

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Community Affairs

BILL: CS/SB 668

INTRODUCER: Criminal Justice Committee and Senator Perry

SUBJECT: Public Nuisances

DATE: April 8, 2019

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Erickson</u>	<u>Jones</u>	<u>CJ</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
2.	<u>Peacock</u>	<u>Yeatman</u>	<u>CA</u>	<u>Pre-meeting</u>
3.	_____	_____	<u>RC</u>	_____

Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

I. Summary:

CS/SB 668 amends s. 823.05, F.S., relating to public nuisances, to:

- Delete the requirement that a criminal gang or member or associate of such gang must use a location “on two or more occasions” for the purpose of engaging in a criminal gang-related activity in order for such use to qualify as a public nuisance that can be abated or enjoined;
- Provide that any place or premises that has been used on more than two occasions within a six-month period as the site of dealing in stolen property, assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, burglary, theft, or robbery by sudden snatching, may be declared a public nuisance and may be abated or enjoined; and
- Provide that a rental property that is declared a public nuisance based upon the previously-described circumstances may not be abated or subject to forfeiture under the Florida Contraband Forfeiture Act if the nuisance was committed by someone other than the owner of the property and the property owner commences rehabilitation of the property within 30 days after the property is declared a public nuisance and completes the rehabilitation within a reasonable time thereafter.

Public nuisances are abated pursuant to s. 60.05, F.S. The bill amends this statute to:

- Extend and increase the frequency of notice so a property owner has sufficient time to receive notice and correct the use of the property;
- Allow for shorter notice where the public nuisance presents a danger of immediate and irreparable injury; and
- Provide more detail on what must be provided in the notice and serving the notice.

The abatement or enjoining of a public nuisance described in the bill may result in a cost-savings or cost-avoidance to homeowners or businesses, if they have sustained an economic loss, and a cost-savings or cost-avoidance to local governments if they have sustained an economic loss. See Section V. Fiscal Impact Statement.

The bill is effective July 1, 2019.

II. Present Situation:

Public Nuisances (s. 823.05, F.S.)

Section 823.05(1), F.S., provides that a person is guilty of maintaining a public nuisance¹ if he or she erects, establishes, continues, or maintains, owns or leases any building, booth, tent or place which tends to annoy the community or injure the health of the community, or become manifestly injurious to the morals or manners of the people as described in s. 823.01, F.S., or any house or place of prostitution, assignation, lewdness or place or building where games of chance are engaged in violation of law or any place where any law of the state is violated. The building, erection, place, tent or booth and the furniture, fixtures, and contents are declared a public nuisance.

Section 823.05(2), F.S., provides that a criminal gang, criminal gang member, or criminal gang associate who engages in the commission of criminal gang-related activity² is a public nuisance,³ and the use of a location on two or more occasions by a criminal gang or member or associate of such gang for the purpose of engaging in criminal gang-related activity is also a public nuisance.⁴

Section 823.05(2), F.S., does not prevent a local governing body from adopting and enforcing laws consistent with ch. 823, F.S., relating to criminal gangs and gang violence.⁵ Further, the state, through the Department of Legal Affairs or any state attorney, or any of the state's agencies, instrumentalities, subdivisions, or municipalities having jurisdiction over conduct in violation of a provision of ch. 823, F.S., may institute civil proceedings under s. 823.05(2)(e),

¹ Although s. 823.05(1), F.S., refers to a person being "guilty of maintaining a public nuisance," s. 823.05, F.S., does not make maintaining a public nuisance a crime. However, s. 823.01, F.S., provides that all nuisances that tend to annoy the community, injure the health of the citizens in general, or corrupt the public morals are second degree misdemeanors, except that a violation of s. 823.10, F.S., is a third degree felony. Section 823.10(1), F.S., provides that certain places visited by persons for the purpose of unlawfully using any controlled substance under ch. 893, F.S. (Florida Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act), or any drugs as described in ch. 499, F.S. (Florida Drug and Cosmetic Act), or for the illegal keeping, selling, or delivering of such substance or drug, are a public nuisance. Any person who willfully keeps or maintains, or aids or abets another in keeping or maintaining, such public nuisance commits a third degree felony, if such public nuisance is a warehouse, structure, or building. *Id.*

² Section 823.05(2)(a), F.S., defines the terms "criminal gang," "criminal gang member," "criminal gang associate," and "criminal gang-related activity" by reference to the definitions of those terms in s. 874.03, F.S.

³ Section 823.05(2)(b), F.S. Section 893.138(2)(d), F.S., also provides that any place or premises that has been used by a criminal gang for the purpose of conducting criminal gang activity may be declared a public nuisance. Additionally, if the place or premises has been used on more than two occasions within a six-month period as the site of dealing in stolen property or a violation of ch. 499, F.S., such location may be declared a public nuisance. Unlike s. 823.05, F.S., a public nuisance described in s. 893.138, F.S., is abated pursuant to procedures provided in that section. Section 893.138(2)-(7), F.S. However, the public nuisance may be enjoined pursuant to s. 60.05, F.S. Section 893.138(9), F.S.

