

title or imprisoned not more than two years, or both.

Merchandise so concealed, removed, or repacked, or packages upon which any marks or numbers have been so altered, defaced, or obliterated, shall be forfeited to the United States.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 717; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, §330016(1)(K), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2147.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on section 1597 of title 19, U.S.C., 1940 ed., Customs Duties (June 17, 1930, ch. 497, title IV, §597, 46 Stat. 752).

This section was rewritten to place the criminal provisions ahead of the forfeiture provisions. This did not require any substantive changes except omission of reference to persons aiding. Such persons are made principals by section 2 of this title.

The punishment prescribed by section 545 of this title was inserted to make this section complete without reference to another section. In doing so it was necessary to rephrase the punishment provision of section 545 of this title, as originally enacted, without change of substance.

Forfeiture provision was rephrased to make it clear that forfeiture was not dependent upon conviction.

Changes were made in phraseology.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

1994—Pub. L. 103-322 substituted “fined under this title” for “fined not more than \$5,000”.

§ 549. Removing goods from customs custody; breaking seals

Whoever, without authority, affixes or attaches a customs seal, fastening, or mark, or any seal, fastening, or mark purporting to be a customs seal, fastening, or mark to any vessel, vehicle, warehouse, or package; or

Whoever, without authority, willfully removes, breaks, injures, or defaces any customs seal or other fastening or mark placed upon any vessel, vehicle, warehouse, or package containing merchandise or baggage in bond or in customs custody; or

Whoever maliciously enters any bonded warehouse or any vessel or vehicle laden with or containing bonded merchandise with intent unlawfully to remove therefrom any merchandise or baggage therein, or unlawfully removes any merchandise or baggage in such vessel, vehicle, or bonded warehouse or otherwise in customs custody or control; or

Whoever receives or transports any merchandise or baggage unlawfully removed from any such vessel, vehicle, or warehouse, knowing the same to have been unlawfully removed—

Shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 10 years, or both.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 717; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, §330016(1)(K), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2147; Pub. L. 109-177, title III, §311(e), Mar. 9, 2006, 120 Stat. 242.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on section 1598 of title 19, U.S.C., 1940 ed., Customs Duties (June 17, 1930, ch. 497, title IV, §598, 46 Stat. 752; June 25, 1938, ch. 679, §26, 52 Stat. 1089).

Reference to persons causing, procuring, aiding or assisting was omitted as unnecessary in view of definition of “principal” in section 2 of this title.

In view of definition of felony in section 1 of this title words “guilty of a felony” were omitted. (See reviser’s note under section 550 of this title.)

The punishment prescribed by section 545 of this title was inserted to make this section complete without reference to another section. In doing so it was necessary to rephrase the punishment provision of section 545 of this title, as originally enacted, without change of substance.

Forfeiture provision was omitted to conform with current administrative practice.

Changes were made in phraseology.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2006—Pub. L. 109-177 substituted “10 years” for “two years” in last par.

1994—Pub. L. 103-322 substituted “fined under this title” for “fined not more than \$5,000” in last par.

§ 550. False claim for refund of duties

Whoever knowingly and willfully files any false or fraudulent entry or claim for the payment of drawback, allowance, or refund of duties upon the exportation of merchandise, or knowingly or willfully makes or files any false affidavit, abstract, record, certificate, or other document, with a view to securing the payment to himself or others of any drawback, allowance, or refund of duties, on the exportation of merchandise, greater than that legally due thereon, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than two years, or both, and such merchandise or the value thereof shall be forfeited.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 718; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, §330016(1)(K), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2147.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on section 1590 of title 19, U.S.C., 1940 ed., Customs Duties (June 17, 1930, ch. 497, title IV, §590, 46 Stat. 750).

Reference to felony, contained in words “such person shall be guilty of a felony” was omitted as unnecessary in view of definition of felony in section 1 of this title. This, too, was the policy adopted by the codifiers of the 1909 Criminal Code. (See S. Rept. 10, pt. I, pp. 12, 13, and 14, 60th Cong., 1st sess.)

Words “and upon conviction thereof” before “shall be punished” were also omitted as unnecessary, since punishment cannot be imposed until a conviction is secured.

Changes were made in phraseology.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

1994—Pub. L. 103-322 substituted “fined under this title” for “fined not more than \$5,000”.

§ 551. Concealing or destroying invoices or other papers

Whoever willfully conceals or destroys any invoice, book, or paper relating to any merchandise imported into the United States, after an inspection thereof has been demanded by the collector of any collection district; or

Whoever conceals or destroys at any time any such invoice, book, or paper for the purpose of suppressing any evidence of fraud therein contained—

Shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than two years, or both.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 718; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, § 330016(1)(K), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2147.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., § 120 (Mar. 4, 1909, ch. 321, § 64, 35 Stat. 1100).

