

**§ 1623. False declarations before grand jury or court**

(a) Whoever under oath (or in any declaration, certificate, verification, or statement under penalty of perjury as permitted under section 1746 of title 28, United States Code) in any proceeding before or ancillary to any court or grand jury of the United States knowingly makes any false material declaration or makes or uses any other information, including any book, paper, document, record, recording, or other material, knowing the same to contain any false material declaration, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

(b) This section is applicable whether the conduct occurred within or without the United States.

(c) An indictment or information for violation of this section alleging that, in any proceedings before or ancillary to any court or grand jury of the United States, the defendant under oath has knowingly made two or more declarations, which are inconsistent to the degree that one of them is necessarily false, need not specify which declaration is false if—

(1) each declaration was material to the point in question, and

(2) each declaration was made within the period of the statute of limitations for the offense charged under this section.

In any prosecution under this section, the falsity of a declaration set forth in the indictment or information shall be established sufficient for conviction by proof that the defendant while under oath made irreconcilably contradictory declarations material to the point in question in any proceeding before or ancillary to any court or grand jury. It shall be a defense to an indictment or information made pursuant to the first sentence of this subsection that the defendant at the time he made each declaration believed the declaration was true.

(d) Where, in the same continuous court or grand jury proceeding in which a declaration is made, the person making the declaration admits such declaration to be false, such admission shall bar prosecution under this section if, at the time the admission is made, the declaration has not substantially affected the proceeding, or it has not become manifest that such falsity has been or will be exposed.

(e) Proof beyond a reasonable doubt under this section is sufficient for conviction. It shall not be necessary that such proof be made by any particular number of witnesses or by documentary or other type of evidence.

(Added Pub. L. 91-452, title IV, § 401(a), Oct. 15, 1970, 84 Stat. 932; amended Pub. L. 94-550, § 6, Oct. 18, 1976, 90 Stat. 2535; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, § 330016(1)(L), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2147.)

**Editorial Notes**

**AMENDMENTS**

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

1976—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 94-550 inserted “(or in any declaration, certificate, verification, or statement under penalty of perjury as permitted under section

1746 of title 28, United States Code)” after “under oath”.

**CHAPTER 81—PIRACY AND PRIVATEERING**

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**HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES**

In the light of far-reaching developments in the field of international law and foreign relations, the law of piracy is deemed to require a fundamental reconsideration and complete restatement, perhaps resulting in drastic changes by way of modification and expansion. Such a task may be regarded as beyond the scope of this project. The present revision is, therefore, confined to the making of some obvious and patent corrections. It is recommended, however, that at some opportune time in the near future, the subject of piracy be entirely reconsidered and the law bearing on it modified and restated in accordance with the needs of the times.

**§ 1651. Piracy under law of nations**

Whoever, on the high seas, commits the crime of piracy as defined by the law of nations, and is afterwards brought into or found in the United States, shall be imprisoned for life.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 774.)

**HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES**

Based on title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., § 481 (Mar. 4, 1909, ch. 321, § 290, 35 Stat. 1145).

**§ 1652. Citizens as pirates**

Whoever, being a citizen of the United States, commits any murder or robbery, or any act of hostility against the United States, or against any citizen thereof, on the high seas, under color of any commission from any foreign prince, or state, or on pretense of authority from any person, is a pirate, and shall be imprisoned for life.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 774.)

**HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES**

Based on title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., § 495 (Mar. 4, 1909, ch. 321, § 304, 35 Stat. 1147).

Words “Notwithstanding the pretense of such authority,” were omitted as surplusage.

**§ 1653. Aliens as pirates**

Whoever, being a citizen or subject of any foreign state, is found and taken on the sea making war upon the United States, or cruising against the vessels and property thereof, or of the citizens of the same, contrary to the provisions of any treaty existing between the United States and the state of which the offender is a citizen or subject, when by such treaty such acts are declared to be piracy, is a pirate, and shall be imprisoned for life.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 774.)

**HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES**

Based on title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., § 496 (Mar. 4, 1909, ch. 321, § 305, 35 Stat. 1147.)

Minor change was made in phraseology.

