

**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 Commerce and Tourism Committee

BILL: SB 1588

INTRODUCER: Senator Latvala

SUBJECT: Licensed security officers

DATE: March 28, 2011

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	McCarthy	Cooper	CM	<b>Pre-meeting</b>
2.	_____	_____	CJ	_____
3.	_____	_____	BC	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

**I. Summary:**

This bill increases and specifically establishes penalties for impersonating a Security Officer, Private Investigator, or Recovery Agent, as licensed by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS or department) under ch. 493, F.S. If a person engages in any activity for which ch. 493, F.S., requires a license, but acts without having a license, they commit a misdemeanor of the first degree. For second or subsequent offenses, the person commits a felony of the third degree, and DACS is authorized to impose a civil penalty not to exceed \$10,000. However, penalties do not apply if the person engaged in unlicensed activity within 90 days after the expiration date of the person’s license. The bill also provides penalties for activities related to the impersonation of a Licensed Security Officer, Private Investigator, or Recovery Agent.

The bill expands the authority of an armed licensed security officer or armed licensed security agency manager to allow them to detain a person on the premises of a critical infrastructure facility if the security officer has probable cause to believe that the person has committed or is committing a crime and for the purpose of ascertaining the person’s identity and the circumstances of the activity that is the basis for the temporary detention. The bill provides procedures for notifying law enforcement and transfer of the detained person.

The bill also authorizes the security officer to search the person detained if he observes that the person temporarily detained is armed with a firearm, concealed weapon, or any destructive device that poses a threat to the safety of the security officer, or the detainee admits to the security officer that he or she is armed with a weapon.

This bill substantially amends ch. 493, and creates an undesignated section of the Florida Statutes.

## II. Present Situation:

### **Private Security, Private Investigative, and Recovery Services**

The Division of Licensing of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is responsible for the regulation of licensing of private security, private investigative and recovery services.<sup>1</sup>

A **security officer** is defined as:

any individual who, for consideration, advertises as providing or performs bodyguard services or otherwise guards persons or property; attempts to prevent theft or unlawful taking of goods, wares, and merchandise; or attempts to prevent the misappropriation or concealment of goods, wares or merchandise, money, bonds, stocks, chooses in action, notes, or other documents, papers, and articles of value or procurement of the return thereof. The term also includes armored car personnel and those personnel engaged in the transportation of prisoners.<sup>2</sup>

A “**private investigator**” is defined as “any individual who, for consideration, advertises as providing or performs private investigation.”<sup>3</sup> Private investigation is defined as an investigation to obtain information on any of the following matters:

- Crime or wrongs done or threatened against the United States or any state or territory of the United States, when operating under express written authority of the governmental official responsible for authorizing such investigation.
- The identity, habits, conduct, movements, whereabouts, affiliations, associations, transactions, reputation, or character of any society, person, or group of persons.
- The credibility of witnesses or other persons.
- The whereabouts of missing persons, owners of unclaimed property or escheated property, or heirs to estates.
- The location or recovery of lost or stolen property.
- The causes and origin of, or responsibility for, fires, libels, slanders, losses, accidents, damage, or injuries to real or personal property.
- The business of securing evidence to be used before investigating committees or boards of award or arbitration or in the trial of civil or criminal cases and the preparation therefore.<sup>4</sup>

A “**recovery agent**” is defined as “any individual who, for consideration, advertises as providing or performs repossessions.”<sup>5</sup> “Recovery agency” is defined as “any person who, for consideration, advertises as providing or is engaged in the business of performing

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<sup>1</sup> Regulating private investigative, private security, and recovery industries was assigned to the Department of State in 1965. In 2002, the Division of Licensing of the Department of State was transferred to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, including the Concealed Weapons Permit Program. See ss. 1, 3-10, Ch. 2002-295, L.O.F.

<sup>2</sup> Section 493.6101(19), F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Section 493.6101(16), F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Section 493.6101(17), F.S.

<sup>5</sup> Section 493.6101(21), F.S.

repossessions.”<sup>6</sup> “Repossession” means recovery of motor vehicles, motor boats, airplanes, personal watercraft, all-terrain vehicles, farm equipment, industrial equipment, and motor homes:

“...by an individual who is authorized by the legal owner, lienholder, or lessor to recover, or to collect money payment in lieu of recovery of, that which has been sold or leased under a security agreement that contains a repossession clause.”<sup>7</sup>

Certain individuals are exempt from the licensing requirements for private security and private investigative services. These include local, state, and federal law enforcement officers, licensed insurance investigators and individuals solely, exclusively, and regularly employed as unarmed investigators and security officers “in connection with the business of his or her employer, when there exists an employer-employee relationship.”<sup>8</sup>

Florida law establishes criteria for granting licenses for security, private investigative, and repossession services. Individuals seeking a license must clear a criminal background check as well as meet specific training and experience requirements, which vary by the type of license. In addition, the applicant must:

- Be at least 18 years of age;
- Be of good moral character;
- Not be adjudicated incapacitated; Not be a chronic and habitual user of alcoholic beverages to the extent normal faculties are impaired;
- Not have been committed for abuse of controlled substances or found guilty of a crime under ch. 893, F.S.; and
- Be a citizen or legal resident alien of the U.S, or have been granted authorization to seek employment in this country.<sup>9</sup>

