

The Senate Committee on the Judiciary offered the following substitute to HB 426:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 1 of Chapter 10 of Title 17 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to procedure for sentencing and imposition of punishment, so as to repeal certain
3 provisions regarding the sentencing of defendants for crimes involving bias or prejudice; to
4 provide criteria for imposition of punishment for defendants who select their victims based
5 upon certain biases or prejudices; to provide the sanctions for such crimes; to provide a
6 definition; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

8 **SECTION 1.**

9 Article 1 of Chapter 10 of Title 17 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
10 procedure for sentencing and imposition of punishment, is amended by repealing Code
11 Section 17-10-17, relating to sentencing of defendants guilty of crimes involving bias or
12 prejudice, circumstances, and parole, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Code
13 section to read as follows:

14 "17-10-17.

15 (a) As used in this Code section, the term 'first responder' means any firefighter of a
16 municipal, county, or volunteer fire department, a peace officer as defined in Code
17 Section 35-8-2, and an emergency medical technician as defined in Code
18 Section 16-10-24.2.

19 (b) Subject to the notice requirement provided in Code Section 17-10-18 and in
20 enhancement of the penalty imposed, if the trier of fact determines beyond a reasonable
21 doubt that the defendant intentionally selected any victim or group of victims or any
22 property as the object of the offense because of such victim or group of victims' actual or
23 perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, mental disability,
24 physical disability, or status of being or having been a first responder, the judge imposing
25 sentence shall:

26 (1) If the offense for which the defendant was convicted is a misdemeanor, impose a
27 sentence of imprisonment for a period of not less than three nor more than 12 months,
28 and a fine not to exceed \$5,000.00;

29 (2) If the offense for which the defendant was convicted is a misdemeanor of a high and
30 aggravated nature, impose a sentence of imprisonment for a period of not less than six nor
31 more than 12 months, and a fine not to exceed \$5,000.00; or

32 (3) If the offense for which the defendant was convicted is a felony, impose a sentence
33 of imprisonment for a period of not less than two years.

34 (c) The judge shall state when he or she imposes the sentence the amount of the increase
35 of the sentence based on the application of subsection (b) of this Code section."

36

SECTION 2.

37 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.