



*Arkansas
Sentencing
Commission*

**Impact Assessment for HB1629
Sponsored by Representative Tucker**

Subtitle TO PROTECT VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE AND STALKING; AND PROHIBITING A PERSON CONVICTED OF MISDEMEANOR DOMESTIC BATTERING OR STALKING FROM POSSESSING A FIREARM.

Impact Summary¹ Cannot be determined.

Change from current law² Amends Arkansas Code Annotated § 5-73-103, Possession of firearm by certain persons, to add to the list of offenders who are prohibited from possessing a firearm. Under the proposed bill, a person shall not possess or own any firearm who has been convicted of stalking in the third degree, A.C.A. § 5-71-229(c), or a Class A misdemeanor offense of domestic battering in the third degree, A.C.A. § 5-26-305, or a misdemeanor offense in this state or another state that has as an element of the offense (1) the use or attempted use of physical force committed against a family or household member, or (2) the threatened use of a deadly weapon committed against a family or household member. Under current law, a person shall not possess or own a firearm who has been convicted of a felony, adjudicated mentally ill, or committed involuntarily to any mental institution. See attached for a reprint of A.C.A. § 5-73-103 as currently written.

The penalty provision remains unchanged under the proposed bill. As currently written, a person is guilty of a Class B felony under this section if the person has a prior violent felony conviction, the person’s current possession of a firearm involves the commission of another crime, or the person has been previously convicted under this section or a similar provision from a similar jurisdiction. A person is guilty of a Class D felony under this section if the person has a prior felony conviction but is not subject to the Class B felony. All other violations constitute a Class A misdemeanor.

Impact Information

This proposed bill expands the pool of people who can commit the offense of A.C.A. § 5-73-103, Possession of a Firearm by certain persons. Data does not exist as to the total number of people who would actually commit this offense if this legislation was enacted. Therefore, the impact cannot be determined. The following data is for informational purposes only.

¹ This impact assessment was prepared (3/2/2017, 7:50 a.m.) by the staff of the Arkansas Sentencing Commission pursuant to A. C. A. § 16-90-802(d)(6) with data supplied by the Arkansas Department of Correction and the Administrative Office of the Courts. A micro-simulation model may be used for bills which have the potential for significant impact on correctional resources. The following designations will be used: “minimal” = less than 10 offenders per year will be affected; “medium” = would require budgetary increases for ADC inmate costs; and “major” = would require budgetary increases for ADC inmate costs and construction costs for additional beds.

² Standard punishment ranges:		
Class Y	10-40 years or life	
Class A	6-30 years; up to \$15,000	
Class B	5-20 years; up to \$15,000	
	Class C	3-10 years; up to \$10,000
	Class D	0-6 years; up to \$10,000
	Unclassified	As specified in statute
		Misdemeanors
	Class A	Up to 1 year; up to \$2,500
	Class B	Up to 90 days; up to \$1,000
	Class C	Up to 30 days; up to \$500

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) reports that for the three year period beginning on January 1, 2013 and ending December 31, 2015, there were 987 convictions reported for A.C.A. § 5-26-305, Domestic battering in the third degree, and 3 convictions reported for, A.C.A. § 5-71-229(c), Stalking in the third degree. This data is limited to that information reported to AOC, which includes all Circuit Courts, but only some District Courts. Further, this only includes data on offenses specifically enumerated in the proposed bill, which is not indicative of the total number of people who would be prohibited from possessing a firearm if this legislation is enacted.

A.C.A. § 5-73-103. Possession of firearms by certain persons.

(a) Except as provided in subsection (d) of this section or unless authorized by and subject to such conditions as prescribed by the Governor, or his or her designee, or the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, or other bureau or office designated by the United States Department of Justice, no person shall possess or own any firearm who has been:

- (1) Convicted of a felony;
- (2) Adjudicated mentally ill; or
- (3) Committed involuntarily to any mental institution.

(b) (1) Except as provided in subdivisions (b)(2) and (3) of this section, a determination by a jury or a court that a person committed a felony constitutes a conviction for purposes of subsection (a) of this section even though the court suspended imposition of sentence or placed the defendant on probation.