**License Classifications**

Ch. 493, F.S., provides for many numerous classifications of licenses within the three general categories of licenses, as follows:<sup>10</sup>

PRIVATE INVESTIGATION

Agency	Class “A”
Private Investigator	Class “C”
Armed Private Investigator	Class “C” & Class “G”
Branch Office	Class “AA”
Manager	Class “C” or Class “MA” or Class “M”
Intern	Class “CC”

PRIVATE SECURITY

Agency	Class “B”
Security Officer	Class “D”
Armed Security Officer	Class “D” & Class “G”
Branch Office	Class “BB”
Manager	Class “MB” or Class “M”

<sup>6</sup> Section 493.6101(20), F.S.

<sup>7</sup> Section 493.6101(22), F.S.

<sup>8</sup> Section 493.6102(1)-(4), F.S.

<sup>9</sup> Section 493.6106(1), F.S.

<sup>10</sup> See. 5N-1.116(1), F.A.C.

REPOSSESSION ACTIVITY

Agency	Class "R"
Recovery Agent	Class "E"
Branch Office	Class "RR"
Manager	Class "MR" or Class "E"
Intern	Class "EE"

COMBINED PRIVATE INVESTIGATION AND SECURITY

Agency	Class "A" & Class "B"
Branch Office	Class "AB"
Manager	Class "M"

SCHOOLS

Security Officer School or Training Facility	Class "DS"
Security Officer Instructor	Class "DI"
Recovery Agent School or Training Facility	Class "RS"
Recovery Agent Instructor	Class "RI"

FIREARMS

Instructor	Class "K"
Statewide Firearm License	Class "G"

MANAGERS

Private Investigative Agency or Branch	Class "C", "MA", or "M"
Private Security Agency or Branch	Class "MB" or "M"
Recovery Agency or Branch	Class "E" or "MR"
Armed Manager	Appropriate Manager's License and Class "G"

**D, MB, and G Licenses**

Generally, an applicant for a Class "D" security officer license must complete a minimum of 40 hours of professional training at a school or training facility licensed by the department, which establishes by rule the general content and number of hours of each subject area to be taught. Class MB security officers may manage a security agency. Class G officers have special firearms training requirements and are authorized to carry their firearms on duty.

Class D and Class G security officers who are employed at seaports and who are given the power to detain persons are further required to be certified under the Maritime Transportation Security Act or s. 311.121, F. S.

The statutorily-specified certification curriculum for the seaport security officer training program includes no less than 218 hours of initial certification training that conforms to or exceeds model courses approved by the Federal Maritime Act under Section 109 of the Federal Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 for facility personnel with specific security duties.

Pursuant to s. 311.124, F.S., these particular Class D or G security officers are given the power to detain persons for a reasonable period of time if they have "probable cause to believe that a person is trespassing ... in a designated restricted area" pending the arrival of a law enforcement officer. In addition, this action does not "render the security officer criminally or civilly liable for false arrest, false imprisonment, or unlawful detention." Furthermore, the seaport security officer must, upon detaining a person for trespass, immediately call a certified law enforcement officer to the scene.

To date, the department has not issued any revised licenses to a class “D” security officer stating that the person is certified as a seaport security officer.

### **Impersonating a Licensee**

Section 493.6116(1), F.S., authorizes DACS to “take disciplinary action” against “any unlicensed person engaged in activities regulated” in ch. 493, F.S., related to Private Security, Private Investigative, and Recovery Services. Grounds for such disciplinary action include:

- Conducting activities regulated under this chapter without a license or with a revoked or suspended license;
- Impersonating, or permitting or aiding and abetting an employee to impersonate, a law enforcement officer;
- Knowingly violating, advising, encouraging, or assisting the violation of any statute, court order, capias, warrant, injunction, or cease and desist order, in the course of business regulated under this chapter; and
- Violating any provision of this chapter.

Section 493.6120, F.S., provides that any person who violates any provision of ch. 493, F.S., with one exception, commits a misdemeanor of the first degree.<sup>11</sup> DACS is authorized to institute judicial proceedings in the appropriate circuit court seeking enforcement of ch. 493, F.S., or any rule or order of DACS.<sup>12</sup>

### **The Power to Detain**

Florida Statute authorizes a law enforcement officer, a merchant, a farmer, or their employee or agent, who has probable cause to believe that a retail theft, farm theft, or trespass, has been committed by a person and, in the case of retail or farm theft, that the property can be recovered by taking the offender into custody may, for the purpose of attempting to effect such recovery or for prosecution, take the offender into custody and detain the offender in a reasonable manner for a reasonable length of time.<sup>13</sup> The subsection further prescribes that in the event the merchant, merchant’s employee, farmer, or a transit agency’s employee or agent takes the person into custody, a law enforcement officer shall be called to the scene immediately after the person has been taken into custody. The subsection is also applicable to transit fare evasion with respect to detention. Innkeepers and food service establishment operators likewise have the statutory authority to “take a person into custody and detain that person” if there is probable cause to believe the person is engaging in disorderly conduct that threatens the safety of the person or others.<sup>14</sup> In these situations it is also required that law enforcement be called immediately.

