

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FINAL BILL ANALYSIS

BILL #:	CS/CS/HB 1097 (CS/SB 2052)	FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION:	
SPONSOR(S):	Appropriations Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; Kreegel (Children, Families, and Elder Affairs; Children, Families, and Elder Affairs; Lynn)	115 Y's	0 N's
COMPANION BILLS:	CS/SB 2052	GOVERNOR'S ACTION:	Pending

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CS/CS/HB 1097 passed the House on March, 5, 2012, and subsequently passed the Senate on March 9, 2012. The bill amends chapter 394, part V, F.S., relating to the involuntary civil commitment of sexually violent predators act. Specifically, the bill:

- Requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to prioritize the assessments of persons convicted of a sexually violent offense who are at least 365 days from release from confinement and who have not had an assessment or recommendation. The prioritization must be based upon the person's release date.
- Clarifies the timeframe for completing assessments and recommendations by the multidisciplinary team and the filing of civil commitment petitions by the state attorney.
- Removes a deportation detainer exception for sexually violent predators in s. 394.917, F.S. As a result, DCF will be able to work with the courts to facilitate the deportation of sexually violent predators that can be safely deported.
- Makes it a third degree felony for a person to knowingly and intentionally bring, send, take, or attempt to take specified items into any secure facility providing confinement and treatment under chapter 394, part V, F.S.

The Criminal Justice Impact Conference met January 17, 2012 and determined the bill will have an insignificant impact on state prison beds.

Subject to the Governor's veto power, the effective date of the bill is July 1, 2012.

I. SUBSTANTIVE INFORMATION

A. EFFECT OF CHANGES:

Present Situation

Sexually violent predators¹ are persons who have been convicted of a sexually violent offense² and have a mental abnormality or personality disorder that makes them likely to engage in future acts of sexual violence if not confined to a secure facility for long-term control, care, and treatment.³

To address the treatment needs of these offenders, the 1998 Legislature enacted the Involuntary Civil Commitment of Sexually Violent Predators Act,⁴ also known as the Ryce Act.⁵ The Ryce Act creates a civil commitment process for sexually violent predators that is similar to the Baker Act (used to involuntarily commit and treat mentally ill persons).⁶ Under the Ryce Act, offenders with specified sex offenses who are nearing the end of their criminal sentence are referred to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) for assessment by a multidisciplinary team as to whether they meet the clinical definition of a sexually violent predator. After assessment, DCF provides a recommendation to the state attorney.⁷

Following receipt of the recommendation and supporting information, the state attorney determines whether to file a petition with the circuit court alleging that the person is a sexually violent predator. If the judge determines probable cause exists, the offender is detained at the Florida Civil Commitment Center, the case proceeds through the commitment process, and in many instances a civil trial is held.⁸

Those civilly committed as sexually violent predators pursuant to the Ryce Act are housed for treatment at the Florida Civil Commitment Center.⁹ The treatment program consists of four levels of sex offender-specific cognitive behavior treatment, which takes approximately six years to complete.¹⁰ Section 394.918, F.S., provides that persons committed to the state under the Ryce Act be confined until the court determines that they are no longer a threat to public safety.

A person committed under the Ryce Act has an examination of his or her mental condition once every year (or more frequently at the court's discretion) and the court holds a hearing to determine whether there is probable cause to believe that the person's condition has so changed that it is safe for him or her to be released. If the court believes there is probable cause, a trial is held at which the state attorney bears the burden of proving that the person's mental condition remains such that, if released, he or she is likely to engage in acts of sexual violence.¹¹

Since the program's inception, over 42,777 offenders have been referred to DCF for screening and assessment.¹² As of September 2011, there were 677 detained and committed individuals at the Florida Civil Commitment Center.¹³

¹ The term "sexually violent predator" is defined in s. 394.912(10), F.S.

² The term "sexually violent offense" is defined in s. 394.912(9), F.S.

³ S. 394.912, F.S.

⁴ Ch. 394, part V, F.S.