(2) Subdivision (b)(1) of this section does not apply to a person whose case was dismissed and expunged under § 16-93-301 et seq. or § 16-98-303(g).

(3) The determination by the jury or court that the person committed a felony does not constitute a conviction for purposes of subsection (a) of this section if the person is subsequently granted a pardon explicitly restoring the ability to possess a firearm.

(c) (1) A person who violates this section commits a Class B felony if:

- (A) The person has a prior violent felony conviction;
- (B) The person's current possession of a firearm involves the commission of another crime; or
- (C) The person has been previously convicted under this section or a similar provision from another jurisdiction.

(2) A person who violates this section commits a Class D felony if he or she has been previously convicted of a felony and his or her present conduct or the prior felony conviction does not fall within subdivision (c)(1) of this section.

(3) Otherwise, the person commits a Class A misdemeanor.

(d) The Governor may restore without granting a pardon the right of a convicted felon or an adjudicated delinquent to own and possess a firearm upon the recommendation of the chief law enforcement officer in the jurisdiction in which the person resides, so long as the underlying felony or delinquency adjudication:

- (1) Did not involve the use of a weapon; and
- (2) Occurred more than eight (8) years ago.

HISTORY: Acts 1975, No. 280, § 3103; 1977, No. 360, § 18; A.S.A. 1947, § 41-3103; Acts 1987, No. 74, § 1; 1994 (2nd Ex. Sess.), No. 63, § 1; 1995, No. 595, § 1; 1995, No. 1325, § 1; 2001, No. 1429, § 1; 2009, No. 1491, § 1.

A.C.A. § 5-26-305. Domestic battering in the third degree.

(a) A person commits domestic battering in the third degree if:

(1) With the purpose of causing physical injury to a family or household member, the person causes physical injury to a family or household member;

(2) The person recklessly causes physical injury to a family or household member;

(3) The person negligently causes physical injury to a family or household member by means of a deadly weapon; or

(4) The person purposely causes stupor, unconsciousness, or physical or mental impairment or injury to a family or household member by administering to the family or household member, without the family or household member's consent, any drug or other substance.

(b) (1) Domestic battering in the third degree is a Class A misdemeanor.

(2) However, domestic battering in the third degree is a Class D felony if:

(A) Committed against a woman the person knew or should have known was pregnant;

(B) The person committed one (1) or more of the following offenses within five (5) years of the offense of domestic battering in the third degree:

(i) Domestic battering in the first degree, § 5-26-303;

(ii) Domestic battering in the second degree, § 5-26-304;

(iii) Domestic battering in the third degree;

(iv) Aggravated assault on a family or household member, § 5-26-306; or

(v) A violation of an equivalent penal law of this state or of another state or foreign jurisdiction; or

(C) The person committed two (2) or more offenses of battery against a family or household member as defined by a law of this state or by an equivalent law of any other state or foreign jurisdiction within ten (10) years of the offense of domestic battering in the third degree.

HISTORY: Acts 1979, No. 396, § 3; A.S.A. 1947, § 41-1655; Acts 1995, No. 1291, § 3; 1999, No. 1365, § 3; 2001, No. 1553, § 10; 2003, No. 944, § 3; 2003, No. 1079, § 1; 2005, No. 1994, § 481; 2009, No. 333, § 1; 2013, No. 417, § 3; 2015, No. 1155, § 5.

A.C.A. § 5-71-229. Stalking.

(a) (1) A person commits stalking in the first degree if he or she knowingly engages in a course of conduct that would place a reasonable person in the victim's position under emotional distress and in fear for his or her safety or a third person's safety, and the actor:

(A) Does so in contravention of an order of protection consistent with the Domestic Abuse Act of 1991, § 9-15-101 et seq., or a no contact order as set out in subdivision (a)(2)(A) of this section, protecting the same victim, or any other order issued by any court protecting the same victim;

(B) Has been convicted within the previous ten (10) years of:

(i) Stalking in the second degree;

(ii) Terroristic threatening, § 5-13-301, or terroristic act, § 5-13-310; or

(iii) Stalking or threats against another person's safety under the statutory provisions of any other state jurisdiction; or

(C) Is armed with a deadly weapon or represents by word or conduct that he or she is armed with a deadly weapon.