⁴ Section 823.05(2)(c), F.S.

⁵ Section 823.05(2)(d), F.S.

F.S., and, pending final determination, the circuit court may enter injunctions, prohibitions, or restraining orders, or take such other actions it deems proper.

Section 823.05(3), F.S., provides that a massage establishment as defined in s. 480.033(7), F.S., that operates in violation of s. 480.0475, F.S., or s. 480.0535(2), F.S., is declared a public nuisance.

Abating or Enjoining Public Nuisances (ss. 60.05 and 60.06, F.S.)

Public nuisances described in s. 823.05, F.S., must be enjoined pursuant to s. 60.05, F.S., or abated pursuant to s. 60.06, F.S.⁶ Section 60.05(1), F.S., authorizes the Attorney General, state attorney, city attorney, county attorney, and any citizen of the county to sue in the name of the state to enjoin the nuisance, the person(s) maintaining it, and the owner or agent of the building or ground on which the nuisance exists. The court, based on evidence⁷ or affidavit, may issue a temporary injunction enjoining:

- The maintaining of a nuisance;
- The operating and maintaining of the place or premises where the nuisance is maintained;
- The owner or agent of the building or ground upon which the nuisance exists; and
- The conduct, operation, or maintenance of any business or activity operated or maintained in the building or on the premises in connection with or incident to the maintenance of the nuisance.⁸

The injunction must specify the activities enjoined and must not preclude the operation of any lawful business not conducive to the maintenance of the alleged nuisance.⁹ If the existence of a nuisance is shown at the final hearing, the court must issue a permanent injunction and order the costs to be paid by the persons establishing or maintaining the nuisance.¹⁰ The court must adjudge that the costs are a lien on all personal property found in the place of the nuisance; however, if the property fails to bring enough to pay costs, the lien is on the real estate occupied by the nuisance.¹¹

Section 60.06, F.S., requires the court, upon “proper” proof, to order the abatement of all nuisances mentioned in s. 823.05, F.S., and authorizes the court to enforce injunctions by contempt. However, this jurisdiction does not repeal or alter s. 823.01, F.S., which provides criminal penalties for nuisances described in that section.¹²

⁶ Section 823.05(1), (2)(b) and (c), and (3), F.S.

⁷ Evidence of the general reputation of the alleged nuisance and place is admissible to prove the existence of a nuisance. Section 60.05(3), F.S.

⁸ Section 60.05(2), F.S.

⁹ Section 60.05(2), F.S. At least 3 days’ notice in writing shall be given to the defendant of the time and place of application for the temporary injunction. *Id.*

¹⁰ Section 60.05(4), F.S.

¹¹ *Id.* However, no lien attaches to the real estate of any person other than the person establishing or maintaining the nuisance unless five days’ written notice has been given to the owner or owner’s agent who fails to abate the nuisance within this five-day period. *Id.*

¹² Section 60.06, F.S.

Real Property and the Florida Contraband Forfeiture Act

The “Florida Contraband Forfeiture Act” (Act)¹³ authorizes seizure and civil forfeiture of real property used in violation of the provisions of the Act.¹⁴ The seizure may only occur if the owner of the property is arrested for a criminal offense¹⁵ that forms the basis for determining that the property is a “contraband article” under s. 932.701, F.S.,¹⁶ or when one or more statutorily-specified exceptions to this arrest requirement apply.¹⁷ For example, one specified exception is when the property is not owned by the person arrested for a criminal offense that forms the basis for determining that the property is a “contraband article,” but the owner of the property had actual knowledge of the criminal activity.¹⁸

As previously noted, s. 823.05, F.S., in part, addresses criminal gang-related activity. Section 874.08, F.S., provides that the following are subject to seizure and forfeiture under the Florida Contraband Forfeiture Act:

- All profits, proceeds, and instrumentalities of criminal gang activity;
- All property used or intended or attempted to be used to facilitate the criminal activity of any criminal gang or of any criminal gang member;
- All profits, proceeds, and instrumentalities of criminal gang recruitment; and
- All property used or intended or attempted to be used to facilitate criminal gang recruitment.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill amends s. 823.05, F.S., relating to public nuisances, to:

- Delete the requirement that a criminal gang or member or associate of such gang must use a location “on two or more occasions” for the purpose of engaging in a criminal gang-related activity in order for such use to qualify as a public nuisance that can be abated or enjoined;
- Provide that any place or premises that has been used on more than two occasions within a six-month period as the site of dealing in stolen property (s. 812.019, F.S.), assault (s. 784.011, F.S.), aggravated assault (s. 784.021, F.S.), battery (s. 784.03, F.S.), aggravated battery (s. 784.045, F.S.), burglary (s. 810.02, F.S.),¹⁹ theft (s. 812.014, F.S.), or robbery by

¹³ Sections 932.701-932.7062, F.S. *See* s. 932.701(1), F.S.