⁵ *Conditional Release of Sexually Violent Predators through Stipulated Agreements*, Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) Research Memorandum, October 21, 2011. On file with Criminal Justice Subcommittee staff.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ The Florida Civil Commitment Center is a 720-bed, physically secure facility located in Arcadia, FL, and operated by The GEO Group.
Id.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² See, Sexually Violent Predator Program Reports. <http://edr.state.fl.us/Content/resource-demand/criminal-justice/reports/sexually-violent-predators/index.cfm> (last visited January 26, 2012).

¹³ *Supra*, note 4.

Effect of Proposed Changes

Notice of Release

Section 394.913, F.S., requires agencies with jurisdiction over a person who has been convicted of a sexually violent offense to give written notice to the multidisciplinary team and to the state attorney of the person's upcoming release from confinement. The statute requires this notice to be given within a certain time period prior to the person's release. For example, written notice must be given:

- At least 545 days prior to the anticipated release of a person serving a sentence in the custody of the Department of Corrections.
- At least 180 days prior to the anticipated release from residential commitment of a person committed to the custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice.
- At least 180 days prior to the anticipated hearing regarding possible release of a person committed to the custody of DCF who has been found not guilty by reason of insanity or mental incapacity.¹⁴

Within 180 days after receiving notice, the multidisciplinary team must assess the offender to determine whether he or she meets the clinical definition of a sexually violent predator.¹⁵ After assessment, DCF provides a recommendation to the state attorney.

The bill requires DCF to prioritize the assessments of persons who are at least 365 days from release from confinement and who have not had an assessment or recommendation. The prioritization must be based upon the person's release date.

Immediate Release – Assessment and Petition Timeframes

On occasion, a person convicted of a sexually violent offense may unexpectedly be ordered to be released from confinement. In such instances, the agency with jurisdiction over the person must immediately transfer such person to the custody of DCF upon release. Within 72 hours of this transfer, the multidisciplinary team must assess the person to determine whether he or she meets the definition of a sexually violent predator and if so, make a recommendation to the state attorney. However, if the 72-hour period ends on a weekend or holiday, the assessment and recommendation must be provided within the next working day thereafter.

Within 48 hours after receiving the assessment and recommendation, the state attorney may petition the court alleging that the person is a sexually violent predator. If the petition is not filed within 48 hours, the person must be released.

Currently, the law does not address what happens if the statutory timeframes described above end after 5 PM. This could be problematic, because failure to abide by the statutory timeframes could result in an unintended release of a person under consideration for civil commitment.

The bill amends s. 394.9135, F.S., to clarify the timeframe for completing assessments and recommendations by the multidisciplinary team and the filing of civil commitment petitions by the state attorney. The bill specifies that if the timeframes for completing assessments, recommendations or petitions falls after 5 PM on a work day, then the document may be filed on the next working day.

¹⁴ S. 394.913(1), F.S.

¹⁵ S. 394.913(3)(e), F.S.

Commitment

Section 394.917, F.S., provides that if a court or jury determines that a person is a sexually violent predator, the person must be committed to DCF's custody. This occurs upon the expiration of the incarcerative portion of the person's criminal sentence and disposition of any detainers, other than detainers for deportation by the United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services. This exception for deportation detainers requires that a person be committed to DCF's custody, even where a person has a deportation detainer.

The bill amends s. 394.917, F.S., to remove the deportation detainer exception. As a result, DCF will be able to work with the courts to facilitate the deportation of sexually violent predators that can be safely deported. The courts will still be able to proceed with commitment of sexually violent predators to the custody of DCF if deportation is unsuccessful.

Contraband

The bill creates s. 394.9265, F.S., which provides that except as authorized by law or by the person in charge of a secure facility providing confinement and treatment under ch. 394, part V, F.S., it is a third degree felony for a person to knowingly and intentionally bring, send, take, or attempt to take the following into such facility:

- Any intoxicating beverage or beverage that causes or may cause an intoxicating effect;
- Any controlled substance defined in chapter 893, F.S.;¹⁶ or
- Any firearm or weapon.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

The Criminal Justice Impact Conference met January 17, 2012 and determined the bill will have an insignificant impact on state prison beds.

DCF reports that this bill will not have a fiscal impact on the agency.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

¹⁶Ch. 893, F.S., is the Drug Abuse and Control Act.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.