



**Sub. H.B. 502**

123rd General Assembly  
(As Reported by H. Criminal Justice)

**Reps. DePiero, Redfern, Clancy, Schuring, Distel, Hartnett, Flannery, Vesper, Van Vyven, Patton, Allen, Britton, Pringle, Womer Benjamin, Myers, Taylor, Jerse**

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**BILL SUMMARY**

- Replaces the requirement that a sex offender who is serving any type of confinement on or after January 1, 1997, for a sexually oriented offense be given notice of the offender's duties under the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Law at least ten days before the offender's release from confinement with a requirement that the offender simply be given notice of those duties before the offender's release from confinement.
- For an offender who, prior to January 1, 1997, was sentenced for a sexually oriented offense and is imprisoned in a state correctional institution on or after that date, authorizes a court to adjudicate the offender a sexual predator either prior to the offender's release from imprisonment or within one year after that release.
- Permits the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction to determine whether to recommend that such an offender be adjudicated as being a sexual predator either before or after the offender's release from the term of imprisonment.
- Requires that, if such an offender is adjudicated a sexual predator after the offender's release from imprisonment, the offender must register within seven days of the adjudication with the sheriff of the county in which the offender resides or temporarily is domiciled for more than seven days and, within seven days of coming into the county, must register with the sheriff of any county in which the offender subsequently resides or temporarily is domiciled for more than seven days.

- Requires that, if a court adjudicates such an offender to be a sexual predator after the offender's release from imprisonment, the court must provide the offender a notice of the offender's duties under the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Law that replaces any notice that the offender previously may have received.

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## CONTENT AND OPERATION

### *Notice of duty to register given to imprisoned sex offenders who are released on or after January 1, 1997*

Under existing law, regardless of when an offender committed a sexually oriented offense, if the offender is sentenced for the sexually oriented offense to a prison term, a term of imprisonment, or any other type of confinement, and if, on or after January 1, 1997, the offender is serving that term or is under that confinement, the official in charge of the institution in which the offender serves the prison term, term of imprisonment, or confinement, or a designee of that official, must provide notice of the offender's duties under the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Law (the SORN Law) to the offender *at least ten*

*days* before the offender is released pursuant to any type of supervised release or *at least ten days* before the offender otherwise is released from the prison term, term of imprisonment, or confinement (R.C. 2950.03(A)(1)).

The bill replaces the requirement that the notice be provided at least ten days before the person's release with a requirement that the notice simply be provided before the person's release. Thus, under the bill, the official in charge of the institution in which the offender serves the prison term, term of imprisonment, or confinement, or a designee of that official, must provide the notice to such an offender *before* the offender is released pursuant to any type of supervised release or *before* the offender otherwise is released from the prison term, term of imprisonment, or confinement. (R.C. 2950.03(A)(1).)

**Revised time period for adjudicating as a sexual predator a sex offender sentenced prior to January 1, 1997, and serving a term of imprisonment in a state correctional institution on or after that date**

The bill revises the time period in which a sex offender who was sentenced for a sexually oriented offense prior to January 1, 1997, and is serving a term of imprisonment for that offense on or after that date may be adjudicated a sexual predator. Under existing law, the court is required to make such an adjudication prior to the offender's release from imprisonment. The bill permits the court to make such an adjudication either prior to the offender's release or within one year after that release. The bill also conforms other aspects of the SORN Law to the revised time period.

**Definition of being "adjudicated as being a sexual predator"**

Under existing law, an offender is "adjudicated as being a sexual predator" if, prior to January 1, 1997, the offender was convicted of or pleaded guilty to, and was sentenced for, a sexually oriented offense (see "Definitions," below), the offender is imprisoned in a state correctional institution on or after January 1, 1997, and, *prior to the offender's release from imprisonment*, the court determines pursuant to R.C. 2950.09(C) that the offender is a sexual predator. An offender is "adjudicated as being a sexual predator" in other circumstances described in **COMMENT 1**.

The bill expands the above-described portion of the definition of "adjudicated as being a sexual predator" by removing the requirement that a court determine such an offender to be a sexual predator prior to the offender's release from imprisonment. (R.C. 2950.01(G)(3).)

