

AN ACT

relating to the punishment for certain criminal conduct involving the smuggling of persons or the operation of a stash house; increasing criminal penalties.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 3.03, Penal Code, is amended by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsections (d) and (e) to read as follows:

(a) When the accused is found guilty of more than one offense arising out of the same criminal episode prosecuted in a single criminal action, a sentence for each offense for which the accused has been found guilty shall be pronounced. Except as otherwise provided by this section [~~Subsections (b) and (c)~~], the sentences shall run concurrently.

(d)(1) This subsection applies only to a single criminal action in which the accused is found guilty of:

(A) an offense under Section 20.05(a)(2) or an offense under Section 20.06 involving conduct constituting an offense under Section 20.05(a)(2); and

(B) an offense punishable under Section 22.01(b-4), 28.10, 30.02(c-2), 30.04(d)(3)(B), 30.05(d)(4), or 38.04(b-1) that arises out of the same criminal episode as the offense described by Paragraph (A).

(2) The sentence for an offense described by

1 Subdivision (1)(A) may run consecutively with each sentence for an  
2 offense described by Subdivision (1)(B).

3 (3) If the accused is found guilty of more than one  
4 offense described by Subdivision (1)(A), the sentences for those  
5 offenses must run concurrently with each other.

6 (e) Except as otherwise provided by this subsection, if in a  
7 single criminal action the accused is found guilty of more than one  
8 offense arising out of the same criminal episode, the sentences may  
9 run consecutively if each sentence is for a conviction of an offense  
10 for which a plea agreement was reached in a case in which the  
11 accused was charged with an offense described by Subsection  
12 (d)(1)(A) and an offense described by Subsection (d)(1)(B). If the  
13 accused is found guilty of more than one offense described by  
14 Subsection (d)(1)(A), the sentences for those offenses must run  
15 concurrently with each other.

16 SECTION 2. Section 12.50, Penal Code, is amended by  
17 amending Subsections (a), (b), and (c) and adding Subsection (d) to  
18 read as follows:

19 (a) Subject to Subsections [~~Subsection~~] (c) and (d), the  
20 punishment for an offense described by Subsection (b) is increased  
21 to the punishment prescribed for the next higher category of  
22 offense if it is shown on the trial of the offense that the offense  
23 was committed in an area that was, at the time of the offense:

24 (1) subject to a declaration of a state of disaster  
25 made by:

26 (A) the president of the United States under the  
27 Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42

1 U.S.C. Section 5121 et seq.);

2 (B) the governor under Section [418.014](#),  
3 Government Code; or

4 (C) the presiding officer of the governing body  
5 of a political subdivision under Section [418.108](#), Government Code;  
6 or

7 (2) subject to an emergency evacuation order.

8 (b) The increase in punishment authorized by this section  
9 applies only to an offense under:

10 (1) Section [20.05](#);

11 (2) Section [20.06](#);

12 (3) Section [20.07](#);

13 (4) Section [22.01](#);

14 (5) [~~(2)~~] Section [28.02](#);

15 (6) [~~(3)~~] Section [29.02](#);

16 (7) [~~(4)~~] Section [30.02](#);

17 (8) [~~(5)~~] Section [30.03](#);

18 (9) [~~(6)~~] Section [30.04](#);

19 (10) [~~(7)~~] Section [30.05](#); and

20 (11) [~~(8)~~] Section [31.03](#).

21 (c) If an offense listed under Subsection (b) [~~(b)(1), (5),~~  
22 ~~(6), (7), or (8)]~~ is punishable as a Class A misdemeanor, the  
23 minimum term of confinement for the offense is increased to 180  
24 days. Except as provided by Subsection (d), if [~~if~~] an offense  
25 listed under Subsection (b) [~~(b)(2), (4), or (8)]~~ is punishable as a  
26 felony of the first degree, the punishment for that offense may not  
27 be increased under this section.

1        (d) Except as otherwise provided by this subsection, the  
2 minimum term of imprisonment for an offense listed under Subsection  
3 (b)(1), (2), or (3) for which punishment is increased under this  
4 section is 10 years. If an offense listed under Subsection (b)(1)  
5 or (2) is punishable as a felony of the first degree, the minimum  
6 term of imprisonment is increased to 15 years unless another  
7 provision of law applicable to the offense provides for a minimum  
8 term of imprisonment of 15 years or more.

