

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to the law as it existed prior to this session of the General Assembly.

1 State of Arkansas
2 85th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2005

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1176

4
5 By: Representative T. Hutchinson
6
7

For An Act To Be Entitled

8
9 AN ACT TO CLARIFY THAT THE SENTENCING GUIDELINES
10 OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS ARE ENTIRELY VOLUNTARY;
11 AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
12

Subtitle

13
14 AN ACT TO CLARIFY THAT THE SENTENCING
15 GUIDELINES OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS ARE
16 ENTIRELY VOLUNTARY.
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19 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
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21 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code §§ 16-90-803 and 16-90-804 are amended to
22 read as follows:

23 16-90-803. Voluntary presumptive standards.

24 (a)(1)(A) When a person charged with a felony enters a plea of guilty
25 or no contest, enters a negotiated plea, or is found guilty in a trial before
26 the judge, or when the trial judge is authorized to fix punishment following
27 an adjudication of guilt by a jury pursuant to § 5-4-103, sentencing ~~shall~~
28 may follow the procedures provided in this chapter.

29 (B) However, these sentencing procedures do not apply to
30 probation revocation proceedings.

31 ~~(2)(A) The presumptive sentence shall be determined, but may be~~
32 ~~departed from pursuant to the procedures outlined in § 16-90-804.~~

33 ~~(B)(i) In a case with multiple counts, the presumptive~~
34 ~~sentence shall be determined only on the most serious offense if the~~
35 ~~sentences are to run concurrently.~~

36 ~~(ii) If run consecutively, the presumptive sentence~~



1 ~~should be determined on each count.~~

2 ~~(3)~~(2) The presumptive sentence for any offender of a felony
3 committed on or after January 1, 1994, ~~is~~ may be determined by locating the
4 appropriate cell of the sentencing standards grid.

5 (b) The two dimensions of the sentencing standards grid represent the
6 primary determinants of a sentence: offense seriousness and offender
7 history.

8 (1) Offense Seriousness. The offense seriousness level is
9 determined by the offense of conviction or the offense of which the person
10 was found guilty or to which the person pleaded guilty or nolo contendere.

11 (A) Felony offenses are divided into ten (10) levels of
12 seriousness, ranging from low, seriousness level I, to high, seriousness
13 level X.

14 (B) The typical cases for the offenses listed within each
15 level of seriousness are deemed to be generally equivalent in seriousness.

16 (C) The most frequently occurring offenses within each
17 seriousness level are listed on the vertical axis of the sentencing standards
18 grid.

19 (D) The seriousness level for infrequently occurring
20 offenses can be determined by consulting the offense seriousness reference
21 table.

22 (E) The seriousness level for inchoate offenses is one (1)
23 level below the level for substantive offenses.

24 (2) Offender History. An offender's criminal history score
25 constitutes the horizontal axis of the sentencing standards grid.

26 (A) The offender's criminal history score shall be
27 computed from the following:

- 28 (i) Prior felony records;
- 29 (ii) Prior misdemeanor records;
- 30 (iii) Prior juvenile records, under certain
- 31 circumstances outlined below; and
- 32 (iv) Custody status at the time of the offense.

33 (B) The term "records", for the purpose of computing
34 criminal history scores, shall include:

- 35 (i) Convictions;
- 36 (ii) Findings of guilt;

1 (iii) Acceptance of a plea of guilty or nolo
2 contendere;

3 (iv) Instances where the defendant has been placed
4 on probation, suspended imposition of sentence, or suspended execution of
5 sentence;

6 (v) Records which have been expunged after August
7 31, 1994; and

8 (vi) Dismissals ordered after August 31, 1994,
9 pursuant to the First Offender Act, §§ 16-93-301 - 16-93-303.

10 (C) The specific weights to be assigned to the various
11 criteria are as follows:

12 (i) Weight is assigned to prior felony records
13 according to seriousness level, as follows:

14 (a) Seriousness levels I, II, III, IV, and V =
15 one-half (.5) point;

16 (b) Seriousness levels VI, VII, VIII, IX, and
17 X = one (1) point;

18 (ii) Weight is assigned only to Class A
19 misdemeanors.

20 (a) Each Class A misdemeanor is worth one-
21 quarter (.25) point.

22 (b) No more than one (1) point may be accrued
23 from misdemeanor records;

24 (iii) Weight is assigned only to judicial
25 adjudications of delinquency for offenses for which a juvenile could have
26 been tried as an adult and which the trial court deems relevant to sentencing
27 in the current proceeding.

28 (a) Each adjudication is worth one-quarter
29 (.25) point, except for offenses adjudicated as delinquent which would have
30 constituted:

31 (i) Capital murder, § 5-10-101;

32 (ii) Murder in the first degree, § 5-10-102;

33 (iii) Murder in the second degree, § 5-10-103;

34 (iv) Kidnapping in the first degree, § 5-11-102;

35 (v) Aggravated robbery, § 5-12-103;

36 (vi) Rape, § 5-14-103; or

1 (vii) Battery in the first degree, § 5-13-201,
 2 if committed by an adult, which are worth one (1) point.