#### § 1654. Arming or serving on privateers

Whoever, being a citizen of the United States, without the limits thereof, fits out and arms, or attempts to fit out and arm or is concerned in furnishing, fitting out, or arming any private vessel of war or privateer, with intent that such vessel shall be employed to cruise or commit hostilities upon the citizens of the United States or their property; or

Whoever takes the command of or enters on board of any such vessel with such intent; or

Whoever purchases any interest in any such vessel with a view to share in the profits thereof—

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

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 774; 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., §494 (Mar. 4, 1909, ch. 321, §303, 35 Stat. 1147).

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

Mandatory punishment provisions were rephrased in the alternative.

The last sentence relating to venue was omitted as unnecessary in view of the general provision to the same effect in section 3238 of this title.

Minor changes were made in phraseology and arrangement.

##### Editorial Notes

###### AMENDMENTS

1994—Pub. L. 103-322 substituted "fined under this title" for "fined not more than \$10,000" in last par.

#### § 1655. Assault on commander as piracy

Whoever, being a seaman, lays violent hands upon his commander, to hinder and prevent his fighting in defense of his vessel or the goods intrusted to him, is a pirate, and shall be imprisoned for life.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 774.)

##### HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., §485 (Mar. 4, 1909, ch. 321, §294, 35 Stat. 1146).

A minor verbal change was made.

#### § 1656. Conversion or surrender of vessel

Whoever, being a captain or other officer or mariner of a vessel upon the high seas or on any other waters within the admiralty and maritime jurisdiction of the United States, piratically or feloniously runs away with such vessel, or with any goods or merchandise thereof, to the value of \$50 or over; or

Whoever yields up such vessel voluntarily to any pirate—

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

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 774; 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., §497 (Mar. 4, 1909, ch. 321, §306, 35 Stat. 1148).

Minor changes were made in phraseology.

##### Editorial Notes

###### AMENDMENTS

1994—Pub. L. 103-322 substituted "fined under this title" for "fined not more than \$10,000" in last par.

#### § 1657. Corruption of seamen and confederating with pirates

Whoever attempts to corrupt any commander, master, officer, or mariner to yield up or to run away with any vessel, or any goods, wares, or merchandise, or to turn pirate or to go over to or confederate with pirates, or in any wise to trade with any pirate, knowing him to be such; or

Whoever furnishes such pirate with any ammunition, stores, or provisions of any kind; or

Whoever fits out any vessel knowingly and, with a design to trade with, supply, or correspond with any pirate or robber upon the seas; or

Whoever consults, combines, confederates, or corresponds with any pirate or robber upon the seas, knowing him to be guilty of any piracy or robbery; or

Whoever, being a seaman, confines the master of any vessel—

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

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 775; Pub. L. 101-647, title XXV, §2527(b), Nov. 29, 1990, 104 Stat. 4877; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, §330016(1)(H), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2147.)

##### HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., §498 (Mar. 4, 1909, ch. 321, §307, 35 Stat. 1148).

Mandatory punishment provisions were rephrased in the alternative.

Minor changes were made in phraseology.

##### Editorial Notes

###### AMENDMENTS

1994—Pub. L. 103-322 substituted "fined under this title" for "fined not more than \$1,000" in last par.

1990—Pub. L. 101-647, which directed insertion of "section 11, 12, or 13 of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act" after "consideration of any action brought under", could not be executed because the words "consideration of any action brought under" did not appear.

#### § 1658. Plunder of distressed vessel

(a) Whoever plunders, steals, or destroys any money, goods, merchandise, or other effects from or belonging to any vessel in distress, or wrecked, lost, stranded, or cast away, upon the sea, or upon any reef, shoal, bank, or rocks of the sea, or in any other place within the admiralty and maritime jurisdiction of the United States, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both.

(b) Whoever willfully obstructs the escape of any person endeavoring to save his life from such vessel, or the wreck thereof; or

Whoever holds out or shows any false light, or extinguishes any true light, with intent to bring any vessel sailing upon the sea into danger or distress or shipwreck—

Shall be imprisoned not less than ten years and may be imprisoned for life.