the Public Health Service Act, and is not excluded under sections 73.4 and 73.5 or exempted under section 73.6 of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations” for “as a select agent in Appendix A of part 72 of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations, pursuant to section 351A of the Public Health Service Act, and is not exempted under subsection (h) of section 72.6, or Appendix A of part 72, of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations”.

Subsec. (d)(2)(G). Pub. L. 108-458, § 6802(c)(1), designated existing provisions as cl. (i), added cl. (ii), and struck out “or” at end.

Subsec. (d)(2)(H). Pub. L. 108-458, § 6802(c)(2), substituted “; or” for period at end.

Subsec. (d)(2)(I). Pub. L. 108-458, § 6802(c)(3), added subpar. (I).

2002—Pub. L. 107-273 substituted “Possession by restricted persons” for “Select agents; certain other agents” in section catchline.

Pub. L. 107-188, § 231(b)(1)(B), substituted “Select agents; certain other agents” for “Possession by restricted persons” in section catchline.

Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 107-188, § 231(a)(1), (c)(2)(A), designated existing provisions of subsec. (a) as par. (1) and substituted “shall ship or transport in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce, or possess in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce, any biological agent or toxin, or receive any biological agent or toxin that has been shipped or transported in interstate or foreign commerce, if the biological agent or toxin is listed as a select agent in Appendix A of part 72 of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations, pursuant to section 351A of the Public Health Service Act, and is not exempted under subsection (h) of section 72.6, or Appendix A of part 72, of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations” for “described in subsection (b) shall ship or transport interstate or foreign commerce, or possess in or affecting commerce, any biological agent or toxin, or receive any biological agent or toxin that has been shipped or transported in interstate or foreign commerce, if the biological agent or toxin is listed as a select agent in subsection (j) of section 72.6 of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations, pursuant to section 511(d)(1) of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-132), and is not exempted under subsection (h) of such section 72.6, or appendix A of part 72 of the Code of Regulations”.

Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 107-188, § 231(a)(2), (3), redesignated and transferred subsec. (c) as par. (2) of subsec. (a).

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 107-188, § 231(a)(5), added subsec. (b). Former subsec. (b) redesignated (d).

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 107-188, § 231(a)(5), added subsec. (c). Former subsec. (c) redesignated (a)(2).

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 107-188, § 231(a)(4), redesignated subsec. (b) as (d).

Subsec. (d)(1). Pub. L. 107-188, § 231(b)(1)(A), substituted “The term ‘select agent’ means a biological agent or toxin to which subsection (a) applies. Such term (including for purposes of subsection (a)) does not include” for “The term ‘select agent’ does not include”.

Subsec. (d)(3). Pub. L. 107-188, § 231(c)(2)(B), substituted “section 101(a)(3)” for “section 1010(a)(3)”.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2004 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 108-458, title VI, § 6802(d)(2), Dec. 17, 2004, 118 Stat. 3767, provided that: “The amendment made by paragraph (1) [amending this section] shall take effect at the same time that sections 73.4, 73.5, and 73.6 of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations, become effective [probably means the effective date of the final rule revising sections 73.4, 73.5, and 73.6 of title 42, C.F.R., which was Apr. 18, 2005, see 70 F.R. 13294].”

§ 175c. Variola virus

(a) UNLAWFUL CONDUCT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), it shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly produce, engineer, synthesize, acquire, transfer directly or indirectly, receive, possess, import, export, or use, or possess and threaten to use, variola virus.

(2) EXCEPTION.—This subsection does not apply to conduct by, or under the authority of, the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(b) JURISDICTION.—Conduct prohibited by subsection (a) is within the jurisdiction of the United States if—

(1) the offense occurs in or affects interstate or foreign commerce;

(2) the offense occurs outside of the United States and is committed by a national of the United States;

(3) the offense is committed against a national of the United States while the national is outside the United States;

(4) the offense is committed against any property that is owned, leased, or used by the United States or by any department or agency of the United States, whether the property is within or outside the United States; or

(5) an offender aids or abets any person over whom jurisdiction exists under this subsection in committing an offense under this section or conspires with any person over whom jurisdiction exists under this subsection to commit an offense under this section.

(c) CRIMINAL PENALTIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Any person who violates, or attempts or conspires to violate, subsection (a) shall be fined not more than \$2,000,000 and shall be sentenced to a term of imprisonment not less than 25 years or to imprisonment for life.

(2) OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES.—Any person who, in the course of a violation of subsection (a), uses, attempts or conspires to use, or possesses and threatens to use, any item or items described in subsection (a), shall be fined not more than \$2,000,000 and imprisoned for not less than 30 years or imprisoned for life.

(3) SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.—If the death of another results from a person’s violation of subsection (a), the person shall be fined not more than \$2,000,000 and punished by imprisonment for life.

(d) DEFINITION.—As used in this section, the term “variola virus” means a virus that can cause human smallpox or any derivative of the variola major virus that contains more than 85 percent of the gene sequence of the variola major virus or the variola minor virus.

(Added Pub. L. 108-458, title VI, § 6906, Dec. 17, 2004, 118 Stat. 3773.)

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

Pub. L. 108-458, title VI, § 6902, Dec. 17, 2004, 118 Stat. 3769, provided that:

“(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

“(1) The criminal use of man-portable air defense systems (referred to in this section as ‘MANPADS’) presents a serious threat to civil aviation worldwide, especially in the hands of terrorists or foreign states that harbor them.