As used in this analysis, "adjudicated being a sexual predator" means that the person has not been subsequently determined to no longer be a sexual predator.

**Procedure for adjudicating an offender sentenced prior to January 1, 1997, and serving a term of imprisonment in a state correctional institution to be a sexual predator**

**Recommendation for adjudication as sexual predator.** Under existing law, if a person was sentenced for committing a sexually oriented offense prior to January 1, 1997, and if, on or after January 1, 1997, the offender is serving a term of imprisonment in a state correctional institution, *prior to the offender's release from the term of imprisonment*, the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DRC) must determine whether to recommend that the offender be adjudicated as being a sexual predator. In making this determination, DRC must consider all relevant factors, including, but not limited to, certain statutorily specified factors. If DRC determines that it will recommend that the offender be adjudicated as being a sexual predator, it immediately must send the recommendation to the court that sentenced the offender and must enter its determination and recommendation in the offender's institutional record.

The bill removes the requirement that DRC determine *prior to the offender's release from the term of imprisonment* whether to recommend that the offender be adjudicated as being a sexual predator. (R.C. 2950.09(C)(1).)

**Adjudication as a sexual predator.** Under existing law, if DRC sends to a court a recommendation that the offender be adjudicated as being a sexual predator, the court is not bound by DRC's recommendation, and the court may conduct a hearing to determine whether the offender is a sexual predator. The court may deny the recommendation and determine that the offender is not a sexual predator without a hearing but is prohibited from making a determination that the offender is a sexual predator in any case without a hearing. If the court determines without a hearing that the offender is not a sexual predator, it must include its determination in the offender's institutional record and must determine whether the offender previously has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a sexually oriented offense other than the offense in relation to which the court determined that the offender is not a sexual predator.

The bill specifies that the court may hold the sexual predator hearing and make the determination prior to the offender's release from imprisonment or at any time within one year following the offender's release from imprisonment. (R.C. 2950.09(C)(2)(a).)

**Other procedures.** Under existing law, unchanged by the bill, if the court schedules a hearing, the court must give the offender and the prosecutor who prosecuted the offender for the sexually oriented offense, or that prosecutor's successor in office, notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing. At the

hearing, the offender and the prosecutor must have an opportunity to testify, present evidence, call and examine witnesses and expert witnesses, and cross-examine witnesses and expert witnesses regarding the determination as to whether the offender is a sexual predator. The offender has the right to be represented by counsel and, if indigent, the right to have counsel appointed to represent the offender. In making a determination as to whether the offender is a sexual predator, the court must consider all relevant factors, including, but not limited to, certain statutorily specified factors (see **COMMENT 2**). After reviewing all testimony and evidence presented at the sexual predator hearing and the statutorily specified factors, the court must determine by clear and convincing evidence whether the offender is a sexual predator. If the court determines that the offender is *not* a sexual predator, it also must determine whether the offender previously has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a sexually oriented offense other than the offense in relation to which the hearing is being conducted.

Upon making its determinations at the hearing, the court must proceed as follows:

(1) If the court determines that the offender is not a sexual predator and that the offender previously has not been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a sexually oriented offense (other than the offense in relation to which the hearing is being conducted), it must include its determinations in the offender's institutional record.

(2) If the court determines that the offender is not a sexual predator but that the offender previously has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a sexually oriented offense (other than the offense in relation to which the hearing is being conducted), it must (a) include its determination that the offender is not a sexual predator but is a habitual sex offender in the offender's institutional record, (b) attach the determinations to the offender's sentence, (c) specify that the determinations were pursuant to R.C. 2950.09(C), and (d) provide a copy of the determinations to the offender, to the prosecuting attorney, and to DRC. The court may impose a requirement that the offender be subject to the SORN Law's community notification provisions regarding the offender's place of residence. If the court does not impose the requirement, the offender is not subject to those community notification provisions relative to the sexually oriented offense in question. If the court imposes those community notification provisions, the offender may appeal the judge's determination that the offender is a habitual sex offender.

