

By: Menéndez

S.B. No. 2537

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a criminal offense committed against a person because of bias or prejudice on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

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

SECTION 1. Article 42.014(a), Code of Criminal Procedure, is amended to read as follows:

(a) In the trial of an offense under Title 5, Penal Code, or Section 28.02, 28.03, 28.08, or 42.0601, Penal Code, the judge shall make an affirmative finding of fact and enter the affirmative finding in the judgment of the case if at the guilt or innocence phase of the trial, the judge or the jury, whichever is the trier of fact, determines beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant intentionally selected the person against whom the offense was committed, or intentionally selected the person's property that was damaged or affected as a result of the offense, because of the defendant's bias or prejudice against a group identified by race, color, disability, religion, national origin or ancestry, age, gender, ~~or~~ sexual orientation, or gender identity ~~[preference]~~ or by status as a peace officer or judge.

SECTION 2. Article 42.014(c), Code of Criminal Procedure, is repealed.

SECTION 3. The change in law made by this Act applies only to an offense committed on or after the effective date of this Act.

1 An offense committed before the effective date of this Act is
2 governed by the law in effect on the date the offense was committed,
3 and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose. For
4 purposes of this section, an offense was committed before the
5 effective date of this Act if any element of the offense occurred
6 before that date.

7 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.