

Public Law 96-350
96th Congress

An Act

To facilitate increased enforcement by the Coast Guard of laws relating to the importation of controlled substances, and for other purposes.

Sept. 15, 1980

[H.R. 2538]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That (a) it is unlawful for any person on board a vessel of the United States, or on board a vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States on the high seas, to knowingly or intentionally manufacture or distribute, or to possess with intent to manufacture or distribute, a controlled substance.

Coast Guard.
Enforcement of
importation
laws.
21 USC 955a.

(b) It is unlawful for a citizen of the United States on board any vessel to knowingly or intentionally manufacture or distribute, or to possess with intent to manufacture or distribute, a controlled substance.

(c) It is unlawful for any person on board any vessel within the customs waters of the United States to knowingly or intentionally manufacture or distribute, or to possess with intent to manufacture or distribute, a controlled substance.

(d) It is unlawful for any person to possess, manufacture, or distribute a controlled substance—

(1) intending that it be unlawfully imported into the United States; or

(2) knowing that it will be unlawfully imported into the United States.

(e) Subsections (a), (b), and (c) do not apply to a common or contract carrier, or an employee thereof, who possesses or distributes a controlled substance in the lawful and usual course of the carrier's business or to a public vessel of the United States, or any person on board such a vessel who possesses or distributes a controlled substance in the lawful course of his duties, if the controlled substance is a part of the cargo entered in the vessel's manifest and is intended to be lawfully imported into the country of destination for scientific, medical, or other legitimate purposes. It shall not be necessary for the United States to negative the exception set forth in this subsection in any complaint, information, indictment, or other pleading or in any trial or other proceeding. The burden of going forward with the evidence with respect to this exception is upon the person claiming its benefit.

Lawful
distribution
of controlled
substances.

(f) Any person who violates this section shall be tried in the United States district court at the point of entry where that person enters the United States, or in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

Violations.

(g)(1) Any person who commits an offense defined in subsection (a), (b), (c) or (d) of this section shall be punished in accordance with the penalties set forth in section 1010 of the Comprehensive Act.

Penalties.

(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1) of this subsection, any person convicted of an offense under this Act shall be punished in accordance with the penalties set forth in section 1012 of the Comprehensive

21 USC 960.

21 USC 962.

Act if such offense is a second or subsequent offense as defined in section 1012(b) of that Act.

(h) This section is intended to reach acts of possession, manufacture, or distribution committed outside the territorial jurisdiction of the United States.

Definitions.

21 USC 955b.

SEC. 2. As used in this Act—

(a) "Customs waters" means those waters as defined in section 401(j) of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1401(j)).

(b) "High seas" means all waters beyond the territorial seas of the United States and beyond the territorial seas of any foreign nation.

46 USC 1451
note.

(c) "Vessel of the United States" means any vessel documented under the laws of the United States, or numbered as provided by the Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971, as amended, or owned in whole or in part by the United States or a citizen of the United States, or a corporation created under the laws of the United States, or any State, Territory, District, Commonwealth, or possession thereof, unless the vessel has been granted nationality by a foreign nation in accordance with article 5 of the Convention on the High Seas, 1958.

13 UST 2315.

(d) "Vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States" includes a vessel without nationality or a vessel assimilated to a vessel without nationality, in accordance with paragraph (2) of article 6 of the Convention on the High Seas, 1958.

(e) "Comprehensive Act" means the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Control and Prevention Act of 1970 (21 U.S.C. 801-966). All terms used in this Act that are defined in the Comprehensive Act have the meanings assigned to them by that Act.

Offense.

21 USC 955c.

SEC. 3. Any person who attempts or conspires to commit any offense defined in this Act is punishable by imprisonment or fine or both which may not exceed the maximum punishment prescribed for the offense, the commission of which was the object of the attempt or conspiracy.

21 USC 955d.

21 USC 881.

SEC. 4. Any property described in section 511(a) of the Comprehensive Act that is used or intended for use to commit, or to facilitate the commission of, an offense under this Act shall be subject to seizure and forfeiture in the same manner as similar property seized or forfeited under section 511 of the Comprehensive Act.

Approved September 15, 1980.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

HOUSE REPORT No. 96-323 (Comm. on Merchant Marine and Fisheries).

SENATE REPORT No. 96-855 (Comm. on Commerce, Science, and Transportation).

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

Vol. 125 (1979): July 23, considered and passed House.

Vol. 126 (1980): July 24, considered and passed Senate, amended.

July 31, House concurred in certain Senate amendments, in others with amendments.

Sept. 3, Senate concurred in House amendments.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS:

Vol. 16, No. 38 (1980): Sept. 15, Presidential statement.