

CRIMES CODE (18 PA.C.S.) - DESECRATION, THEFT OR SALE OF VENERATED  
OBJECTS

Act of Oct. 9, 2008, P.L. 1419, No. 116

Cl. 18

Session of 2008

No. 2008-116

HB 2289

AN ACT

Amending Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, further providing for desecration, theft or sale of venerated objects.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. Section 5509 of Title 18 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes is amended to read:

§ 5509. Desecration , **theft** or sale of venerated objects.

(a) Offense defined.--A person commits a misdemeanor of the second degree if he:

(1) intentionally desecrates any public monument or structure, or place of worship or burial;

(2) [if he] intentionally desecrates any other object of veneration by the public or a substantial segment thereof in any public place; [or]

(3) sells , [or] attempts to sell **or removes with intent to sell** a veteran's marker as described in section 1913 of the act of August 9, 1955 (P.L.323, No.130), known as The County Code. This paragraph shall not apply to the sale of veterans' markers authorized by statute[.] ; or

(4) **intentionally receives, retains or disposes of a veteran's marker or item decorating a veteran's grave knowing that the item has been stolen, or believing that it has probably been stolen, unless it has been received, retained or disposed of with the intent to return it to the owner.**

(a.1) Historic burial lots and burial places.--A person commits a misdemeanor of the first degree if the person intentionally desecrates a historic burial lot or historic burial place.

(b) Definitions.--As used in this section, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection:

"Desecrate." Defacing, damaging, polluting or otherwise physically mistreating in a way that the actor knows will outrage the sensibilities of persons likely to observe or discover the action.

"Historic burial lot." An individual burial site within a historic burial place.

"Historic burial place." A tract of land which has been:

(1) in existence as a burial ground for more than 100 years; or

(2) listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as determined by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

Section 2. The amendment of 18 Pa.C.S. § 5509 shall apply to offenses committed on or after the effective date of this section.

Section 3. This act shall take effect in 60 days.

APPROVED--The 9th day of October, A. D. 2008.

EDWARD G. RENDELL