

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised Section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
46501(1)	49 App.:1301(38) (words after 10th comma).	Aug. 23, 1958, Pub. L. 85-726, 72 Stat. 731, §101(38); added Oct. 14, 1970, Pub. L. 91-449, §1(1), 84 Stat. 921; restated Aug. 5, 1974, Pub. L. 93-366, §§102, 206, 88 Stat. 409, 419; Nov. 9, 1977, Pub. L. 95-163, §17(b)(1), 91 Stat. 1286; Oct. 24, 1978, Pub. L. 95-504, §2(b), 92 Stat. 1705; Oct. 12, 1984, Pub. L. 98-473, §2013(c), 98 Stat. 2189.
	49 App.:1472(n)(4).	Aug. 23, 1958, Pub. L. 85-726, 72 Stat. 731, §902(n)(2), (4); added Aug. 5, 1974, Pub. L. 93-366, §103(b), 88 Stat. 410, 411.
46501(2)	49 App.:1301(38) (words before 10th comma).	
46501(3)	49 App.:1472(n)(2).	

In clause (2), before subclause (A), the words “any of the following” are substituted for “includes” for clarity. In subclause (B), the words “armed forces” are substituted for “national defense forces” because of 10:101. In subclause (D)(i), the word “place” is substituted for “point” for consistency in the revised title. The word “actually” is omitted as surplus. In subclause (D)(ii), the words “on which an individual commits” are substituted for “having . . . committed aboard” for clarity. In subclause (D)(iii), the words “against which an individual commits” are substituted for “regarding which an offense . . . is committed” for clarity. The words “(Montreal, September 23, 1971)” are omitted as surplus. In subclause (E), the words “the lessee does not have a principal place of business” are substituted for “none” for clarity.

In clause (3), the words “by force or threat thereof, or . . . other” are omitted as surplus.

§ 46502. Aircraft piracy

(a) IN SPECIAL AIRCRAFT JURISDICTION.—(1) In this subsection—

(A) “aircraft piracy” means seizing or exercising control of an aircraft in the special aircraft jurisdiction of the United States by force, violence, threat of force or violence, or any form of intimidation, and with wrongful intent.

(B) an attempt to commit aircraft piracy is in the special aircraft jurisdiction of the United States although the aircraft is not in flight at the time of the attempt if the aircraft would have been in the special aircraft jurisdiction of the United States had the aircraft piracy been completed.

(2) An individual committing or attempting or conspiring to commit aircraft piracy—

(A) shall be imprisoned for at least 20 years; or

(B) notwithstanding section 3559(b) of title 18, if the death of another individual results from the commission or attempt, shall be put to death or imprisoned for life.

(b) OUTSIDE SPECIAL AIRCRAFT JURISDICTION.—(1) An individual committing or conspiring to commit an offense (as defined in the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft) on an aircraft in flight outside the special aircraft jurisdiction of the United States—

(A) shall be imprisoned for at least 20 years; or

(B) notwithstanding section 3559(b) of title 18, if the death of another individual results

from the commission or attempt, shall be put to death or imprisoned for life.

(2) There is jurisdiction over the offense in paragraph (1) if—

(A) a national of the United States was aboard the aircraft;

(B) an offender is a national of the United States; or

(C) an offender is afterwards found in the United States.

(3) For purposes of this subsection, the term “national of the United States” has the meaning prescribed in section 101(a)(22) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(22)).

(Pub. L. 103-272, §1(e), July 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 1241; Pub. L. 103-429, §6(61), Oct. 31, 1994, 108 Stat. 4385; Pub. L. 104-132, title VII, §§721(a), 723(b), Apr. 24, 1996, 110 Stat. 1298, 1300.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES
PUB. L. 103-272

Revised Section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
46502(a)(1) ..	49 App.:1472(i)(2), (3).	Aug. 23, 1958, Pub. L. 85-726, 72 Stat. 731, §902(i); added Sept. 5, 1961, Pub. L. 87-197, §1, 75 Stat. 466; Oct. 14, 1970, Pub. L. 91-449, §1(3), 84 Stat. 921; Aug. 5, 1974, Pub. L. 93-366, §§103(a), 104, 88 Stat. 410, 411.
46502(a)(2) ..	49 App.:1472(i)(1).	
46502(b)(1) ..	49 App.:1472(n)(1).	Aug. 23, 1958, Pub. L. 85-726, 72 Stat. 731, §902(n)(1), (3); added Aug. 5, 1974, Pub. L. 93-366, §103(b), 88 Stat. 410.
46502(b)(2) ..	49 App.:1472(n)(3).	

In subsection (a)(1)(B), the words “offense of” are omitted as surplus.

In subsection (a)(2), the words “as herein defined” are omitted as surplus.

In subsection (b)(2), the words “the place of actual” are omitted as surplus. The words “as defined in paragraph (2) of this subsection” are omitted because of the restatement. The word “country” is substituted for “State” for consistency in the revised title and with other titles of the United States Code.

PUB. L. 103-429

This amends 49:46502(a)(2)(B) and (b)(1)(B) to clarify the restatement of 49 App.:1472(i)(1)(B) and (n)(1)(B) by section 1 of the Act of July 5, 1994 (Public Law 103-272, 108 Stat. 1241, 1242).

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

1996—Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 104-132, §723(b)(1), inserted “or conspiring” after “attempting”.

Subsec. (b)(1). Pub. L. 104-132, §§721(a)(1), 723(b)(2), in introductory provisions, inserted “or conspiring to commit” after “committing” and struck out “and later found in the United States” after “jurisdiction of the United States”.

Subsec. (b)(2). Pub. L. 104-132, §721(a)(2), amended par. (2) generally. Prior to amendment, par. (2) read as follows: “This subsection applies only if the place of take-off or landing of the aircraft on which the individual commits the offense is located outside the territory of the country of registration of the aircraft.”

