

**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.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Fiscal Policy

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BILL: CS/SB 1656

INTRODUCER: Appropriations Committee on Criminal Justice and Senator Martin

SUBJECT: Child Exploitation Offenses

DATE: February 26, 2024

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

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|    | ANALYST        | STAFF DIRECTOR  | REFERENCE  | ACTION             |
|----|----------------|-----------------|------------|--------------------|
| 1. | <u>Parker</u>  | <u>Stokes</u>   | <u>CJ</u>  | <b>Favorable</b>   |
| 2. | <u>Atchley</u> | <u>Harkness</u> | <u>ACJ</u> | <b>Fav/CS</b>      |
| 3. | <u>Parker</u>  | <u>Yeatman</u>  | <u>FP</u>  | <b>Pre-meeting</b> |

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**I. Summary:**

CS/SB 1656 amends s. 921.0022, F.S., increasing ranking levels of specified child exploitation offenses on the offense severity ranking chart (OSRC) of the Criminal Punishment Code.

This bill may have a positive insignificant prison bed impact (increase of 10 or fewer beds). See Section V., Fiscal Impact Statement.

The bill is effective October 1, 2024.

**II. Present Situation:**

**Child Exploitation Offense**

*Using a Child in Sexual Performance*

Section 827.071(2), F.S., prohibits a person from, knowing the character and content thereof, employing, authorizing, or inducing a child to engage in a sexual performance; or being a parent, legal guardian, or custodian of such child, consenting to the participation by such child in a sexual performance. A violation for using a child in a sexual performance is a second degree felony<sup>1</sup> and the offense is ranked as a Level 6 offense on the OSRC.

*Promoting a Sexual Performance by a Child*

Under s. 827.071(3), F.S., a person commits a second degree felony if, knowing the character and content thereof, he or she produces, directs, or promotes any performance which includes sexual conduct by a child. The offense is ranked as a Level 6 offense on the OSRC.

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<sup>1</sup> A second degree felony is punishable by up to 15 years imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine. Sections 775.082, 775.083, or 775.084, F.S

***Possessing Child Pornography with Intent to Promote***

Under s. 827.071(4), F.S., a person commits a second degree felony if he or she possesses with the intent to promote any photograph, motion picture, exhibition, show, representation, or other presentation which, in whole or in part, includes child pornography. The possession of three or more copies of such photograph, motion picture, representation, or presentation is prima facie evidence of an intent to promote. The offense is ranked as a Level 5 offense on the OSRC.

***Possessing or Intentionally Viewing Child Pornography***

Section 827.071(5), F.S., prohibits a person from knowingly possessing, controlling, or intentionally viewing a photograph, motion picture, exhibition, show, representation, image, data, computer depiction, or other presentation which, in whole or in part, he or she knows to include child pornography. A violation of the prohibition is a third degree felony and the offense is ranked as a Level 5 offense on the OSRC.

Additionally, s. 827.071(5), F.S., specifies that the possession, control, or intentional viewing of each such photograph, motion picture, exhibition, show, image, data, computer depiction, representation, or presentation is a separate offense, and if such photograph, motion picture, exhibition, show, representation, image, data, computer depiction, or other presentation includes child pornography depicting more than one child, then each such child in each such photograph, motion picture, exhibition, show, representation, image, data, computer depiction, or other presentation that is knowingly possessed, controlled, or intentionally viewed is a separate offense.<sup>2</sup>

Section 827.071, F.S., defines the following relevant terms:

- “Child pornography” means any image depicting a minor engaged in sexual conduct, or any image that has been created, altered, adapted, or modified by electronic, mechanical, or other means, to portray an identifiable minor engaged in sexual conduct.<sup>3</sup>
- “Sexual conduct” means actual or simulated sexual intercourse, deviate sexual intercourse, sexual bestiality, masturbation, or sadomasochistic abuse; actual or simulated lewd exhibition of the genitals; actual physical contact with a person’s clothed or unclothed genitals, pubic area, buttocks, or, if such person is a female, breast, with the intent to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of either party; or any act or conduct which constitutes sexual battery or simulates that sexual battery is being or will be committed.<sup>4</sup>
- “Sexual performance” means any performance or part thereof which includes sexual conduct by a child.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This does not apply to any material possessed, controlled, or intentionally viewed as part of a law enforcement investigation. Section 827.071(5)(b), F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Section 827.071(1)(b), F.S.

