

TITLE 18 - CRIMES AND CRIMINAL PROCEDURE**PART I - CRIMES****CHAPTER 83 - POSTAL SERVICE****§ 1696. Private express for letters and packets**

(a) Whoever establishes any private express for the conveyance of letters or packets, or in any manner causes or provides for the conveyance of the same by regular trips or at stated periods over any post route which is or may be established by law, or from any city, town, or place to any other city, town, or place, between which the mail is regularly carried, shall be fined not more than \$500 or imprisoned not more than six months, or both.

This section shall not prohibit any person from receiving and delivering to the nearest post office, postal car, or other authorized depository for mail matter any mail matter properly stamped.

(b) Whoever transmits by private express or other unlawful means, or delivers to any agent thereof, or deposits at any appointed place, for the purpose of being so transmitted any letter or packet, shall be fined under this title.

(c) This chapter shall not prohibit the conveyance or transmission of letters or packets by private hands without compensation, or by special messenger employed for the particular occasion only. Whenever more than twenty-five such letters or packets are conveyed or transmitted by such special messenger, the requirements of section 601 of title 39, shall be observed as to each piece.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 777; Pub. L. 91–375, § 6(j)(14), Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 778; Pub. L. 103–322, title XXXIII, § 330016(1)(A), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2146.)

Historical and Revision Notes

Based on title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., §§ 304, 306, 309 (Mar. 4, 1909, ch. 321, §§ 181, 183, 186, 35 Stat. 1123, 1124; June 22, 1934, ch. 716, 48 Stat. 1207).

Section consolidates sections 304, 306, and 309 of title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed. Reference to persons causing, procuring, aiding or assisting was omitted as such persons are principals under section 2 of this title.

Minor changes were made in phraseology.

Amendments

1994—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 103–322 substituted “fined under this title” for “fined not more than \$50”.

1970—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 91–375 substituted “section 601 of title 39” for “section 500 of title 39”.

Effective Date of 1970 Amendment

Amendment by Pub. L. 91–375 effective within 1 year after Aug. 12, 1970, on date established therefor by Board of Governors of United States Postal Service and published by it in Federal Register, see section 15(a) of Pub. L. 91–375, set out as an Effective Date note preceding section 101 of Title 39, Postal Service.

Study of Private Carriage of Mail; Reports to President and Congress

Congressional findings of need for study and reevaluation of restrictions on private carriage of letters and packets contained in this section and submission by United States Postal Service of reports to President and Congress for modernization of law, regulations, and administrative practices, see section 7 of Pub. L. 91–375, set out as a note under section 601 of Title 39, Postal Service.