

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 175 Session of 2025

INTRODUCED BY HUGHES, LANGERHOLC, TARTAGLIONE, FONTANA, BROOKS, ROTHMAN, PHILLIPS-HILL, SCHWANK, LAUGHLIN, COSTA AND KANE, JANUARY 23, 2025

REFERRED TO JUDICIARY, JANUARY 23, 2025

AN ACT

1 Amending Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) of the Pennsylvania  
 2 Consolidated Statutes, in falsification and intimidation,  
 3 further providing for the offense of false alarms to agencies  
 4 of public safety.

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
 6 hereby enacts as follows:

7 Section 1. Section 4905(a) of Title 18 of the Pennsylvania  
 8 Consolidated Statutes is amended and the section is amended by  
 9 adding subsections to read:

10 § 4905. False alarms to agencies of public safety.

11 (a) Offense defined.--A person commits an offense if [he  
 12 knowingly causes a false alarm of fire or other emergency to be  
 13 transmitted to or within any organization, official or  
 14 volunteer, for dealing with emergencies involving danger to life  
 15 or property.] the person knowingly and intentionally makes or  
 16 causes to be made a false report of a crime or medical or other  
 17 emergency to a law enforcement agency, firefighter, fire  
 18 company, emergency medical services agency, emergency medical

1 services provider, 911 system operator or a government employee  
2 or contractor or an employee of a contractor who is authorized  
3 to receive a report of a crime or medical or other emergency.

4 \* \* \*

5 (c) Costs.--

6 (1) In addition to a penalty imposed under subsection  
7 (b), the court may order a person convicted or adjudicated  
8 under this section to pay to the State or local unit of  
9 government the costs of responding to the false report,  
10 including the use of law enforcement officers or fire,  
11 medical or other emergency response personnel, vehicles and  
12 teams.

13 (2) The following apply to a juvenile ordered to pay  
14 costs under this subsection:

15 (i) If the court determines that the juvenile is or  
16 will be unable to pay the costs ordered, after notice to  
17 the juvenile's parent or legal guardian and an  
18 opportunity for the persons to be heard, the court may  
19 order the parent or legal guardian having supervisory  
20 responsibility of the juvenile at the time of the act  
21 upon which the order is based to pay a portion of the  
22 costs ordered that is outstanding. An order under this  
23 subparagraph does not relieve the juvenile of the  
24 juvenile's obligation to pay the costs as ordered, but  
25 the amount owed is offset by an amount paid by the  
26 juvenile's parent or legal guardian.

27 (ii) If the court orders a parent or legal guardian  
28 to pay costs under subparagraph (i), the court shall take  
29 into account the financial resources of the parent or  
30 legal guardians and the burden that the payment of the

1 cost will impose. If the court requires a parent or legal  
2 guardian to pay costs under subparagraph (i), the court  
3 shall provide for payment to be made in specified  
4 installments over a specific period of time.

5 (iii) A parent or legal guardian who has been  
6 ordered to pay costs under subparagraph (i) may petition  
7 the court for a modification of the amount of the costs  
8 owed or for a cancellation of an unpaid portion of the  
9 obligation. The court shall cancel all or part of the  
10 obligation due if the court determines that the payment  
11 of the amount due will impose a manifest hardship on the  
12 parent or legal guardian.

13 (3) If more than one unit of government incurs a cost in  
14 responding to a false report, the court may order the person  
15 convicted to reimburse each unit of government for the  
16 expense incurred.

17 (4) The amount ordered to be paid under this subsection  
18 must be paid to the court, at a time and in a manner  
19 prescribed by the court. The clerk of the court shall  
20 transmit the appropriate amount to the unit or units of  
21 government named in the order to receive reimbursement.  
22 Unless otherwise ordered by the court, reimbursement must be  
23 made immediately. This section does not prohibit a court from  
24 authorizing payments to be made according to a payment  
25 schedule to be completed during a specified time.

26 (5) An order for reimbursement issued under this section  
27 may be enforced in the same manner as a judgment in a civil  
28 action by the district attorney of a county in which a  
29 government unit entitled to reimbursement under the order is  
30 located.

1           (6) For purposes of this subsection, the phrase "costs  
2 of responding" includes:

3           (i) The salary or wages, including overtime pay, of  
4 a law enforcement officer or law enforcement agency for  
5 time spent responding to the false report from which the  
6 following occurred:

7                   (A) the conviction or adjudication of  
8 delinquency;

9                   (B) the arrest of the person convicted or  
10 adjudicated delinquent;

11                   (C) processing the person after arrest;

12                   (D) preparing reports on the incident;

13                   (E) investigating the incident;

14                   (F) collecting and analyzing evidence; and

15                   (G) preparing for and appearing at a pretrial  
16 proceeding or trial.

17           (ii) The salary, wages or other compensation,  
18 including overtime pay, of a firefighter or emergency  
19 medical services provider for time spent in responding to  
20 the false report.

21           (iii) The salary, wages or other compensation,  
22 including overtime pay, of a prosecutor for time spent  
23 investigating and prosecuting the crime charged under  
24 this section.

25           (iv) The costs of supplies expended or equipment  
26 used by the law enforcement agency, fire company or  
27 emergency medical services agency in responding to the  
28 false report.

29           (d) Construction.--A violation of this section occurs if the  
30 communication of the false report originates in this

1 Commonwealth, is intended to terminate in this Commonwealth or  
2 is intended to terminate with a person located in this  
3 Commonwealth.

4 (e) Jurisdiction.--In addition to the jurisdiction granted  
5 to a district attorney under 16 Pa.C.S. § 14302 (relating to  
6 duties of district attorney and entry of nolle prosequi), the  
7 Attorney General shall have the authority to investigate and to  
8 institute criminal proceedings for any violation or series of  
9 violations of this section when the violation or series of  
10 violations involves more than one county of this Commonwealth or  
11 another state. The authority granted to the Attorney General  
12 under this subsection shall be in addition to the authority  
13 conferred upon the Attorney General by the act of October 15,  
14 1980 (P.L.950, No.164), known as the Commonwealth Attorneys Act.  
15 A person charged with any violation or series of violations of  
16 this section by the Attorney General shall not have standing to  
17 challenge the authority of the Attorney General to investigate  
18 or prosecute the case, and, if a challenge is made, the  
19 challenge shall be dismissed and no relief shall be made  
20 available in the courts of this Commonwealth to the person  
21 making the challenge.

22 (f) Definitions.--As used in this section, the following  
23 words and phrases shall have the meanings given to them in this  
24 subsection unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

25 "911 system." As defined in 35 Pa.C.S. § 5302 (relating to  
26 definitions).

27 "Emergency medical services agency." As defined in 35  
28 Pa.C.S. § 8103 (relating to definitions).

29 "Emergency medical services provider." As defined in 35  
30 Pa.C.S. § 8103.

1     "Fire company." As defined in 35 Pa.C.S. § 7802 (relating to  
2 definitions).

3     "Law enforcement agency." A law enforcement agency in this  
4 Commonwealth that is the employer of a law enforcement officer.

5     "Law enforcement officer." The term shall have the same  
6 meaning as "peace officer" under section 501 (relating to  
7 definitions).

8     Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.