(2) (A) Upon pretrial release of the defendant, a judicial officer shall enter a no contact order in writing consistent with Rules 9.3 and 9.4 of the Arkansas Rules of Criminal Procedure and shall give notice to the defendant of penalties contained in Rule 9.5 of the Arkansas Rules of Criminal Procedure.

(B) The no contact order remains in effect during the pendency of any appeal of a conviction under this subsection.

(C) The judicial officer or prosecuting attorney shall provide a copy of the no contact order to the victim and the arresting law enforcement agency without unnecessary delay.

(D) If the judicial officer has reason to believe that mental disease or defect of the defendant will or has become an issue in the cause, the judicial officer shall enter such orders as are consistent with § 5-2-305.

(3) Stalking in the first degree is a Class C felony.

(b) (1) A person commits stalking in the second degree if he or she knowingly engages in a course of conduct that harasses another person and makes a terroristic threat with the purpose of placing that person in imminent fear of death or serious bodily injury or placing that person in imminent fear of the death or serious bodily injury of his or her immediate family.

(2) (A) Upon pretrial release of the defendant, a judicial officer shall enter a no contact order in writing consistent with Rules 9.3 and 9.4 of the Arkansas Rules of Criminal Procedure and shall give notice to the defendant of penalties contained in Rule 9.5 of the Arkansas Rules of Criminal Procedure.

(B) The no contact order remains in effect during the pendency of any appeal of a conviction under this subsection.

(C) The judicial officer or prosecuting attorney shall provide a copy of the no contact order to the victim and arresting law enforcement agency without unnecessary delay.

(D) If the judicial officer has reason to believe that mental disease or defect of the defendant will or has become an issue in the cause, the judicial officer shall enter such orders as are consistent with § 5-2-305.

(3) Stalking in the second degree is a Class D felony.

(c) (1) A person commits stalking in the third degree if he or she knowingly commits an act that would place a reasonable person in the victim's position under emotional distress and in fear for his or her safety or a third person's safety.

(2) (A) Upon pretrial release of the defendant, a judicial officer shall enter a no contact order in writing consistent with Rules 9.3 and 9.4 of the Arkansas Rules of Criminal Procedure and shall give notice to the defendant of penalties contained in Rule 9.5 of the Arkansas Rules of Criminal Procedure.

(B) The no contact order remains in effect during the pendency of any appeal of a conviction under this subsection.

(C) The judicial officer or prosecuting attorney shall provide a copy of the no contact order to the victim and arresting law enforcement agency without unnecessary delay.

(D) If the judicial officer has reason to believe that mental disease or defect of the defendant will or has become an issue in the cause, the judicial officer shall enter orders as are consistent with § 5-2-305.

(3) Stalking in the third degree is a Class A misdemeanor.

(d) It is an affirmative defense to prosecution under this section if the actor is a law enforcement officer, licensed private investigator, attorney, process server, licensed bail bondsman, or a store detective acting within the reasonable scope of his or her duty while conducting surveillance on an official work assignment.

(e) It is not a defense to a prosecution under this section that the actor was not given actual notice by the victim that the actor's conduct was not wanted.

(f) As used in this section:

(1) (A) "Course of conduct" means a pattern of conduct composed of two (2) or more acts, separated by at least thirty-six (36) hours, but occurring within one (1) year, including without limitation an act in which the actor directly, indirectly, or through a third party by any action, method, device, or means follows, monitors, observes, places under surveillance, threatens, or communicates to or about a person or interferes with a person's property.

(B) (i) "Course of conduct" does not include constitutionally protected activity.

(ii) If the defendant claims that he or she was engaged in a constitutionally protected activity, the court shall determine the validity of that claim as a matter of law and, if found valid, shall exclude that activity from evidence;

(2) (A) "Emotional distress" means significant mental suffering or distress.

(B) "Emotional distress" does not require that the victim sought or received medical or other professional treatment or counseling; and

(3) "Harasses" means an act of harassment as prohibited by § 5-71-208.

HISTORY: Acts 1993, No. 379, §§ 1-3; 1993, No. 388, §§ 1-3; 1995, No. 1302, § 1; 2007, No. 827, § 94; 2013, No. 1014, § 1.