¹⁴ Section 932.703(1)(a), F.S. Real property may not be seized or restrained, other than by *lis pendens*, subsequent to a violation of the Florida Contraband Forfeiture Act until the persons entitled to notice are afforded the opportunity to attend the pre-seizure adversarial preliminary hearing. Section 932.703(3)(b), F.S. “A notice of *lis pendens* is an instrument which may be filed with the clerk of the circuit court in connection with actions involving the ownership of, or interest in, property. It is intended to operate as constructive notice to persons dealing with the property that is the subject matter of litigation.” *Op. Att’y Gen. Fla.* 58-135 (1958). Other requirements relating to seizure are specified in s. 932.703, F.S. Forfeiture proceedings are addressed in s. 932.704, F.S., and disposition of liens and forfeited property are addressed in s. 932.7055, F.S.

¹⁵ Section 932.703(1)(a), F.S.

¹⁶ The definition of “contraband article” in s. 932.701(2), F.S., includes an extensive list of tangible items. One of these items is real property used or attempted to be used as an instrumentality in the commission of, or in aiding or abetting the commission of, any felony, or which is acquired by proceeds obtained as a result of a violation of the Act. Section 932.701(2)(a)6., F.S. *See* s. 932.702, F.S. (unlawful acts involving a contraband article).

¹⁷ Section 932.703(1)(a), F.S.

¹⁸ Section 932.703(1)(a)3., F.S. Evidence that the owner received notification from a law enforcement agency and acknowledged receipt of the notification in writing, that the seized asset had been used in violation of the Act on a prior occasion by the arrested person, may be used to establish actual knowledge. *Id.*

¹⁹ Armed burglary is also included in this section. *See* s. 810.02(2)(b), F.S.

sudden snatching (s. 812.131, F.S.), may be declared a public nuisance and may be abated or enjoined as provided in s. 60.05, F.S., or s. 60.06, F.S.; and

- Provide that a rental property that is declared a public nuisance based upon the previously-described circumstances may not be abated or subject to forfeiture under the Florida Contraband Forfeiture Act if the nuisance was committed by someone other than the owner of the property and the property owner commences rehabilitation of the property within 30 days after the property is declared a public nuisance and completes the rehabilitation within a reasonable time thereafter.

The bill also restructures s. 823.05(1), F.S., which defines what constitutes a public nuisance and what may be abated or enjoined as a public nuisance. This is not a substantive change because nothing of a substantive nature is eliminated from or added to that subsection.

Public nuisances are abated pursuant to s. 60.05, F.S. The bill amends this statute to increase the notice requirements from one three-day notice to two notices (if needed) with a total of 25 days to abate the nuisance. The defendant must be given written notice (first notice) with a ten-day compliance time frame to abate the nuisance. If the defendant fails to abate the nuisance within these ten days, the defendant must be given written notice (second notice) of the application for temporary injunction if the defendant does not abate the nuisance within 15 days following the original ten-day period. However, the notice period may be waived and shortened to a period of 24 to 72 hours where the nuisance presents an immediate and irreparable danger to a person or to the safety of a community. The written notice must identify the location of where the application for temporary injunction will be filed and the time that it will be filed.

Contents of the notice must include:

- If applicable, a description of the building, booth, tent, or place that is declared a public nuisance;
- The activities that led to the public nuisance being declared;
- The actions necessary to abate the public nuisance; and
- A statement that costs will be assessed if abatement of the public nuisance is not completed and if there is a determination by the court that such public nuisance exists.

Required notices must be sent by personal service to the owner at his or her address as it appears on the latest tax assessment roll or to the tenant of such address. If an address is not found for the owner, notices must be sent to the location of the declared nuisance and displayed prominently and conspicuously at such location. The notice timeframe before a lien may attach when the property is owned by someone other than the person causing the public nuisance is extended from five days to 15 days.

The bill is effective July 1, 2019.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

The abatement or enjoining of a public nuisance described in the bill may result in a cost-savings or cost-avoidance to homeowners or businesses, if they have sustained an economic loss (e.g., decreased home and business property values and loss of customers) as a result of the presence of the nuisance.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The abatement or enjoining of a public nuisance described in the bill may result in a cost-savings or cost-avoidance to local governments if they have sustained an economic loss (e.g., decreased local tax revenues, increased local law enforcement costs, and increased local ordinance or code enforcement costs) as a result of the presence of the nuisance.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 60.05 and 823.05.

IX. Additional Information:

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

CS by Criminal Justice on April 1, 2019:

The Committee Substitute:

- Extends and increases the frequency of notice so a property owner has sufficient time to receive notice and correct the use of the property;
- Allows for shorter notice where the public nuisance presents a danger of immediate and irreparable injury; and
- Provides more detail on what must be provided in the notice and serving the notice.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