### **“Citizen’s Arrest”**

Under Florida law a citizen has a common law right to make a “citizen’s arrest” for a felony, or a breach of the peace committed in his presence. The citizen may make such an arrest and justify

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<sup>11</sup> The exception is s. 493.6405(3), F.S., which deals with the sale of motor vehicles, mobile homes, motorboats, aircraft, personal watercraft, all-terrain vehicles, farm equipment or industrial equipment by a recovery agent or intern.

<sup>12</sup> Section 493.6121(7), F.S.

<sup>13</sup> Section 812.015(3)(a), F.S.

<sup>14</sup> Section 509.143, F.S.

his failure to obtain a warrant by proving the person's guilt. *Phoenix v. State*, 455 So.2d 1024 (Fla. 1984).

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

**Section 1** amends s. 493.6120, F.S., to increase and specifically establish penalties for impersonating a Security Officer, Private Investigator, or Recovery Agent, as licensed by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS or department) under ch. 493, F.S. Specifically, if a person engages in any activity for which ch. 493, F.S., requires a license, but acts without having a license, they commit a misdemeanor of the first degree. For second or subsequent offenses, the person commits a felony of the third degree, and DACS is authorized to impose a civil penalty not to exceed \$10,000. However, penalties do not apply if the person engaged in unlicensed activity within 90 days after the expiration date of the person's license.

The bill also provides that a person who, while impersonating a security officer, private investigator, recovery agent, or other person required to have a license under ch. 493, F.S., knowingly and intentionally forces another person to assist the impersonator in an activity within the scope of duty of a professional licensed under ch. 493, F.S., commits a felony of the third degree. A person who impersonates a security officer or other designated officer during the commission of a felony commits a felony of the second degree and a person who impersonates a security officer or other designated officer during the commission of a felony that results in death or serious bodily injury to another human being commits a felony of the first degree.

**Section 2** creates an undesignated provision in the Florida Statutes to provide that an armed licensed security officer or an armed licensed security agency manager licensed under ch. 493, F.S., be allowed to temporarily detain a person on the premises of a critical infrastructure facility if the security officer has probable cause to believe that the person has committed or is committing a crime. The individual may be detained for the purpose of ascertaining the person's identity and the circumstances of the activity that is the basis for the temporary detention. The security officer must notify the law enforcement agency as soon as possible, and the person may be detained until a responding law enforcement officer arrives at the critical infrastructure facility. The custody of any person temporarily detained must be immediately transferred to the responding law enforcement officer unless the law enforcement officer requests the security officer to assist in detaining the person.

The security officer is authorized to search the person detained if the security officer observes that the person is armed with a firearm, concealed weapon, or any destructive device that poses a threat to the safety of the security officer, or the detainee admits to the security officer that he or she is armed with a weapon. The security officer is required to seize any weapon discovered and transfer the weapon to the responding law enforcement officer.

This section defines the term "critical infrastructure facility" to mean any one of the following, if it employs measures such as fences, barriers, or guard posts that are designed to exclude unauthorized personnel and is determined by a state or federal authority to be so vital to the state that the incapacity or destruction of the facility would have a debilitating impact on security, state economic stability, state public health or safety, or any combination of those matters:

- A chemical manufacturing facility;
- A refinery;
- An electrical power generating facility, substation, switching station, electrical control center, or electrical transmission or distribution facility;
- A water intake structure, water treatment facility, wastewater treatment plant, or pump station;
- A natural gas transmission compressor station;
- A liquid natural gas terminal or storage facility;
- A telecommunications central switching office;
- A deep water seaport or railroad switching yard; or
- A gas processing plant, including a plant used in the processing, treatment, or fractionation of natural gas.

In addition, a security officer or manager must perform duties required “under this chapter” in a uniform that bears at least one patch or emblem visible at all time clearly indentifying the employing agency.

**Section 3** provides an effective date July 1, 2011.

**Other Potential Implications:**

While a person may know that physical barriers and signage indicate that trespassing may be unlawful, they may be unaware that they are in a “critical infrastructure facility” where security personnel would have the lawful authority to detain and search them, if otherwise warranted. The designation of “critical infrastructure facility” is not necessarily public information.

**IV. Constitutional Issues:**

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. Other Constitutional Issues:

It is possible that a person who is detained under this bill could raise Fourth Amendment search and seizure issues. The bill statutorily authorizes one citizen, arguably “under color of law,” to detain and search another citizen virtually *on behalf of* law enforcement. For that reason, security officers who undertake a detention and subsequent search under

the parameters authorized in the bill should be aware that any evidence they seize may be later used as evidence in a criminal case and it should be handled accordingly.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None

C. Government Sector Impact:

None

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

Section 2 of the bill requires a security officer or manager to perform duties required “under this chapter” in a uniform that bears at least one patch or emblem visible at all time clearly indentifying the employing agency. The clause “under this chapter” should be replaced with “under this section” as the bill creates provisions in an undesignated section of the Florida Statutes.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Additional Information:**

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.