(3) If the court determined without a hearing that the offender previously has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a sexually oriented offense (other than the offense in relation to which the court determined that the offender is not a

sexual predator), and, as such, is a habitual sex offender, and the hearing is solely to determine whether to impose a requirement that the offender be subject to the SORN Law's community notification provisions, after the hearing, the court may impose a community notification requirement regarding the offender's place of residence. If the court does not impose the community notification requirement, the offender is not subject to the community notification provisions relative to the sexually oriented offense in question. If the court imposes those community notification provisions, the offender may appeal the judge's determination that the offender is a habitual sex offender.

(4) If the court determines by clear and convincing evidence that the offender is a sexual predator, it must enter its determination in the offender's institutional record, attach the determination to the offender's sentence, specify that the determination was pursuant to R.C. 2950.09(C), and provide a copy of the determination to the offender, to the prosecuting attorney, and to DRC. The offender and the prosecutor may appeal as a matter of right the judge's determination as to whether the offender is, or is not, a sexual predator. (R.C. 2950.09(C).)

### **Duty to register**

**Existing law.** Under existing law, an offender who is convicted of or pleads guilty to, or has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to, a sexually oriented offense must, within seven days of coming into the county, register with the sheriff of any county in which the offender resides or temporarily is domiciled for more than seven days.

An offender who is required to register personally must obtain from the sheriff or from a designee of the sheriff a registration form, complete and sign the form, and return the completed form together with the offender's photograph to the sheriff or the designee. The sheriff or designee must sign the form and indicate on the form the date on which it is returned. The registration is complete when the offender returns the form, containing the requisite information, photograph, signatures, and date, to the sheriff or designee.

The registration form must contain certain statutorily specified information. Additionally, if the sentencing judge determined that the offender is a habitual sex offender, the offender must include on the signed, written registration form a specific declaration that the person has been determined to be a habitual sex offender. If the offender is adjudicated as being a sexual predator relative to the sexually oriented offense in question, the offender must include on the signed, written registration form a specific declaration that the person is under such an adjudication and the identification license plate number of each motor vehicle the

offender owns and of each motor vehicle registered in the offender's name. (R.C. 2950.04(A), (B), and (C).)

**Operation of the bill.** Under the bill, if (1) the offender is sentenced for a sexually oriented offense to a prison term, a term of imprisonment, or any other type of confinement, regardless of when the sexually oriented offense was committed, (2) on or after July 1, 1997, the offender is released in any manner from the prison term, term of imprisonment, or confinement, and (3) subsequent to the offender's release, the offender is adjudicated to be a sexual predator, then the offender must register within seven days of the adjudication with the sheriff of the county in which the offender resides or temporarily is domiciled for more than seven days and must register with the sheriff of any county in which the offender subsequently resides or temporarily is domiciled for more than seven days within seven days of coming into that county. The provisions regarding the manner of registration described above under "**Existing law**" also apply to this duty to register. (R.C. 2950.04(A)(6).)

#### **Notice of duty to register**

**Existing law.** Under existing law, each person who has been convicted of, is convicted of, has pleaded guilty to, or pleads guilty to a sexually oriented offense and who has a duty to register under the SORN Law must be provided notice of the offender's duties under the SORN Law. Regardless of when the offender committed the sexually oriented offense, if the offender is sentenced for the sexually oriented offense to a prison term, a term of imprisonment, or any other type of confinement, and if, on or after January 1, 1997, the offender is serving that term or is under that confinement, the official in charge of the institution in which the offender serves the prison term, term of imprisonment, or confinement, or a designee of that official, must provide the notice to the offender *at least ten days before the offender is released* pursuant to any type of supervised release or *at least ten days before the offender otherwise is released* from the prison term, term of imprisonment, or confinement. (R.C. 2950.03(A)(1).) (Also, see "**Notice of duty to register given to imprisoned sex offenders who are released on or after January 1, 1997,**" above.)

The notice must inform the offender of the offender's duty to register under the SORN Law, to notify the appropriate officials of a change in the offender's residence address and to register the new residence address, and to periodically verify a residence address. The official or official's designee must require the offender to read and sign a form prescribed by BCII, stating that the offender's duties have been explained to the offender. If the offender is unable to read, the official or designee must certify on the form that the official or designee

specifically informed the offender of those duties and that the offender indicated an understanding of those duties.