9        SECTION 3. Section 20.05, Penal Code, is amended by  
10 amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsections (b-1) and (b-2) to  
11 read as follows:

12        (b) Subject to Subsections (b-1) and (b-2), an ~~An~~ offense  
13 under this section is a felony of the third degree with a term of  
14 imprisonment of 10 years, except that the offense is:

15                (1) a felony of the second degree with a minimum term  
16 of imprisonment of 10 years if:

17                        (A) the actor commits the offense in a manner  
18 that creates a substantial likelihood that the smuggled individual  
19 will suffer serious bodily injury or death;

20                        (B) the smuggled individual is a child younger  
21 than 18 years of age at the time of the offense;

22                        (C) the offense was committed with the intent to  
23 obtain a pecuniary benefit;

24                        (D) during the commission of the offense the  
25 actor, another party to the offense, or an individual assisted,  
26 guided, or directed by the actor knowingly possessed a firearm; or

27                        (E) the actor commits the offense under

1 Subsection (a)(1)(B); or

2 (2) a felony of the first degree with a minimum term of  
3 imprisonment of 10 years if:

4 (A) it is shown on the trial of the offense that,  
5 as a direct result of the commission of the offense, the smuggled  
6 individual became a victim of sexual assault, as defined by Section  
7 22.011, or aggravated sexual assault, as defined by Section 22.021;  
8 or

9 (B) the smuggled individual suffered serious  
10 bodily injury or death.

11 (b-1) If at the punishment stage of the trial or at the time  
12 of entering a plea agreement for an offense under this section  
13 punishable as a felony of the third degree, the attorney  
14 representing the state in the prosecution of the offense certifies  
15 to the court in writing that the actor has provided significant  
16 cooperation to the state or law enforcement, and describes the  
17 manner of cooperation, the minimum term of imprisonment is five  
18 years. The certification is confidential and shall be sealed by the  
19 court, except that the certification may be accessed by the office  
20 of the attorney representing the state, the attorney representing  
21 the defendant, and the court. For purposes of this subsection,  
22 "significant cooperation" includes:

23 (1) testifying in a trial on behalf of the state  
24 against other parties to the offense;

25 (2) providing relevant information regarding the case  
26 and other parties to the offense;

27 (3) providing information that furthers the

1 investigation of the charged offense and any other parties  
2 involved; or

3 (4) providing information that aids law enforcement.

4 (b-2) At the punishment stage of a trial of an offense under  
5 this section, other than an offense punishable under Subsection  
6 (b)(1)(A), (C), (D), or (E) or (b)(2), the actor may raise the issue  
7 as to whether the actor is related to the smuggled individual in the  
8 third degree of consanguinity or, at the time of the offense, in the  
9 third degree of affinity. If the actor proves the issue in the  
10 affirmative by a preponderance of the evidence, the offense is a  
11 felony of the third degree with a minimum term of imprisonment of  
12 five years.

13 SECTION 4. Sections 20.06(e) and (f), Penal Code, are  
14 amended to read as follows:

15 (e) Except as provided by Subsections (f) and (g), an  
16 offense under this section is a felony of the second degree with a  
17 minimum term of imprisonment of 10 years.

18 (f) An offense under this section is a felony of the first  
19 degree with a minimum term of imprisonment of 10 years if:

20 (1) the conduct constituting an offense under Section  
21 20.05 is conducted in a manner that creates a substantial  
22 likelihood that the smuggled individual will suffer serious bodily  
23 injury or death; or

24 (2) the smuggled individual is a child younger than 18  
25 years of age at the time of the offense.

26 SECTION 5. Section 20.07(b), Penal Code, is amended to read  
27 as follows:

1 (b) An offense under this section is a felony of the third  
2 degree with a minimum term of imprisonment of five years, except  
3 that the offense is a felony of the second degree with a minimum  
4 term of imprisonment of five years if:

5 (1) the offense is committed under Subsection (a)(1)  
6 and the property that is the subject of the offense is used to  
7 commit or facilitate the commission of an offense under Section  
8 20.06, 20A.03, or 43.05; or

9 (2) it is shown on the trial of the offense that as a  
10 direct result of the commission of the offense:

11 (A) an individual became a victim of sexual  
12 assault, as defined by Section 22.011, or aggravated sexual  
13 assault, as defined by Section 22.021; or

14 (B) an individual suffered serious bodily injury  
15 or death [~~Class A misdemeanor~~].

16 SECTION 6. Section 22.01, Penal Code, is amended by adding  
17 Subsection (b-4) to read as follows:

18 (b-4) Notwithstanding Subsection (b), an offense under  
19 Subsection (a)(1) is a felony of the third degree if it is shown on  
20 the trial of the offense that the actor committed the offense in the  
21 course of committing an offense under Section 20.05(a)(2).

22 SECTION 7. Chapter 28, Penal Code, is amended by adding  
23 Section 28.10 to read as follows:

24 Sec. 28.10. ENHANCED PENALTY FOR CERTAIN MISDEMEANORS OR  
25 STATE JAIL FELONIES. The punishment for an offense under this  
26 chapter that is punishable as a misdemeanor or a state jail felony  
27 is increased to the punishment for a felony of the third degree if

1 it is shown on the trial of the offense that the actor committed the  
2 offense in the course of committing an offense under Section  
3 20.05(a)(2).