Minor changes were made in phraseology.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

1994—Pub. L. 103-322 substituted “fined under this title” for “fined not more than \$5,000” in last par.

Executive Documents

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

All offices of collector of customs, comptroller of customs, surveyor of customs, and appraiser of merchandise in Bureau of Customs of Department of the Treasury to which appointments were required to be made by President with advice and consent of Senate ordered abolished, with such offices to be terminated not later than Dec. 31, 1966, by Reorg. Plan No. 1 of 1965, eff. May 25, 1965, 30 F.R. 7035, 79 Stat. 1317, set out in the Appendix to Title 5, Government Organization and Employees. All functions of offices eliminated were already vested in Secretary of the Treasury by Reorg. Plan No. 26 of 1950, eff. July 31, 1950, 15 F.R. 4935, 64 Stat. 1280, set out in the Appendix to Title 5.

§ 552. Officers aiding importation of obscene or treasonous books and articles

Whoever, being an officer, agent, or employee of the United States, knowingly aids or abets any person engaged in any violation of any of the provisions of law prohibiting importing, advertising, dealing in, exhibiting, or sending or receiving by mail obscene or indecent publications or representations, or books, pamphlets, papers, writings, advertisements, circulars, prints, pictures, or drawings containing any matter advocating or urging treason or insurrection against the United States or forcible resistance to any law of the United States, or containing any threat to take the life of or inflict bodily harm upon any person in the United States, or means for procuring abortion, or other articles of indecent or immoral use or tendency, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 718; Pub. L. 91-662, § 2, Jan. 8, 1971, 84 Stat. 1973; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, § 330016(1)(K), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2147.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on section 1305(b) of title 19, U.S.C., 1940 ed., Customs Duties (June 17, 1930, ch. 497, title III, § 305(b), 46 Stat. 688).

In view of definition of misdemeanor in section 1 of this title words “shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and” were omitted.

Words “at hard labor” after “imprisonment” were omitted. (See reviser’s note under section 1 of this title.)

Changes were made in phraseology.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

1994—Pub. L. 103-322 substituted “fined under this title” for “fined not more than \$5,000”.

1971—Pub. L. 91-662 struck out “preventing conception or” before “procuring abortion”.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1971 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 91-662, § 7, Jan. 8, 1971, 84 Stat. 1974, provided that: “The amendments made by this Act (other than by section 6) [amending this section, sections 1461 and 1462 of this title, and section 1305 of Title 19, Customs Duties] shall take effect on the day after the date of the enactment of this Act [Jan. 8, 1971].”

§ 553. Importation or exportation of stolen motor vehicles, off-highway mobile equipment, vessels, or aircraft

(a) Whoever knowingly imports, exports, or attempts to import or export—

(1) any motor vehicle, off-highway mobile equipment, vessel, aircraft, or part of any motor vehicle, off-highway mobile equipment, vessel, or aircraft, knowing the same to have been stolen; or

(2) any motor vehicle or off-highway mobile equipment or part of any motor vehicle or off-highway mobile equipment, knowing that the identification number of such motor vehicle, equipment, or part has been removed, obliterated, tampered with, or altered;

shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 10 years, or both.

(b) Subsection (a)(2) shall not apply if the removal, obliteration, tampering, or alteration—

(1) is caused by collision or fire; or

(2)(A) in the case of a motor vehicle, is not a violation of section 511 of this title (relating to altering or removing motor vehicle identification numbers); or

(B) in the case of off-highway mobile equipment, would not be a violation of section 511 of this title if such equipment were a motor vehicle.

(c) As used in this section, the term—

(1) “motor vehicle” has the meaning given that term in section 32101 of title 49;

(2) “off-highway mobile equipment” means any self-propelled agricultural equipment, self-propelled construction equipment, and self-propelled special use equipment, used or designed for running on land but not on rail or highway;

(3) “vessel” has the meaning given that term in section 401 of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1401);

(4) “aircraft” has the meaning given that term in section 40102(a) of title 49; and

(5) “identification number”—

(A) in the case of a motor vehicle, has the meaning given that term in section 511 of this title; and

(B) in the case of any other vehicle or equipment covered by this section, means a number or symbol assigned to the vehicle or equipment, or part thereof, by the manufacturer primarily for the purpose of identifying such vehicle, equipment, or part.

(Added Pub. L. 98-547, title III, § 301(a), Oct. 25, 1984, 98 Stat. 2771; amended Pub. L. 100-690, title VII, § 7021, Nov. 18, 1988, 102 Stat. 4396; Pub. L. 102-519, title I, § 102, Oct. 25, 1992, 106 Stat. 3385;