After an offender has signed the form or the official or designee has certified on it that the form has been explained to the offender and that the offender indicated an understanding of the duties indicated on it, the official or designee must give one copy of the form to the offender, within three days must send one copy of the form to BCII, and must send one copy of the form to the sheriff of the county in which the offender expects to reside. The official or designee must determine the offender's name, identifying factors, and expected future residence address, must obtain the offender's criminal history, and must obtain a photograph and the fingerprints of the offender. The official or designee must obtain this information and these items prior to giving the notice. Within three days after receiving this information and these items, the official or designee must forward the information and items to BCII and to the sheriff of the county in which the offender expects to reside. If it has not already done so, BCII must forward a copy of the fingerprints and conviction data received to the FBI. (R.C. 2950.03(B) and (C).)

**Operation of the bill.** The bill provides that if, subsequent to release, an offender, as described above under "**Existing law**," is adjudicated as being a sexual predator, the judge must provide the notice of the offender's duties under the SORN Law to the offender at the time of the adjudication (R.C. 2950.03(A)(4)). The provisions relating to notices described above under "**Existing law**" also apply to this new notice. In addition, the BCII-prescribed form also must include: (1) a statement that the notice replaces any notice previously provided to the offender before the offender was released from the prison term, term of imprisonment, or confinement, (2) a statement that the offender's duties described in the new notice supersede the duties described in the prior notice, and (3) a statement that, if the offender already has registered under the SORN Law, the offender must register again (R.C. 2950.03(A)(1), (A)(4), and (B)(1)(d)). (Also, see "**Notice of duty to register given to imprisoned sex offenders who are released on or after January 1, 1997**," above.)

**Procedure relative to determining that an offender no longer is a sexual predator**

Existing law provides procedures by which an offender who is adjudicated as being a sexual predator may petition the judge who made the determination, or that judge's successor in office, to enter a determination that the offender no longer is a sexual predator. Existing law specifies procedures by which petitions of this nature and the related determinations must be made. (R.C. 2950.09(D), (E), and (F).)

### **Effect of being adjudicated as being a sexual predator**

Numerous sections of the Revised Code impose restrictions or additional duties on a person who is convicted of a sexually oriented offense. A person who is adjudicated as being a sexual predator is subject to additional restrictions and duties. The most notable of those restrictions and duties are sex offender registration, victim notification, and community notification.

**Sex offender registration.** An offender who is convicted of or pleads guilty to, or has been convicted of or pleads guilty to, a sexually oriented offense must comply with the registration requirements under the SORN Law. This Law requires the offender to register with the sheriff of the county in which the offender resides or is temporarily domiciled for more than seven days (R.C. 2950.04 and 2950.07(A)). The offender also must periodically verify with that sheriff the offender's current residence address. The frequency with which the offender must verify the offender's current residence address varies depending on whether or not the offender has been adjudicated as being a sexual predator. If the offender has been adjudicated as being a sexual predator, the offender must verify the offender's current residence address every 90 days after the offender's initial registration. In all other cases, the offender must verify the offender's current residence address on each anniversary of the date of the offender's initial registration. (R.C. 2950.06(B).)

The duration of the registration requirements also depends on whether or not the offender has been adjudicated as being either a sexual predator or a habitual sex offender. Generally, a sex offender's duty to comply with the registration requirements continues for ten years. If the judge who sentenced the offender for the sexually oriented offense determined that the offender is a habitual sex offender, the offender's duty to comply with the registration requirements continues for 20 years. If the offender has been adjudicated as being a sexual predator relative to the sexually oriented offense, the offender's duty to comply with the registration requirements generally continues until the offender's death. If the judge who sentenced the offender or that judge's successor in office subsequently enters a determination that the offender no longer is a sexual predator, the offender's duty to comply with the registration requirements continues for the period of time that otherwise would have been applicable to the offender. (R.C. 2950.07(B).)

