



SPONSOR: Sen. Peterson & Rep. J. Johnson & Rep. M. Smith  
Sens. Henry, Townsend; Rep. Potter

DELAWARE STATE SENATE  
148th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE SUBSTITUTE NO. 1

FOR

SENATE BILL NO. 163

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 11 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO HABITUAL OFFENDERS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

1 Section 1. Amend § 4214 of Title 11 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through and insertions  
2 as shown by underline as follows:

3 § 4214 Habitual criminal; life sentence

4 (a) Any person who has been 2 times convicted of a Title 11 violent felony, or attempt to commit such a violent felony,  
5 as defined in § 4201(c) of this title under the laws of this State, and/or any comparable violent felony as defined by another  
6 state, United States or any territory of the United States, and who shall thereafter be convicted of a subsequent violent  
7 felony, or attempt to commit such a violent felony, as defined in Section 4201(c), or 4 times convicted of any felony under  
8 the laws of this State, and/or any other state, United States or any territory of the United States, is declared to be an  
9 habitual criminal and the court, upon the State's petition, shall impose the applicable minimum sentence pursuant to (b), (c)  
10 or (d) of this section and may, in its discretion, impose a sentence of up to life imprisonment, unless the felony conviction  
11 allows and results in the imposition of capital punishment.

12 (b) Any person who has been 3 times convicted of a felony under the laws of this State, and/or any other state, United  
13 States or any territory of the United States, and who shall thereafter be convicted of a 4<sup>th</sup> or subsequent felony, which is the  
14 person's first Title 11 violent felony, or attempt to commit such a violent felony, as defined in § 4201(c) of this title, shall  
15 receive a minimum sentence of one-half of the statutory maximum penalty provided elsewhere in this title, unless the  
16 maximum statutory penalty is life in which case the minimum sentence shall be 30 years, for the 4<sup>th</sup> or subsequent felony  
17 which forms the basis of the States petition to have the person declared to be an habitual criminal, up to life imprisonment,  
18 unless the felony conviction allows and results in the imposition of capital punishment.

19 (c) Any person who has been 2 times convicted of a felony under the laws of this State, and/or any other state, United  
20 States or any territory of the United States, and 1 time convicted of a Title 11 violent felony, or attempt to commit such a  
21 violent felony, as defined in § 4201(c) of this title under the laws of this State, and/or any comparable violent felony as

22 defined by another state, United States or any territory of the United States, and who shall thereafter be convicted of a 4<sup>th</sup> or  
23 subsequent violent felony, or attempt to commit such a violent felony, as defined by § 4201(c) of this title, shall receive a  
24 minimum sentence of the statutory maximum penalty provided elsewhere in this title for the 4<sup>th</sup> or subsequent felony which  
25 forms the basis of the State's petition to have the person declared to be an habitual criminal, up to life imprisonment, unless  
26 the felony conviction allows and results in the imposition of capital punishment.

27 (d) Any person who has been 2 times convicted of a Title 11 violent felony, or attempt to commit such a violent felony,  
28 as defined in § 4201(c) of this title under the laws of this State, and/or any comparable violent felony as defined by another  
29 state, United States or any territory of the United States, and who shall thereafter be convicted of a 3<sup>rd</sup> or subsequent felony  
30 which is a violent felony, or an attempt to commit such a violent felony, as defined in § 4201(c), shall receive a minimum  
31 sentence of the statutory maximum statutory penalty provided elsewhere in this title for the 3<sup>rd</sup> or subsequent violent felony  
32 which forms the basis of the State's petition to have the person declared to be an habitual criminal, up to life imprisonment,  
33 unless the felony conviction allows and results in the imposition of capital punishment.

34 (e) Notwithstanding any provision of this title to the contrary, any sentence imposed pursuant to (b), (c), or (d) of this  
35 section shall not be subject to suspension by the court, and shall be served in its entirety at full custodial Level V  
36 institutional setting without the benefit of probation or parole, except that any such sentence shall be subject to the  
37 provisions of §§ 4205(h), 4381 and 4382 of this title. For purposes of the computation of good time under § 4381 of this  
38 title, a life sentence imposed pursuant only to § 4214 of this title shall equate to a sentence of 45 years.