4 SECTION 8. Section 30.02, Penal Code, is amended by  
5 amending Subsection (c) and adding Subsection (c-2) to read as  
6 follows:

7 (c) Except as provided in Subsection (c-1), (c-2), or (d),  
8 an offense under this section is a:

9 (1) state jail felony if committed in a building other  
10 than a habitation; or

11 (2) felony of the second degree if committed in a  
12 habitation.

13 (c-2) An offense under this section is a felony of the third  
14 degree if:

15 (1) the premises are a building other than a  
16 habitation; and

17 (2) it is shown on the trial of the offense that the  
18 actor committed the offense in the course of committing an offense  
19 under Section 20.05(a)(2).

20 SECTION 9. Section 30.04(d), Penal Code, is amended to read  
21 as follows:

22 (d) An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor,  
23 except that:

24 (1) the offense is a Class A misdemeanor with a minimum  
25 term of confinement of six months if it is shown on the trial of the  
26 offense that the defendant has been previously convicted of an  
27 offense under this section;



1 (2) the offense is a state jail felony if:

2 (A) it is shown on the trial of the offense that  
3 the defendant has been previously convicted two or more times of an  
4 offense under this section; or

5 (B) the vehicle or part of the vehicle broken  
6 into or entered is a rail car; and

7 (3) the offense is a felony of the third degree if:

8 (A) the vehicle broken into or entered is owned  
9 or operated by a wholesale distributor of prescription drugs[+] and

10 [~~(B)~~] the actor breaks into or enters that  
11 vehicle with the intent to commit theft of a controlled substance;  
12 or

13 (B) it is shown on the trial of the offense that  
14 the actor committed the offense in the course of committing an  
15 offense under Section 20.05(a)(2).

16 SECTION 10. Section 30.05(d), Penal Code, is amended to  
17 read as follows:

18 (d) Subject to Subsection (d-3), an offense under this  
19 section is:

20 (1) a Class B misdemeanor, except as provided by  
21 Subdivisions (2), ~~[and]~~ (3), and (4);

22 (2) a Class C misdemeanor, except as provided by  
23 Subdivisions [~~Subdivision~~] (3) and (4), if the offense is  
24 committed:

25 (A) on agricultural land and within 100 feet of  
26 the boundary of the land; or

27 (B) on residential land and within 100 feet of a

1 protected freshwater area; ~~and~~

2 (3) a Class A misdemeanor, except as provided by  
3 Subdivision (4), if:

4 (A) the offense is committed:

5 (i) in a habitation or a shelter center;

6 (ii) on a Superfund site; or

7 (iii) on or in a critical infrastructure  
8 facility;

9 (B) the offense is committed on or in property of  
10 an institution of higher education and it is shown on the trial of  
11 the offense that the person has previously been convicted of:

12 (i) an offense under this section relating  
13 to entering or remaining on or in property of an institution of  
14 higher education; or

15 (ii) an offense under Section 51.204(b)(1),  
16 Education Code, relating to trespassing on the grounds of an  
17 institution of higher education;

18 (C) the person carries a deadly weapon during the  
19 commission of the offense; or

20 (D) the offense is committed on the property of  
21 or within a general residential operation operating as a  
22 residential treatment center; and

23 (4) a felony of the third degree if it is shown on the  
24 trial of the offense that the defendant committed the offense in the  
25 course of committing an offense under Section 20.05(a)(2).

26 SECTION 11. Section 38.04, Penal Code, is amended by adding  
27 Subsection (b-1) to read as follows:

1        (b-1) Notwithstanding Subsection (b), an offense under this  
2 section is a felony of the third degree if it is shown on the trial  
3 of the offense that the actor committed the offense in the course of  
4 committing an offense under Section 20.05(a)(2).

5        SECTION 12. The changes in law made by this Act apply only  
6 to an offense committed on or after the effective date of this Act.  
7 An offense committed before the effective date of this Act is  
8 governed by the law in effect on the date the offense was committed,  
9 and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose. For  
10 purposes of this section, an offense was committed before the  
11 effective date of this Act if any element of the offense was  
12 committed before that date.

13        SECTION 13. This Act takes effect December 1, 2023, if it  
14 receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each  
15 house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution.  
16 If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for effect on that  
17 date, this Act takes effect on the 91st day after the last day of the  
18 legislative session.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President of the Senate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker of the House

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 4 passed the Senate on October 12, 2023, by the following vote: Yeas 29, Nays 2.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of the Senate

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 4 passed the House on October 26, 2023, by the following vote: Yeas 92, Nays 54, one present not voting.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Clerk of the House

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Governor