

Senate Bill 470

By: Senators Albers of the 56th, Robertson of the 29th, Bearden of the 30th, Kirkpatrick of the 32nd, Payne of the 54th and others

AS PASSED

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1 To amend Article 2 of Chapter 11 of Title 16 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to offenses against public order, so as to prohibit the possession, use, operation,
3 manufacture, sale, offer for sale, distribution, or import of signal jammers; to establish
4 criminal offenses; to provide for penalties; to require that certain penalties shall not be
5 suspended, stayed, deferred, or withheld by the sentencing court; to provide for the
6 designation of signal jammers and other property as contraband; to provide for the forfeiture
7 of property used directly or indirectly, or intended for use in any manner, to facilitate a
8 violation of the criminal offenses established in this Act; to specifically authorize the
9 Attorney General to commence forfeiture proceedings; to provide for exemptions; to provide
10 for definitions; to provide a short title; to provide an effective date; to provide for related
11 matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

12 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

13 **SECTION 1.**

14 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Emergency & Public Safety Signal
15 Protection Act."

S. B. 470

SECTION 2.

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Article 2 of Chapter 11 of Title 16 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to offenses against public order, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

"16-11-46.

(a) As used in this Code section, the term:

(1) 'Communication signal' means a signal used in a communications system to transfer information from a transmitter to a receiver. Communication signals include, but are not limited to, analog signals and digital signals.

(2) 'Critical infrastructure' means publicly or privately owned facilities, systems, functions, or assets, whether physical or virtual, providing or distributing services for the benefit of the public, including, but not limited to, energy, fuel, water, agriculture, healthcare, finance, communications, education, or any other vital public service.

(3) 'Property' shall have the same meaning as set forth in Code Section 9-16-2.

(4) 'Public agency' means the state and any city, county, city and county, municipal corporation, chartered organization, public district, or public authority located in whole or in part within this state which provides or has authority to provide fire-fighting, law enforcement, ambulance, medical, correctional, or other emergency services.

(5) 'Public safety agency' means a functional division of a public agency which provides fire-fighting, law enforcement, emergency medical, suicide prevention, emergency management dispatching, poison control, drug prevention, child abuse, spouse abuse, correctional, or other emergency services.

(6) 'Public safety answering point' means the designated communication center or centers of a public safety agency for dispatching appropriate emergency personnel, agencies, correctional personnel, or law enforcement officers, including, but not limited to, 9-1-1 call centers.

41 (7) 'Public transportation system' means all facilities, conveyances, and instrumentalities,
42 whether publicly or privately owned, that are used in or for publicly available services
43 for the transportation of individuals or cargo.

44 (8) 'Signal jammer' means any device, instrument, or apparatus which through emitting
45 a signal is capable of preventing, disrupting, delaying, degrading, or otherwise interfering
46 with the transmission of a communication signal over:

47 (A) Any wireless communications system, cellular communications system, radar
48 system, or global positioning system; or

49 (B) Any radio, telephone, or cable line, station, or system.

50 (9) 'Vital public service' includes water, sewerage, drainage, energy, electric, gas, natural
51 gas, telecommunications, internet, cable, navigation, collision avoidance, public
52 transportation systems, railroads, and other services the loss of which would have a
53 debilitating impact on the health, safety, or financial security of the public.

54 (b) Except as provided in subsection (g) of this Code section, it shall be unlawful for any
55 person to possess, use, or operate a signal jammer with the intent to prevent, disrupt, delay,
56 degrade, or otherwise interfere with the transmission of a communication signal over:

57 (1) Any wireless communications system, cellular communications system, radar system,
58 or global positioning system; or

59 (2) Any radio, telephone, or cable line, station, or system.

60 (c)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, a person that violates
61 subsection (b) of this Code section shall be guilty of a felony and, upon conviction
62 thereof, shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than seven
63 years, a fine of not more than \$10,000.00, or both.

64 (2) A person that violates subsection (b) of this Code section shall be guilty of a felony
65 and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than one nor
66 more than ten years, a fine of not more than \$25,000.00, or both, if such violation
67 involves the possession, use, or operation of a signal jammer with the intent to prevent,

68 disrupt, delay, degrade, or otherwise interfere with the transmission of a communication
69 signal by, from, with, or to a public safety agency, a public safety answering point, or any
70 component of critical infrastructure.

71 (3) A violation of subsection (b) of this Code section shall not merge with any other
72 offense and the punishments prescribed by paragraphs (1) and (2) of this subsection shall
73 not be suspended, stayed, deferred, or withheld by the sentencing court.

74 (d) Except as provided in subsection (g) of this Code section, it shall be unlawful for any
75 person to possess, manufacture, sell, offer for sale, distribute, or import a signal jammer
76 in this state.

77 (e) A person that violates subsection (d) of this Code section shall be guilty of a felony
78 and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than one nor
79 more than five years, a fine of not more than \$10,000.00, or both.

80 (f)(1) Any property which is used or intended for use in any manner to facilitate a
81 violation of this Code section shall be declared to be contraband, no person shall have a
82 property right in such property, and such property shall be subject to forfeiture.

83 (2) Any property subject to forfeiture pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection shall
84 be forfeited in accordance with the procedures set forth in Chapter 16 of Title 9, the
85 'Georgia Uniform Civil Forfeiture Procedure Act.'

86 (3) The Attorney General shall be specifically authorized to commence civil forfeiture
87 proceedings under this subsection.

88 (g) The following shall be exempt from the provisions of this Code section:

89 (1) The possession, use, operation, manufacture, sale, offer for sale, distribution, or
90 importation of a signal jammer in this state that is authorized under federal law or that has
91 been approved by the Federal Communications Commission or other federal agency
92 authorized to regulate signal jammers; and

93 (2) The possession, use, operation, manufacture, sale, offer for sale, distribution, or
94 importation of a signal jammer in this state by public safety agencies, state and local law

95 enforcement and correctional agencies, or any other person or entity that is legally
96 authorized to possess, use, operate, manufacture, sell, offer for sale, distribute, or import
97 a signal jammer in this state."

98 **SECTION 3.**

99 This Act shall become effective on July 1, 2026.

100 **SECTION 4.**

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