Subsec. (b)(3). Pub. L. 104-132, §721(a)(3), added par. (3).

1994—Subsecs. (a)(2)(B), (b)(1)(B). Pub. L. 103-429 inserted “notwithstanding section 3559(b) of title 18,” before “if the death”.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1994 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 103-429 effective July 5, 1994, see section 9 of Pub. L. 103-429, set out as a note under section 321 of this title.

DEATH PENALTY PROCEDURES FOR CERTAIN AIR PIRACY CASES OCCURRING BEFORE ENACTMENT OF THE FEDERAL DEATH PENALTY ACT OF 1994

Pub. L. 109-177, title II, §211, Mar. 9, 2006, 120 Stat. 230, provided that:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 60003 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-322), is amended, as of the time of its enactment [Sept. 13, 1994], by adding at the end the following:

“(c) [Omitted, see below.]”.

“(b) SEVERABILITY CLAUSE.—If any provision of section 60003(b)(2) of the Violent Crime and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-322) [repealed section 46503 of this title], or the application thereof to any person or any circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of such section and the application of such section to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.”

Pub. L. 103-322, title VI, §60003(c), as added by Pub. L. 109-177, title II, §211(a), Mar. 9, 2006, 120 Stat. 230, provided that:

“(c) DEATH PENALTY PROCEDURES FOR CERTAIN PREVIOUS AIRCRAFT PIRACY VIOLATIONS.—An individual convicted of violating section 46502 of title 49, United States Code, or its predecessor, may be sentenced to death in accordance with the procedures established in chapter 228 of title 18, United States Code, if for any offense committed before the enactment of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-322) [Sept. 13, 1994], but after the enactment of the Antihijacking Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-366) [Aug. 5, 1974], it is determined by the finder of fact, before consideration of the factors set forth in sections 3591(a)(2) and 3592(a) and (c) of title 18, United States Code, that one or more of the factors set forth in former section 46503(c)(2) of title 49, United States Code, or its predecessor, has been proven by the Government to exist, beyond a reasonable doubt, and that none of the factors set forth in former section 46503(c)(1) of title 49, United States Code, or its predecessor, has been proven by the defendant to exist, by a preponderance of the information. The meaning of the term ‘especially heinous, cruel, or depraved’, as used in the factor set forth in former section 46503(c)(2)(B)(iv) of title 49, United States Code, or its predecessor, shall be narrowed by adding the limiting language ‘in that it involved torture or serious physical abuse to the victim’, and shall be construed as when that term is used in section 3592(c)(6) of title 18, United States Code.”

AIRCRAFT PIRACY

The United States is a party to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, signed at The Hague, Dec. 16, 1970, entered into force as to the United States, Oct. 14, 1971, 22 UST 1641.

§ 46503. Interference with security screening personnel

(a) IN GENERAL.—An individual in an area within a commercial service airport in the United States who, by assaulting a Federal, airport, or air carrier employee who has security duties within the airport, interferes with the performance of the duties of the employee or lessens the ability of the employee to perform those duties, shall be fined under title 18, imprisoned for not more than 10 years, or both. If the individual used a dangerous weapon in committing the assault or interference, the individual may be imprisoned for any term of years or life imprisonment.

(b) AIRPORT AND AIR CARRIER EMPLOYEES.—For purposes of this section, an airport or air carrier employee who has security duties within the airport includes an airport or air carrier employee performing ticketing, check-in, baggage claim, or boarding functions.

(Added Pub. L. 107-71, title I, §114(a), Nov. 19, 2001, 115 Stat. 623; amended Pub. L. 118-63, title IV, § 436, May 16, 2024, 138 Stat. 1176.)

Editorial Notes

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 46503, Pub. L. 103-272, §1(e), July 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 1242, provided for death penalty sentencing procedure for individuals convicted of aircraft piracy, prior to repeal by Pub. L. 103-322, title VI, §60003(b)(2), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 1970.

AMENDMENTS

2024—Pub. L. 118-63 designated existing provisions as subsec. (a), inserted heading, and added subsec. (b).

§ 46504. Interference with flight crew members and attendants

An individual on an aircraft in the special aircraft jurisdiction of the United States who, by assaulting or intimidating a flight crew member or flight attendant of the aircraft, interferes with the performance of the duties of the member or attendant or lessens the ability of the member or attendant to perform those duties, or attempts or conspires to do such an act, shall be fined under title 18, imprisoned for not more than 20 years, or both. However, if a dangerous weapon is used in assaulting or intimidating the member or attendant, the individual shall be imprisoned for any term of years or for life.

(Pub. L. 103-272, §1(e), July 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 1244; Pub. L. 107-56, title VIII, §811(i), Oct. 26, 2001, 115 Stat. 382.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised Section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
46504	49 App.:1472(j).	Aug. 23, 1958, Pub. L. 85-726, 72 Stat. 731, §902(j); added Sept. 5, 1961, Pub. L. 87-197, §1, 75 Stat. 466; Oct. 14, 1970, Pub. L. 91-449, §1(3), 84 Stat. 921.

The words “or threatens” are omitted as being included in “intimidating”. The words “(including any steward or stewardess)” are omitted as being included in “attendant”. The words “fined under title 18” are substituted for “fined not more than \$10,000” for consistency with title 18. The words “deadly or” are omitted as surplus.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2001—Pub. L. 107-56 inserted “or attempts or conspires to do such an act,” before “shall be fined under title 18.”.

§ 46505. Carrying a weapon or explosive on an aircraft

(a) DEFINITION.—In this section, “loaded firearm” means a starter gun or a weapon designed or converted to expel a projectile through an explosive, that has a cartridge, a detonator, or