

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2501 Session of 2026

INTRODUCED BY KAUFFMAN, RAPP AND STENDER, MAY 8, 2026

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY, MAY 8, 2026

AN ACT

1 Amending Titles 18 (Crimes and Offenses) and 42 (Judiciary and
 2 Judicial Procedure) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated
 3 Statutes, in authorized disposition of offenders, further
 4 providing for sentence for murder, murder of unborn child and
 5 murder of law enforcement officer; and, in sentencing,
 6 further providing for sentences for second and subsequent
 7 offenses and for life imprisonment for homicides.

8 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
 9 hereby enacts as follows:

10 Section 1. Section 1102(b) of Title 18 of the Pennsylvania
 11 Consolidated Statutes is amended and the section is amended by
 12 adding a subsection to read:

13 § 1102. Sentence for murder, murder of unborn child and murder
 14 of law enforcement officer.

15 * * *

16 (b) Second degree.--

17 (1) Except as provided under section 1102.1, a person
 18 who has been convicted of murder of the second degree, of
 19 second degree murder of an unborn child or of second degree
 20 murder of a law enforcement officer shall be sentenced [to a
 21 term of life imprisonment.] as follows:

1 (i) Except as provided in subparagraph (ii), the
2 person shall be sentenced to a minimum term of
3 imprisonment of at least 35 years.

4 (ii) Notwithstanding subparagraph (i), the person
5 shall be sentenced to a term of life imprisonment without
6 parole or a term of imprisonment of at least 40 years to
7 life without parole, if the finder of fact determines
8 beyond a reasonable doubt that the person:

9 (A) caused the death of the victim; or

10 (B) was an active participant in the killing of
11 the victim.

12 (2) Reasonable notice to the defendant of the intention
13 of the Commonwealth to seek a sentence of life imprisonment
14 without parole under paragraph (1) shall be provided after
15 the conviction and before the sentencing of the defendant.

16 (3) In determining whether to impose a sentence of life
17 without parole in accordance with paragraph (1), the court
18 shall consider and make findings on the record regarding the
19 following:

20 (i) The impact of the offense on each victim,
21 including oral and written impact statements made or
22 submitted by family members of the victim detailing the
23 physical, psychological and economic effects of the crime
24 on the victim and the victim's family. A victim statement
25 may include comment on the sentence of the defendant.

26 (ii) The impact of the offense on the community.

27 (iii) The threat posed by the defendant to the
28 safety of the public or an individual.

29 (iv) The nature and circumstances of the offense
30 committed by the defendant, including the level of

1 planning, use of a deadly weapon, degree of violence and
2 vulnerability of the victim.

3 (v) The degree of the defendant's culpability.

4 (vi) The defendant's prior criminal history,
5 including the nature and circumstances of prior offenses
6 and any history of violent conduct.

7 (vii) Guidelines for sentencing and resentencing
8 adopted by the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing.

9 (viii) Any other factor that the court deems
10 relevant to the imposition of a sentence under this
11 section.

12 * * *

13 (e) Definitions.--As used in this section, the following
14 words and phrases shall have the meanings given to them in this
15 subsection unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

16 "Active participant." A defendant whose conduct was a
17 substantial factor in bringing about the death of the victim or
18 who aided or attempted to aid another person in the acts
19 resulting in the victim's death. The term includes a defendant
20 who:

21 (1) caused or attempted to cause serious bodily injury
22 to the victim;

23 (2) committed or attempted to commit an offense listed
24 under 42 Pa.C.S. § 9799.14 (relating to sexual offenses and
25 tier system) against the victim;

26 (3) used or possessed a deadly weapon during the
27 commission of the underlying felony;

28 (4) restrained, confined, isolated or otherwise
29 prevented the victim from escaping while another person
30 caused the death of the victim;

1 (5) directed, commanded, solicited or encouraged another
2 person in conduct that resulted in the death of the victim;

3 (6) planned, organized or exercised decision-making
4 authority over the commission of the underlying felony in a
5 manner that materially contributed to the death of the
6 victim;

7 (7) knowingly created a grave risk of death to the
8 victim or another person during the commission of the
9 underlying felony; or

10 (8) was present at the scene of the offense and, with
11 knowledge that deadly force was being used or was
12 substantially likely to be used, failed to take reasonable
13 steps to prevent the death of the victim despite having a
14 realistic opportunity to do so.

15 "Deadly weapon." As defined in section 2301 (relating to
16 definitions).

17 Section 2. Sections 9714(g) and 9715(a) of Title 42 are
18 amended to read:

19 § 9714. Sentences for second and subsequent offenses.

20 * * *

21 (g) Definition.--As used in this section, the term "crime of
22 violence" means murder of the second degree, murder of the third
23 degree, voluntary manslaughter, manslaughter of a law
24 enforcement officer as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 2507(c) or (d)
25 (relating to criminal homicide of law enforcement officer),
26 murder of the third degree involving an unborn child as defined
27 in 18 Pa.C.S. § 2604(c) (relating to murder of unborn child),
28 aggravated assault of an unborn child as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. §
29 2606 (relating to aggravated assault of unborn child),
30 aggravated assault as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 2702(a) (1) or (2)

1 (relating to aggravated assault), assault of law enforcement
2 officer as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 2702.1(a)(1) (relating to
3 assault of law enforcement officer), use of weapons of mass
4 destruction as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 2716(b) (relating to
5 weapons of mass destruction), terrorism as defined in 18 Pa.C.S.
6 § 2717(b)(2) (relating to terrorism), strangulation when the
7 offense is graded as a felony as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 2718
8 (relating to strangulation), trafficking of persons when the
9 offense is graded as a felony of the first degree as provided in
10 18 Pa.C.S. § 3011 (relating to trafficking in individuals),
11 rape, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, aggravated
12 indecent assault, incest, sexual assault, arson endangering
13 persons or aggravated arson as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3301(a)
14 or (a.1) (relating to arson and related offenses), ecoterrorism
15 as classified in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3311(b)(3) (relating to
16 ecoterrorism), kidnapping, burglary as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. §
17 3502(a)(1) (relating to burglary), robbery as defined in 18
18 Pa.C.S. § 3701(a)(1)(i), (ii) or (iii) (relating to robbery), or
19 robbery of a motor vehicle, drug delivery resulting in death as
20 defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 2506(a) (relating to drug delivery
21 resulting in death), or criminal attempt, criminal conspiracy or
22 criminal solicitation to commit murder or any of the offenses
23 listed above, or an equivalent crime under the laws of this
24 Commonwealth in effect at the time of the commission of that
25 offense or an equivalent crime in another jurisdiction.

26 § 9715. Life imprisonment for homicide.

27 (a) Mandatory life imprisonment.--Notwithstanding the
28 provisions of section 9712 (relating to sentences for offenses
29 committed with firearms), 9713 (relating to sentences for
30 offenses committed on public transportation) or 9714 (relating

1 to sentences for second and subsequent offenses), any person
2 convicted of murder of the second degree or murder of the third
3 degree in this Commonwealth who has previously been convicted at
4 any time of murder or voluntary manslaughter in this
5 Commonwealth or of the same or substantially equivalent crime in
6 any other jurisdiction shall be sentenced to life imprisonment,
7 notwithstanding any other provision of this title or other
8 statute to the contrary.

9 * * *

10 Section 3. This act shall take effect in 60 days.