

1 State of Arkansas
2 94th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2023
4

As Engrossed: S3/30/23

A Bill

SENATE BILL 469

5 By: Senators C. Tucker, Gilmore
6 By: Representative Gazaway
7

For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO REDUCE VIOLENT CRIME IN ARKANSAS; TO
10 ESTABLISH THE VIOLENT CRIME CLEARANCE GRANT FUND; TO
11 PROVIDE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES WITH RESOURCES TO
12 COMBAT VIOLENT CRIME; TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY; AND
13 FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
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Subtitle

16 TO REDUCE VIOLENT CRIME IN ARKANSAS; TO
17 ESTABLISH THE VIOLENT CRIME CLEARANCE
18 GRANT FUND; TO PROVIDE LAW ENFORCEMENT
19 AGENCIES WITH RESOURCES TO COMBAT VIOLENT
20 CRIME; AND TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY.
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24 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
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26 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 12, Chapter 6, is amended to add an
27 additional subchapter to read as follows:

Subchapter 8 – Violent Crime Clearance Grants

12-6-801. Legislative findings.

The General Assembly finds that:

32 (1) In 2021, there was a clearance rate of thirty-nine percent
33 (39%) for violent crimes reported in Arkansas, which means there were no
34 arrests for sixty-one percent (61%) of reported violent crimes;

35 (2) Low clearance rates undermine law enforcement efforts to
36 hold perpetrators accountable, to disrupt cycles of violence, and to provide



1 justice to victims;

2 (3) Research shows that enhanced investigative resources,
3 improved management structures, and oversight processes can increase
4 clearance rates and improve the chances that perpetrators are apprehended in
5 even the most difficult cases to clear; and

6 (4) Law enforcement agencies need additional resources and
7 support to strengthen investigations, apply community problem-solving
8 approaches to violent-crime hot spots, and implement programs that blend law
9 enforcement, social services, and community mobilization strategies.

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11 12-6-802. Grant funding.

12 (a)(1) The Secretary of the Department of Public Safety, in
13 consultation with the Arkansas Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and
14 Training, shall develop grant applications to be used under this subchapter.

15 (2) The secretary shall consult with local law enforcement
16 agencies when determining grant eligibility requirements and criteria under
17 this subchapter.

18 (b) Grant awards under this subchapter:

19 (1) Shall be premised upon identifying and encouraging the
20 adoption of law enforcement strategies that research demonstrates can reduce
21 different types of violent crime, as determined by the department, and
22 improve violent crime clearance rates;

23 (2) Shall target new initiatives and strategies to combat
24 violent crime as proposed by local law enforcement agencies;

25 (3) May be used to provide the following for law enforcement
26 agencies:

27 (A) Improved investigatory resources;

28 (B) Technical assistance;

29 (C) Law enforcement training;

30 (D) Law enforcement equipment;

31 (E) Contractual support; and

32 (F) Information systems for criminal justice purposes; and

33 (4) May be used to increase direct services to victims of
34 violent crime through:

35 (A) The provision and retention of victim-witness
36 coordinators;

1 (B) Enhanced accessibility to services;
2 (C) Increased awareness of victimization; and
3 (D) Partnership with local community providers to improve
4 support and services to victims of violent crime.

5 (c) The secretary shall give preference to applicants that demonstrate
6 a commitment to regional, multijurisdictional strategies to address community
7 safety issues and to work with community-based organizations and government
8 agencies to address violent criminal activity and improve violent crime
9 clearance rates.

10 (d) The department shall administer all grant awards and expenditures
11 under this subchapter under applicable state and federal law.

12 (e) The secretary and department shall only be obligated to comply
13 with this section in years in which the Violent Crime Clearance Grant Fund, §
14 19-5-1277, receives at least one million dollars (\$1,000,000) in funding.

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16 12-6-803. Additional duties.

17 (a) The Department of Public Safety is encouraged to:

18 (1) Analyze crime and arrest data to determine violent crime
19 clearance rates, identify which law enforcement agencies face the biggest
20 challenges in combating violent crime, and conduct qualitative research to
21 assess the capacity of law enforcement agencies to investigate and solve
22 violent crimes;

23 (2) Provide technical assistance to law enforcement agencies to
24 share best practices for improving violent crime clearance rates based on the
25 analysis and research obtained under subdivision (a)(1) of this section; and

26 (3) Periodically convene agencies, practitioners, and experts to
27 share resources, research, and advice about implementing evidence-based
28 practices that have been proven to reduce violent crime and improve
29 investigations of violent crime.

30 (b) In order to carry out the duties of administering this subchapter,
31 the Secretary of the Department of Public Safety may:

32 (1) Hire personnel as necessary;

33 (2) Enter into a contract for necessary services; and

34 (3) Spend up to five percent (5%) of funds in the Violent Crime
35 Clearance Grant Fund, § 19-5-1277, on the necessary costs of administering
36 this subchapter, including without limitation the costs described in this

1 section.

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3 SECTION 2 Arkansas Code Title 19, Chapter 5, Subchapter 12, is amended
4 to add an additional section to read as follows:

5 19-5-1277. Violent Crime Clearance Grant Fund.

6 (a) There is created on the books of the Treasurer of State, the
7 Auditor of State, and the Chief Fiscal Officer of the State a miscellaneous
8 fund to be known as the "Violent Crime Clearance Grant Fund".

9 (b) The fund shall consist of:

10 (1) Moneys obtained from private grants or other sources that
11 are designated to be credited to the fund; and

12 (2) Any other revenues authorized by law.

13 (c) The fund shall be used by the Secretary of the Department of
14 Public Safety as provided in § 12-6-801 et seq. to fund grant awards.

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16 SECTION 3. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the
17 General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that sixty-one percent (61%) of
18 violent crimes in Arkansas do not end with an arrest; that low clearance
19 rates for violent crimes undermine police efforts and jeopardize public
20 safety; that new strategies and resources are required to improve the
21 apprehension of people who commit violent crimes; and that establishing the
22 Violent Crime Clearance Grant Fund is immediately necessary to provide needed
23 resources to law enforcement agencies and victims of violent crime and to
24 protect the public from violent crime. Therefore, an emergency is declared
25 to exist, and this act being immediately necessary for the preservation of
26 the public peace, health, and safety shall become effective on:

27 (1) The date of its approval by the Governor;

28 (2) If the bill is neither approved nor vetoed by the Governor,
29 the expiration of the period of time during which the Governor may veto the
30 bill; or

31 (3) If the bill is vetoed by the Governor and the veto is
32 overridden, the date the last house overrides the veto.

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34 /s/C. Tucker

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36 **APPROVED: 4/12/23**