39 (f) Notwithstanding any statute, court rule or regulation to the contrary, any person sentenced as an habitual criminal  
40 prior to the date of enactment of this section shall be eligible to petition the Superior Court for sentence modification after  
41 the person has served a sentence of incarceration equal to any applicable mandatory sentence otherwise required by this  
42 section or the statutes describing said offense or offenses, whichever is greater. Absent extraordinary circumstances, the  
43 petitioner may only file one application for sentence modification under this section. A Superior Court Judge upon  
44 consideration of a petition filed pursuant to this subsection may modify, reduce or suspend such petitioner's sentence,  
45 excepting any minimum or mandatory sentence required by this section or the statutes describing said offense or offenses.  
46 If a Superior Court judge modifies such petitioner's sentence, the judge may impose a suspended sentence that includes a  
47 probationary term. Nothing in this section, however, shall require the Court to grant such a petitioner a sentence  
48 modification pursuant to this section. For the purposes of this subsection, the "applicable mandatory sentence" shall be  
49 calculated by reference to the penalties prescribed for the relevant offense or offenses by this Code as of the date of  
50 enactment of this section, unless said offense has been repealed, in which case the penalties prescribed by this Code at the  
51 time of the Act repealing said offense shall be controlling. The Superior Court shall establish rules to implement this

52 subsection which are consistent with the statute, and those rules shall also provide that all petitions filed pursuant to this  
53 subsection where the felony establishing an inmate as a habitual offender was a Title 16 offense are heard first, followed by  
54 all petitions filed pursuant to this subsection where the felony establishing an inmate as a habitual offender was a crime  
55 against property, followed by all other petitions. The rules shall also provide for an initial review, including review of a  
56 formal response by the Department of Justice after consulting with the victim(s), of sentence modification petitions  
57 involving crimes against persons or property, for the purpose of ensuring that victims are not inconvenienced by petitions  
58 that should be denied based upon the documents submitted; in cases not denied in this manner, all victims shall be given an  
59 opportunity to be heard. The Superior Court's review of any petitions filed pursuant to this paragraph shall include a  
60 review of the applicant's prior criminal history, including arrests and convictions, a review of the applicant's conduct while  
61 incarcerated, and available evidence as to the likelihood that the applicant will reoffend if released. In all cases where  
62 sentence modifications are granted, modified sentences should provide for step-down provisions to ensure successful  
63 reintegration of persons into the community. By January 1, 2017, the Department of Correction shall notify any criminal  
64 defendant whose Level V sentence was imposed under a statutory sentencing regimen which was subsequently changed in a  
65 manner that reduced the sentence applicable to the defendant's convictions. The Department of Correction shall similarly  
66 notify the attorney of record, and if the attorney of record is unavailable to receive notice, the Office of Defense Services.

67 ~~(a) Any person who has been 3 times convicted of a felony, other than those which are specifically mentioned in~~  
68 ~~subsection (b) of this section, under the laws of this State, and/or any other state, United States or any territory of the~~  
69 ~~United States, and who shall thereafter be convicted of a subsequent felony of this State is declared to be an habitual~~  
70 ~~criminal, and the court in which such fourth or subsequent conviction is had, in imposing sentence, may in its discretion,~~  
71 ~~impose a sentence of up to life imprisonment upon the person so convicted. Notwithstanding any provision of this title to~~  
72 ~~the contrary, any person sentenced pursuant to this subsection shall receive a minimum sentence which shall not be less~~  
73 ~~than the statutory maximum penalty provided elsewhere in this title for the fourth or subsequent felony which forms the~~  
74 ~~basis of the State's petition to have the person declared to be an habitual criminal except that this minimum provision shall~~  
75 ~~apply only when the fourth or subsequent felony is a Title 11 violent felony, as defined in § 4201(e) of this title.~~

76 Notwithstanding any provision of this title to the contrary, any sentence of life imprisonment imposed pursuant to this  
77 subsection shall not be subject to suspension by the court, and shall be served in its entirety at a full custodial Level V  
78 institutional setting without the benefit of probation, parole, earned good time or any other reduction. Notwithstanding any  
79 provision of this title to the contrary, any sentence of less than life imprisonment imposed pursuant to this subsection shall  
80 not be subject to suspension by the court, and shall be served in its entirety at a full custodial Level V institutional setting

81 without the benefit of probation or parole, except that any such sentence shall be subject to the provisions of §§ 4205(h),  
82 4217, 4381 and 4382 of this title.

83 (b) Any person who has been 2 times convicted of a felony or an attempt to commit a felony hereinafter specifically  
84 named, under the laws of this State, and/or any other state, United States or any territory of the United States, and who  
85 shall thereafter be convicted of a subsequent felony hereinafter specifically named, or an attempt to commit such  
86 specific felony, is declared to be an habitual criminal, and the court in which such third or subsequent conviction is had,  
87 in imposing sentence, shall impose a life sentence upon the person so convicted unless the subsequent felony conviction  
88 requires or allows and results in the imposition of capital punishment. Such sentence shall not be subject to the  
89 probation or parole provisions of Chapter 43 of this title.

