



## ARKANSAS SENTENCING COMMISSION

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### Impact Assessment for SB405 Sponsored by Senator Hammer

**Subtitle** TO AMEND THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE OFFENSE OF POSSESSION OF A HANDGUN BY A MINOR.

**Impact Summary**<sup>1</sup> Minimal, affecting fewer than ten offenders per year.

**Change from Current Law**<sup>2</sup> The proposed bill amends Arkansas Code Annotated, § 5-73-119, Handguns – Possession by minor or possession on school property, by standardizing the penalty for all occurrences of § 5-73-119(a). Under the current statute, the penalty for a conviction of § 5-73-119(a)(1) is a Class A misdemeanor, unless the person has (1) previously been adjudicated delinquent for possession of a handgun by a minor, (2) previously been adjudicated delinquent for any offense that would be a felony if committed by an adult, or (3) previously pleaded or found guilty of a felony in circuit court while under eighteen (18) years of age.

**Impact Information** The proposed bill increases the penalty for misdemeanor occurrences of A.C.A. § 5-73-119, Handguns – Possession by minor or possession on school property, to a Class D felony. The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) reports that for the three (3) year period beginning on 1/1/2020 and ending on 12/31/2022, there were twenty-four (24) felony convictions and nine (9) misdemeanor convictions of A.C.A. § 5-73-119. Please note that not all courts report misdemeanor convictions to the Administrative Office of the Courts. The Division of Correction (ADC) reports that as of December 2, 2022, there are currently 16 offenders serving a term of incarceration for a violation of A.C.A. § 5-73-119, Handguns – Possession by minor or possession on school property. Of these, 2 are serving a term of incarceration for which A.C.A. § 5-73-119 is the primary offense.

The limited scope of new felony conduct, combined with the low number of reported convictions for the offense as currently written makes it unlikely that the proposed bill will result in a significant impact to correctional resources.

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<sup>1</sup> This impact assessment was prepared 3/23/2023 7:57 AM 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 Corrections 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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

**A.C.A. § 5-73-119. Handguns — Possession by minor or possession on school property.**

(a)

(1) No person in this state under eighteen (18) years of age shall possess a handgun.

(2)

(A) A violation of subdivision (a)(1) of this section is a Class A misdemeanor.

(B) A violation of subdivision (a)(1) of this section is a Class D felony if the person has previously:

(i) Been adjudicated delinquent for a violation of subdivision (a)(1) of this section;

(ii) Been adjudicated delinquent for any offense that would be a felony if committed by an adult; or

(iii) Pleaded guilty or nolo contendere to or been found guilty of a felony in circuit court while under eighteen (18) years of age.

(b)

(1) No person in this state shall possess a firearm:

(A) Upon the developed property of a public or private school, kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12);

(B) In or upon any school bus; or

(C) At a designated bus stop as identified on the route list published by a school district each year.

(2)

(A) A violation of subdivision (b)(1) of this section is a Class D felony.

(B) No sentence imposed for a violation of subdivision (b)(1) of this section shall be suspended or probated or treated as a first offense under § 16-93-301 et seq.

(c)

(1) Except as provided in § 5-73-322, a person in this state shall not possess a handgun upon the property of any private institution of higher education or a publicly supported institution of higher education in this state on or about his or her person, in a vehicle occupied by him or her, or otherwise readily available for use with a purpose to employ the handgun as a weapon against a person.

(2) A violation of subdivision (c)(1) of this section is a Class D felony.

(d) “Handgun” means a firearm capable of firing rimfire ammunition or centerfire ammunition and designed or constructed to be fired with one (1) hand.

(e) It is permissible to carry a handgun under this section if at the time of the act of possessing a handgun or firearm:

(1) The person is in his or her own dwelling or place of business or on property in which he or she has a possessory or proprietary interest, except upon the property of a public or private institution of higher learning;

(2) The person is a law enforcement officer, correctional officer, or member of the armed forces acting in the course and scope of his or her official duties;

(3) The person is assisting a law enforcement officer, correctional officer, or member of the armed forces acting in the course and scope of his or her official duties pursuant to the direction or request of the law enforcement officer, correctional officer, or member of the armed forces;

(4) The person is a registered commissioned security guard acting in the course and scope of his or her duties;

(5) The person is hunting game with a handgun or firearm that may be hunted with a handgun or firearm under the rules and regulations of the Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission or is en route to or from a hunting area for the purpose of hunting game with a handgun or firearm;

(6)

(A) The person is a certified law enforcement officer, either on-duty or off-duty.

(B) If the person is an off-duty law enforcement officer, he or she may be required by a public school or publicly supported institution of higher education to be in physical possession of a valid identification identifying the person as a law enforcement officer;

(7) The person is on a journey beyond the county in which the person lives, unless the person is eighteen (18) years of age or less;

(8) The person is participating in a certified hunting safety course sponsored by the commission or a firearm safety course recognized and approved by the commission or by a state or national nonprofit organization qualified and experienced in firearm safety;

(9) The person is participating in a school-approved educational course or sporting activity involving the use of firearms;

(10) The person is a minor engaged in lawful marksmanship competition or practice or other lawful recreational shooting under the supervision of his or her parent, legal guardian, or other person twenty-one (21) years of age or older standing in loco parentis or is traveling to or from a lawful marksmanship competition or practice or other lawful recreational shooting with an unloaded handgun or firearm accompanied by his or her parent, legal guardian, or other person twenty-one (21) years of age or older standing in loco parentis;

(11) The person has a license to carry a concealed handgun under § 5-73-301 et seq. and is carrying a concealed handgun on the developed property of:

(A) A kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) private school operated by a church or other place of worship that:

(i) Is located on the developed property of the kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) private school;

(ii) Allows the person to carry a concealed handgun into the church or other place of worship under § 5-73-306; and

(iii) Allows the person to possess a concealed handgun on the developed property of the kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) private school; or

(B) A kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) private school or a prekindergarten private school that through its governing board or director has set forth the rules and circumstances under which the licensee may carry a concealed handgun into a building or event of the kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) private school or the prekindergarten private school; or

(12)

(A) The person has a license to carry a concealed handgun under § 5-73-301 et seq. and is carrying a concealed handgun in his or her motor vehicle or has left the concealed handgun in his or her locked and unattended motor vehicle in a publicly owned and maintained parking lot.

(B)

(i) As used in this subdivision (e)(12), “parking lot” means a designated area or structure or part of a structure intended for the parking of motor vehicles or a designated drop-off zone for children at a school.

(ii) “Parking lot” does not include a parking lot owned, maintained, or otherwise controlled by the Division of Correction or Division of Community Correction.

## **History**

Acts 1989, No. 649, §§ 1-4; 1993, No. 1166, § 1; 1993, No. 1189, § 4; 1994 (2nd Ex. Sess.), No. 57, § 1; 1994 (2nd Ex. Sess.), No. 58, § 1; 1999, No. 1282, § 1; 2001, No. 592, § 1; 2005, No. 1994, § 476; 2013, No. 226, § 1; 2013, No. 746, § 1; 2013, No. 1390, § 1; 2015, No. 933, § 1; 2015, No. 1078, § 1; 2019, No. 472, § 1; 2019, No. 910, § 679.