

As Introduced

136th General Assembly

Regular Session

2025-2026

H. B. No. 544

Representatives Williams, Swearingen

Cosponsors: Representatives Hall, T., Lear, Miller, K., Johnson

To amend section 2921.32 of the Revised Code to
expand the offense of obstructing justice.

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

Section 1. That section 2921.32 of the Revised Code be
amended to read as follows:

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Sec. 2921.32. (A) No person, with purpose to hinder the
discovery, apprehension, arrest, prosecution, conviction, or
punishment of another for crime or to assist another to benefit
from the commission of a crime, and no person, with purpose to
hinder the discovery, apprehension, arrest, prosecution,
adjudication as a delinquent child, or disposition of a child
for an act that if committed by an adult would be a crime or to
assist a child to benefit from the commission of an act that if
committed by an adult would be a crime, shall do any of the
following:

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(1) Harbor or conceal the other person or child;

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(2) Provide the other person or child with money,
transportation, a weapon, a disguise, or other means of avoiding
discovery or apprehension;

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(3) Warn the other person or child of impending discovery—

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~~or~~, arrest, or apprehension; 20

(4) Destroy or conceal physical evidence of the crime or 21
act, or induce any person to withhold testimony or information 22
or to elude legal process summoning the person to testify or 23
supply evidence; 24

(5) Communicate false information to any person; 25

(6) Prevent or obstruct any person, by means of force, 26
intimidation, or deception, from performing any act to aid in 27
the discovery, apprehension, arrest, or prosecution of the other 28
person or child. 29

(B) A person may be prosecuted for, and may be convicted 30
of or adjudicated a delinquent child for committing, a violation 31
of division (A) of this section regardless of whether the person 32
or child aided ultimately is apprehended for, is arrested for, 33
is charged with, is convicted of, pleads guilty to, or is 34
adjudicated a delinquent child for committing the crime or act 35
the person or child aided committed. The crime or act the person 36
or child aided committed shall be used under division (C) of 37
this section in determining the penalty for the violation of 38
division (A) of this section, regardless of whether the person 39
or child aided ultimately is apprehended for, is arrested for, 40
is charged with, is convicted of, pleads guilty to, or is 41
adjudicated a delinquent child for committing the crime or act 42
the person or child aided committed. 43

(C) (1) Whoever violates this section is guilty of 44
obstructing justice. 45

(2) ~~If~~ Except as provided in division (C) (7) of this 46
section, if the crime committed by the person aided is a 47
misdemeanor or if the act committed by the child aided would be 48

a misdemeanor if committed by an adult, obstructing justice is a 49
misdemeanor of the same degree as the crime committed by the 50
person aided or a misdemeanor of the same degree that the act 51
committed by the child aided would be if committed by an adult. 52

(3) Except as otherwise provided in divisions (C) (4), (5), 53
~~and (6)~~, and (7) of this section, if the crime committed by the 54
person aided is a felony or if the act committed by the child 55
aided would be a felony if committed by an adult, obstructing 56
justice is a felony of the fifth degree. 57

(4) Except as otherwise provided in division (C) (6) of 58
this section, if the crime committed by the person aided is 59
aggravated murder, murder, or a felony of the first or second 60
degree or if the act committed by the child aided would be one 61
of those offenses if committed by an adult and if the offender 62
knows or has reason to believe that the crime committed by the 63
person aided is one of those offenses or that the act committed 64
by the child aided would be one of those offenses if committed 65
by an adult, obstructing justice is a felony of the third 66
degree. 67

(5) If the crime or act committed by the person or child 68
aided is an act of terrorism, obstructing justice is one of the 69
following: 70

(a) Except as provided in division (C) (5) (b) of this 71
section, a felony of the second degree; 72

(b) If the act of terrorism resulted in the death of a 73
person who was not a participant in the act of terrorism, a 74
felony of the first degree. 75

(6) If the crime committed by the person is trafficking in 76
persons or if the act committed by the child aided would be 77

trafficking in persons if committed by an adult, obstructing 78
justice is a felony of the second degree. 79

(7) If the violation of this section was an act that 80
prevented or obstructed an arrest of any person by any local, 81
state, or federal law enforcement agency, other than a federal 82
law enforcement agency engaged in immigration enforcement, 83
obstructing justice is a felony of the fifth degree. If the 84
violation of this section was an act that prevented or 85
obstructed an arrest or detention of any person by a federal law 86
enforcement agency engaged in immigration enforcement, 87
obstructing justice is a felony of the third degree. 88

(D) As used in this section: 89

(1) "Adult" and "child" have the same meanings as in 90
section 2151.011 of the Revised Code. 91

(2) "Delinquent child" has the same meaning as in section 92
2152.02 of the Revised Code. 93

(3) "Act of terrorism" has the same meaning as in section 94
2909.21 of the Revised Code. 95

Section 2. That existing section 2921.32 of the Revised 96
Code is hereby repealed. 97