90 Such felonies shall be:

91	<i>Section</i>	<i>Crime</i>
92	803	Arson in the first degree
93	826	Burglary in the first degree
94	825	Burglary in the second degree
95	826A	Home Invasion
96	636	Murder in the first degree
97	635	Murder in the second degree
98	632	Manslaughter
99	783	Kidnapping in the second degree
100	783A	Kidnapping in the first degree
101	606	Abuse of a pregnant female in the first degree
102	613	Assault in the first degree
103	[Former] 615	Assault by abuse
104	Former 763	Rape in the second degree
105	Former 764	Rape in the first degree
106	Former 766	Sodomy in the first degree
107	832	Robbery in the first degree
108	836	Carjacking in the first degree
109	Former 771	Unlawful sexual penetration in the second
110		degree

111	Former 772	Unlawful sexual penetration in the first
112	degree	
113	Former 773	Sexual intercourse in the third degree
114	Former 774	Unlawful sexual intercourse in the
115	second degree	
116	Former 775	Unlawful sexual intercourse in the first
117	degree	
118	771	Rape in the third degree
119	772	Rape in the second degree
120	773	Rape in the first degree
121	778(1), (2) or (3)	Sexual Abuse of a Child by a Person
122	in a Position of Trust, Authority or Supervision in the First Degree	
123	1447A	Possession of a firearm during the
124	commission of a felony	
125	<i>Title 16, Section</i>	<i>Crime</i>
126	Former 4751	Manufacture, delivery or possession
127	with intent to manufacture or deliver a narcotic drug	
128	Former 4752	Manufacture, delivery or possession
129	with intent to manufacture or deliver nonnarcotic, controlled substance	
130	Former 4752A	Unlawful delivery or attempt to deliver
131	noncontrolled substance	
132	Former 4753A	Trafficking in marijuana, cocaine,
133	illegal drugs or methamphetamine.	
134	4752	Drug dealing—aggravated possession;
135	class B felony	
136	4753	Drug dealing—aggravated possession;
137	class C felony	
138	4754	Drug dealing—aggravated possession;
139	class D felony	
140	4755	Aggravated possession; class E felony

141 Notwithstanding any provision of this title to the contrary, any sentence imposed pursuant to this subsection shall not be  
142 subject to suspension by the court, and shall be served in its entirety at a full custodial Level V institutional setting  
143 without benefit of probation, parole, earned good time or any other reduction.

144 (c) ~~Any person who has been convicted for an offense which occurred within this State prior to July 1, 1973, of any of~~  
145 ~~the hereinafter enumerated crimes shall be considered as having been convicted previously of the crimes specified in~~  
146 ~~subsection (b) of this section for purposes of the operation of this section and § 4215 of this title. Any person convicted~~  
147 ~~under the laws of another state, the United States or any territory of the United States of any felony the same as or~~  
148 ~~equivalent to any of the above or hereinafter named felonies is an habitual offender for the purposes of this section and~~  
149 ~~§ 4215 of this title.~~

150 Such felonies include:

151 Arson in the first degree,

152 Burglary in the first degree,

153 Burglary in the second degree,

154 Murder in the first degree,

155 Murder in the second degree,

156 Manslaughter except involuntary,

157 Manslaughter by motor vehicle,

158 Assault with intent to murder,

159 Poisoning with intent to murder,

160 Kidnapping,

161 Abducting child under 12 years,

162 Kidnapping child under 15 years,

163 Maiming by lying in wait,

164 Maiming without lying in wait,

165 Rape,

166 Assault with intent to commit rape,

167 Robbery,

168 Assault with intent to commit robbery.

169 (d) A conviction of rape or kidnapping under either § 763 or § 783 of this title, as the same existed and were defined  
170 prior to the amendment of this section, shall be considered a prior conviction for the purpose of the effectiveness and  
171 applicability of this subsection, this section and § 4215 of this title.

#### SYNOPSIS

This Act makes changes to the existing habitual criminal statute by focusing penalties on Title 11 felonies, eliminating a mandatory minimum sentence of life imprisonment, and providing a mechanism for those convicted under existing law to petition the court for a sentence modification.

This Act provides for enhanced penalties for habitual criminals convicted of multiple felonies and distinguishes between Title 11 violent felonies and all other Title 11 felonies.

Under this Act, a person is declared a habitual criminal upon conviction of a third Title 11 violent felony or a fourth Title 11 felony of any kind. If a person is convicted of a Title 11 felony that is designated as a violent felony, and has prior convictions of three felonies of any kind, the person will receive a minimum mandatory sentence equal to one half the statutory maximum penalty allowed for the final conviction. If however, one of the three prior felonies is a Title 11 felony that is designated as a violent felony, the person will receive a minimum mandatory sentence equal to the statutory maximum penalty allowed for the final conviction. If a person is convicted of a third Title 11 felony that is designated as a violent felony, the person will receive a minimum mandatory sentence equal to the statutory maximum penalty allowed for the final conviction. There is no provision requiring a mandatory life sentence, though the judge has discretion to impose a life sentence for any person declared a habitual criminal.

This Act further provides an opportunity for those who were convicted under the existing law to apply for a sentence modification once the person has served any applicable minimum mandatory sentence. Such applications for sentence modifications will be subject to court rules promulgated by the Superior Court in accordance with the requirements of the statute.

Author: Senator Peterson