**Notices to victim regarding offender.** The sheriff with whom a sexual predator registers must provide written notice to the victim of the sexually oriented offense relative to which the offender was adjudicated as being a sexual predator if all of the following apply: (1) the offender has been adjudicated as being a sexual predator, (2) the offender registers with a sheriff pursuant to the SORN Law, and

(3) the victim of the sexually oriented offense has made a proper request to be provided notice. The notice must state that the offender has registered and include the offender's name and residence address or addresses. The sheriff must provide the notice at the most recent residence address available for the victim, not later than 72 hours after the offender registers with the sheriff. The sheriff must provide a similar notice if the offender notifies the sheriff of a change of residence address. (R.C. 2950.10(A)(1) and (2).)

**Community notification.** The sheriff with whom a sexual predator has most recently registered under the SORN Law must provide a written notice to specified persons in the sexual predator's community, including the occupants of residences adjacent to the sexual predator's place of residence, the executive director of the local public children services agency, the superintendent of the local boards of education and specified officers of other local schools, day care centers, and specified law enforcement officers. The notice must include the sexual predator's name, the address or addresses at which the sexual predator resides, the sexually oriented offense of which the sexual predator was convicted or to which the sexual predator pleaded guilty, and a statement that the sexual predator has been adjudicated as being a sexual predator. (R.C. 2950.11(A) and (B).)

### **Definitions**

#### **Sexually oriented offense**

Under existing law, "sexually oriented offense" means for the purposes of the SORN Law any of the following offenses (R.C. 2950.01(D)):

(1) Regardless of the age of the victim of the offense, the offense of rape, sexual battery, or gross sexual imposition, or the former offense of felonious sexual penetration;

(2) Any of the following offenses involving a minor, in the circumstances specified:

(a) The offense of kidnapping, abduction, unlawful restraint, the former offense of child stealing, criminal child enticement, or corruption of a minor when the victim of the offense is under 18 years of age;

(b) The offense of compelling prostitution when the person who is compelled, induced, procured, encouraged, solicited, requested, or facilitated to engage in, paid or agreed to be paid for, or allowed to engage in the sexual activity in question is under 18 years of age;

(c) The offense of pandering sexually oriented matter involving a minor or the offense of pandering obscenity involving a minor when the offense involves creating, reproducing, or publishing obscene material that has a minor as one of its participants or portrayed observers or when the offense involves creating, directing, or producing an obscene performance that has a minor as one of its participants;

(d) The offense of illegal use of a minor in nudity-oriented material or performance when the offense involves photographing a minor who is not the person's child or ward in a state of nudity, or creating, directing, producing, or transferring any material or performance that shows the minor in a state of nudity or when the offense involves consenting to the photographing of the person's minor child or ward, or photograph the person's minor child or ward, in a state of nudity or consenting to the use of the person's minor child or ward in a state of nudity in any material or performance, or using or transferring a material or performance of that nature;

(e) The offense of endangering children when the offense involves enticing, coercing, permitting, encouraging, compelling, hiring, employing, using, or allowing the child to act, model, or in any other way participate in, or be photographed for, the production, presentation, dissemination, or advertisement of any material or performance that the offender knows or reasonably should know is obscene, is sexually oriented matter, or is nudity-oriented matter when the child who is involved in the offense is under 18 years of age.

(3) Regardless of the age of the victim of the offense and when the offense is committed with a purpose to gratify the sexual needs or desires of the offender, the offense of aggravated murder, murder, felonious assault, or kidnapping, or involuntary manslaughter committed as a proximate result of the offender's committing or attempting to commit a felony;

(4) A sexually violent offense (see "*Sexually violent offense*," below);

(5) A violation of any former law of this state that was substantially equivalent to any offense listed in paragraph (1), (2), (3), or (4), above;

(6) A violation of an existing or former municipal ordinance or law of another state or the United States, or a violation under the law applicable in a military court, that is or was substantially equivalent to any offense listed in paragraph (1), (2), (3), or (4), above;

(7) An attempt to commit, conspiracy to commit, or complicity in committing any offense listed in paragraph (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), or (6), above.

**Sexually violent offense**

Under existing law, "sexually violent offense" means a "violent sex offense" (see "**Violent sex offense**," below), or a "designated homicide, assault, or kidnapping offense" (see "**Designated homicide, assault, or kidnapping offense**," below) for which the offender also was convicted of or pleaded guilty to a sexual motivation specification under the Sexually Violent Predator Law (R.C. 2971.01(G)--not in the bill).

