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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-THIRD SESSION

H. F. No. 3977

02/19/2024 Authored by Hudson, Novotny, Engen, Koznick, Altendorf and others
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Public Safety Finance and Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to public safety; enhancing the penalty for arson directed at a political
1.3 organization or motivated by a political purpose; amending Minnesota Statutes
1.4 2022, sections 609.561, by adding a subdivision; 609.563, by adding a subdivision;
1.5 609.5631, by adding a subdivision; 609.5632.

1.6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.7 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 609.561, is amended by adding a subdivision
1.8 to read:

1.9 Subd. 4. First degree; political organization. Whoever unlawfully by means of fire or
1.10 explosives intentionally destroys or damages any building, whether the property of the actor
1.11 or another, commits arson in the first degree and may be sentenced to imprisonment for not
1.12 more than 25 years or to a fine of not more than \$40,000, or both if:

1.13 (1) the building housed a political organization;

1.14 (2) the offense was committed in whole or in substantial part because of an actual or
1.15 perceived association between the building, building's owner, or building's occupant and
1.16 any political organization; or

1.17 (3) the offense was committed in whole or in substantial part to make any political
1.18 statement.

1.19 EFFECTIVE DATE. This section is effective August 1, 2024, and applies to crimes
1.20 committed on or after that date.

2.1 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 609.563, is amended by adding a subdivision to
2.2 read:

2.3 Subd. 1a. **Political motivation.** Whoever violates subdivision 1 may be sentenced to
2.4 imprisonment for not more than 90 months or to payment of a fine of \$12,500, or both, if:

2.5 (1) the real or personal property is owned or controlled by a political organization;

2.6 (2) the offense was committed in whole or in substantial part because of an actual or
2.7 perceived association between the real or personal property and any political organization;

2.8 or

2.9 (3) the offense was committed in whole or in substantial part to make any political
2.10 statement.

2.11 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective August 1, 2024, and applies to crimes
2.12 committed on or after that date.

2.13 Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 609.5631, is amended by adding a subdivision
2.14 to read:

2.15 Subd. 3. **Political motivation.** Whoever violates subdivision 2 may be sentenced to
2.16 imprisonment for not more than one year or to payment of a fine of \$5,000, or both, if:

2.17 (1) the personal property is owned or controlled by a political organization;

2.18 (2) the offense was committed in whole or in substantial part because of an actual or
2.19 perceived association between the personal property and any political organization; or

2.20 (3) the offense was committed in whole or in substantial part to make any political
2.21 statement.

2.22 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective August 1, 2024, and applies to crimes
2.23 committed on or after that date.

2.24 Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 609.5632, is amended to read:

2.25 **609.5632 ARSON IN THE FIFTH DEGREE.**

2.26 (a) Whoever intentionally by means of fire or explosives sets fire to or burns or causes
2.27 to be burned any real or personal property of value is guilty of a misdemeanor and may be
2.28 sentenced to imprisonment for not more than 90 days or to payment of a fine of not more
2.29 than \$1,000, or both.

3.1 (b) Whoever violates paragraph (a) may be sentenced to imprisonment for not more than
3.2 364 days or to payment of a fine of \$3,000, or both, if:

3.3 (1) the real or personal property is owned or controlled by a political organization;

3.4 (2) the offense was committed in whole or in substantial part because of an actual or
3.5 perceived association between the real or personal property and any political organization;

3.6 or

3.7 (3) the offense was committed in whole or in substantial part to make any political
3.8 statement.

3.9 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective August 1, 2024, and applies to crimes
3.10 committed on or after that date.