<sup>4</sup> A mother’s breastfeeding of her baby does not under any circumstance constitute “sexual conduct.” Section 827.071(1)(l), F.S.

<sup>5</sup> “Performance” means any play, motion picture, photograph, or dance or any other visual representation exhibited before an audience. Section 827.071(1)(m) and (g), F.S.

**Criminal Punishment Code and Offense Severity Ranking**

- The Criminal Punishment Code<sup>6</sup> is Florida’s primary sentencing policy. Noncapital felonies sentenced under the Code receive an offense severity level ranking (levels 1-10). Points are assigned and accrue based upon the severity level ranking assigned to the primary offense, additional offenses, and prior offenses. Sentence points escalate as the severity level escalates.
- Offenses are either ranked in the offense severity level ranking chart in s. 921.0022, F.S., or are ranked by default based on a ranking assigned to the felony degree of the offense as provided in s. 921.0023, F.S. Currently, a felony of the third degree is ranked as a level 1 offense, and a second degree felony is ranked as a level 4 offense.<sup>7</sup>

***Reclassification of Specified Child Exploitation Offenses***

Under s. 775.0847, F.S., a violation of s. 827.071, F.S., must be reclassified to the next higher degree if the offender possesses 10 or more images of any form of child pornography regardless of content, and the content of at least one image contains one or more of the following:

- A child who is younger than the age of five;
- Sadomasochistic abuse involving a child;
- Sexual battery involving a child;
- Sexual bestiality involving a child; or
- Any motion picture, film, video, or computer-generated motion picture, film, or video involving a child, regardless of length and regardless of whether the motion picture, film, video, or computer-generated motion picture, film, or video contains sound.

**III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

The bill amends s. 921.0022, F.S., to increase the OSRC rankings for specified child exploitation offenses as follows:<sup>8</sup>

| <b>Violation</b>  | <b>Current OSRC Ranking</b> | <b>New OSRC Ranking</b> |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Using a child in or promoting a child sexual performance under s. 827.071(2) or (3), F.S. | Level 6                     | Level 7                 |
| Possessing child pornography with intent to promote under s. 827.071(4), F.S.             | Level 5                     | Level 7                 |
| Possessing or intentionally viewing child pornography under s. 827.071(5), F.S.           | Level 5                     | Level 6                 |

By increasing the offense severity ranking of specified child exploitation offenses, the bill may increase the minimum sentence to which a person convicted of such an offense may be sentenced and may increase a term of incarceration required to be imposed as part of that sentence.

<sup>6</sup> Sections 921.002-921.0027, F.S. See chs. 97-194 and 98-204, L.O.F. The Code is effective for offenses committed on or after October 1, 1998.

<sup>7</sup> Section 921.0023(1) and (2), F.S.

<sup>8</sup> The bill retains the current felony levels for ss. 827.071(2), (3), (4), and (5), F.S.

The bill is effective October 1, 2024.

**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 identified.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The Criminal Justice Impact Conference, which provides the final, official estimate of the prison bed impact, if any, of legislation, has determined the bill has a positive insignificant impact (increase of 10 or fewer beds) on prison beds.<sup>9</sup>

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

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<sup>9</sup> Office of Economic and Demographic Research *SB 1656*,  
<http://edr.state.fl.us/Content/conferences/criminaljusticeimpact/SB1656.pdf>

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 921.0022.

**IX. Additional Information:****A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

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

**CS by Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice on February 13, 2024:**

The committee substitute:

- Removes the penalty enhancements for specific crimes relating to the exploitation of children in ss. 847.1035 and 847.0137, F.S.
- Removes several increased OSRC rankings for specified child exploitation offenses.
- Increases the OSRC ranking for possessing or intentionally viewing child pornography under s. 827.071(5) from a level 5 to a level 6.

**B. Amendments:**

None.