**Violent sex offense**

"Violent sex offense" means any of the following (R.C. 2971.01(L)--not in the bill):

- (1) The offense of rape, sexual battery, gross sexual imposition when the victim or one of the victims of the offense is less than 13 years of age, or the former offense of felonious sexual penetration;
- (2) A felony violation of a former Ohio law that is substantially equivalent to a violation listed in paragraph (1) or of an existing or former law of the United States or of another state that is substantially equivalent to a violation listed in paragraph (1);
- (3) An attempt to commit or complicity in committing a violation listed in paragraph (1) or (2) if the attempt or complicity is a felony.

**Designated homicide, assault, or kidnapping offense**

"Designated homicide, assault, or kidnapping offense" means any of the following (R.C. 2971.01(B)--not in the bill):

- (1) The offense of aggravated murder, murder, felonious assault, or kidnapping, or involuntary manslaughter committed as a proximate result of the offender's committing or attempting to commit a felony;
- (2) An attempt to commit or complicity in committing a violation listed in paragraph (1), if the attempt or complicity is a felony.

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**COMMENT**

1. An offender also is "adjudicated as being a sexual predator" if any of the following apply (R.C. 2950.01(G)):

(a) The offender is convicted of or pleads guilty to committing, on or after January 1, 1997, a sexually oriented offense that is a sexually violent offense (see "Definitions," above) and also is convicted of or pleads guilty to a sexually violent predator specification that was included in the indictment, count in the indictment, or information that charged the sexually violent offense.

(b) Regardless of when the sexually oriented offense was committed, on or after January 1, 1997, the offender is sentenced for a sexually oriented offense (see "Definitions," above), and the sentencing judge determines pursuant to specified statutory criteria that the offender is a sexual predator.

(c) Regardless of when the sexually oriented offense was committed, the offender is convicted of or pleads guilty to, or has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to, a sexually oriented offense in another jurisdiction, as a result of that conviction or plea of guilty, the offender is required, under the law of that jurisdiction, to register as a sex offender until the offender's death and to verify the offender's address on at least a quarterly basis each year, and, on or after July 1, 1997, the offender moves to and resides in this state or temporarily is domiciled in Ohio for more than seven days, unless a court of common pleas determines that the offender is not a sexual predator pursuant to R.C. 2950.09(F).

2. In making a determination as to whether an offender is a sexual predator, the judge must consider all relevant factors, including, but not limited to, all of the following (R.C. 2950.09(B)(2)):

(a) The offender's age;

(b) The offender's prior criminal record regarding all offenses, including, but not limited to, all sexual offenses;

(c) The age of the victim of the sexually oriented offense for which sentence is to be imposed;

(d) Whether the sexually oriented offense for which sentence is to be imposed involved multiple victims;

(e) Whether the offender used drugs or alcohol to impair the victim of the sexually oriented offense or to prevent the victim from resisting;

(f) If the offender previously has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to any criminal offense, whether the offender completed any sentence imposed for the prior offense and, if the prior offense was a sex offense or a sexually oriented offense, whether the offender participated in available programs for sexual offenders;

(g) Any mental illness or mental disability of the offender;

(h) The nature of the offender's sexual conduct, sexual contact, or interaction in a sexual context with the victim of the sexually oriented offense and whether the sexual conduct, sexual contact, or interaction in a sexual context was part of a demonstrated pattern of abuse;

(i) Whether the offender, during the commission of the sexually oriented offense for which sentence is to be imposed, displayed cruelty or made one or more threats of cruelty;

(j) Any additional behavioral characteristics that contribute to the offender's conduct.

3. In *State v. Brewer* (1999), 86 Ohio St.3d 160, the Ohio Supreme Court held that a sexual predator hearing conducted pursuant to R.C. 2950.09(C)(2) must take place prior to the offender's release from confinement. The court also held that the hearing must be scheduled far enough in advance of the offender's release date to allow officials to satisfy their statutory duty to notify the offender of the offender's registration duties under R.C. 2950.03(A)(1).

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## HISTORY

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