

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2025 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 3476

By Delegate Smith

[Introduced March 17, 2025; referred to the
Committee on Government Organization then the
Judiciary]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §61-6-21 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to
2 expanding the offense of violating an individual's civil rights to include gender or sexual
3 orientation.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 6. CRIMES AGAINST THE PEACE.

§61-6-21. Prohibiting violations of an individual's civil rights; penalties.

1 (a) All persons within the boundaries of the State of West Virginia have the right to be free
2 from any violence, or intimidation by threat of violence, committed against their persons or
3 property because of their race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, political affiliation, ~~or sex,~~
4 gender, or sexual orientation.

5 (b) If any person does by force or threat of force, willfully injure, intimidate or interfere with,
6 or attempt to injure, intimidate or interfere with, or oppress or threaten any other person in the free
7 exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege secured to him or her by the Constitution or laws of
8 the State of West Virginia or by the Constitution or laws of the United States, because of such
9 other person's race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, political affiliation, ~~or sex,~~ gender, or
10 sexual orientation, he or she shall be guilty of a felony, and, upon conviction, shall be fined not
11 more than \$5,000 or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both.

12 (c) If any person conspires with another person or persons to willfully injure, oppress,
13 threaten, or intimidate or interfere with any citizen because of such other person's race, color,
14 religion, ancestry, national origin, political affiliation, ~~or sex,~~ gender or sexual orientation in the free
15 exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege secured to him or her by the Constitution or laws of
16 the State of West Virginia or by the Constitution or laws of the United States, and in willfull
17 furtherance thereof to assemble with one or more persons for the purpose of teaching any
18 technique or means capable of causing property damage, bodily injury or death when such person
19 or persons intend to employ such techniques or means to violate this section, each such person
20 shall be guilty of a felony, and, upon conviction, shall be fined not more than \$5,000 or imprisoned

21 not more than ten years, or both.

22 (d) The fact that a person committed a felony or misdemeanor, or attempted to commit a
23 felony, because of the victim's race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, political affiliation ~~or~~
24 sex, gender, or sexual orientation shall be considered a circumstance in aggravation of any crime
25 in imposing sentence.

26 (e) Nothing contained in this section makes unlawful the teaching of any technique in self-
27 defense.

28 (f) Nothing in this section shall be construed so as to make it unlawful nor to prohibit nor, in
29 any manner, to impede or to interfere with any person in conducting labor union or labor union
30 organizing activities.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to expand the offense of violating an individual's civil rights to include gender or sexual orientation.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.