



ENACTMENT SUMMARY

House Bill 531 **Sexual extortion (“Braden’s Law”)** Effective April 9, 2025

On January 8, 2025, Governor DeWine signed into law House Bill 531 (Rep. Lear and Rep. Lorenz), which creates the offense of sexual extortion, and makes a change to felony sentencing guidelines.

Sexual Extortion

Existing law, at R.C. 2905.11, establishes the offense of extortion. House Bill 531 creates a new form of this offense: sexual extortion. Under the new offense, no person shall threaten to release, exhibit, or distribute the private images of another (defined in the bill as images of sexual activity, masturbation, sexual excitement, nudity, bestiality, extreme or bizarre violence, cruelty, or brutality, or human bodily functions of elimination), with the purpose to do any of the following:

- Compel or attempt to compel the other person, against the other person’s will, to perform any act or refrain from performing any act
- Induce the other person to commit an offense
- Obtain additional private images from the other person
- Obtain anything of value from the other person

Sexual extortion is generally an F3. On a second offense, or if the victim of the offense is a person under the age of 18, an elderly person, or a disabled adult, the offense is an F2. On a third or subsequent offense, or on a second offense involving a person under the age of eighteen, an elderly person, or a disabled adult, the offense is an F1.

Sentencing Guidelines

R.C. 2929.12 sets forth the factors a court must consider when imposing a sentence for a felony. One of those factors is whether the victim of the offense suffered serious physical, psychological, or economic harm as a result of the offense. The bill expands this to include “serious physical harm the victim caused to the victim’s self.” The bill also adds a new factor to consider: whether the victim died by suicide as a result of the offense.

Uniform Fiduciary Access to Digital Assets Act

The bill modifies R.C. 2137.15 to require a probate court that receives an application for digital assets of a deceased minor from the minor’s parent, custodian, legal guardian, or estate fiduciary to adjudicate the application within 30-days.

The bill passed the Ohio House by a vote of 96-0 on June 26, 2024 and the Ohio Senate by a vote of 30-0 on December 18, 2024. The House voted the same day to concur on Senate amendments by a vote of 89-0. It was signed into law on January 8, 2025 and becomes effective on April 9, 2025.