3 (b) No more than one (1) point may be accrued
 4 from juvenile offenses unless one (1) of the offenses adjudicated as
 5 delinquent would have constituted:

- 6 (i) Capital murder, § 5-10-101;
- 7 (ii) Murder in the first degree, § 5-10-102;
- 8 (iii) Murder in the second degree, § 5-10-103;
- 9 (iv) Kidnapping in the first degree, § 5-11-102;
- 10 (v) Aggravated robbery, § 5-12-103;
- 11 (vi) Rape, § 5-14-103; or
- 12 (vii) Battery in the first degree, § 5-13-201,

13 if committed by an adult; then, an offender may receive no more than two (2)
 14 points for juvenile offenses;

15 (iv) One (1) point is to be added to an offender's
 16 score if the offender is under any type of criminal justice restraint for a
 17 felony offense at the time that he committed the crime for which he is being
 18 sentenced. Such restraint includes pretrial bond, suspended imposition of
 19 sentence, probation, parole, postprison supervision, and release pending
 20 sentencing for a prior crime;

21 (v)(a) Juvenile offenses must have occurred within
 22 ten (10) years of the time of the offense for which an offender is being
 23 currently sentenced.

24 (b) Misdemeanor offenses must have occurred
 25 within ten (10) years of the time of the offense for which an offender is
 26 currently being sentenced.

27 (c) Felony offenses at seriousness levels I-V
 28 will not be counted if a period of fifteen (15) years has elapsed since the
 29 date of discharge from, or expiration of, the sentence to the date of the
 30 current offense; and

31 (vi) When multiple sentences for a single course of
 32 conduct were imposed, only the offense at the highest seriousness level is
 33 considered.

34 (3)(A)(i) The offense of conviction determines the appropriate
 35 seriousness level on the vertical axis.

36 (ii) The offender's criminal history score

1 determines the appropriate location on the horizontal axis.

2 (B) The presumptive fixed sentence for a felony conviction
 3 is found in the sentencing standards grid cell at the intersection of the
 4 column defined by the criminal history score and the row defined by the
 5 offense seriousness level.

6 (C) The statutory minimum or maximum ranges for a
 7 particular crime shall govern over a presumptive sentence if the presumptive
 8 sentence should fall below or above such ranges.

9 (4) This section shall not apply when a jury has recommended a
 10 sentence to the trial judge.

11 (5) Capital murder is excluded from the sentencing standards and
 12 is subject to the procedures in § 5-4-601 et seq.

13 (c) For all arrests or offenses occurring before July 1, 2005, that
 14 have not reached a final disposition as to judgment in the trial court,
 15 sentencing shall be in accordance with the law in effect at the time the
 16 offense occurred and not under the provisions of this section.

17
 18 16-90-804. Departures from the standards.

19 (a)~~(1)~~ ~~Effective January 1, 1994, the~~ The trial court may deviate
 20 ~~within a five percent (5%) range below or above~~ from the presumptive sentence
 21 without providing a written justification.

22 ~~(2)(A) For the trial court to depart beyond the five percent~~
 23 ~~(5%) range below or above the presumptive sentence, written justification~~
 24 ~~shall be given for the most serious offense if the sentences are run~~
 25 ~~concurrently or on each offense if the sentences are run consecutively,~~
 26 ~~specifying the reasons for such departure.~~

27 ~~(B) Downward departures from duration presumptions need~~
 28 ~~not be given if there is a lower dispositional recommendation, i.e.,~~
 29 ~~departure reasons need not be given for a lower prison sentence than the~~
 30 ~~presumptive prison sentence if alternative sanctions are also included as a~~
 31 ~~presumptive sentence.~~

32 ~~(3) A copy of the written reasons shall be attached to the~~
 33 ~~commitment and another copy forwarded to the Arkansas Sentencing Commission.~~

34 (b)(1) When sentencing is done by the judge following the entry of a
 35 guilty or no contest plea, or a trial before the judge, either or both
 36 parties may present evidence to justify a departure. The judge may allow

1 argument if he or she finds that it would be helpful.

2 (2)(A) If both sides agree on a recommended sentence, the judge
 3 may choose to accept or reject the agreement based upon the facts of the case
 4 and whether those facts support the presumptive sentence or a departure
 5 different from any recommendation.

6 (B) If there is an agreed departure from the presumptive
 7 sentence, written reasons shall be supplied by the parties to the court to
 8 attach to the commitment and to forward to the Arkansas Sentencing
 9 Commission.

10 (C) If the judge rejects the agreement, the defendant
 11 shall be allowed to withdraw his plea.

12 ~~(e)(1) When a sentence is imposed after January 1, 1994, which is~~
 13 ~~outside the presumptive range and which is not accompanied by written reasons~~
 14 ~~for the departure, an offender shall be considered for any discretionary~~
 15 ~~release applicable under the law as if he had received the presumptive~~
 16 ~~sentence, and the transfer or releasing authority may review, grant, or deny~~
 17 ~~transfer or release based on any eligibility established by the presumptive~~
 18 ~~sentence term.~~

19 ~~(2) This provision shall only apply to a conviction for the most~~
 20 ~~serious offense in a particular case.~~

21 ~~(3) In the event that such a conviction is vacated, any~~
 22 ~~concurrent conviction in the same case need not have a written departure.~~

23 ~~(d)(c)~~ The following is a nonexclusive list of factors which may be
 24 used considered as reasons for departure:

25 (1) Mitigating factors:

26 (A) While falling short of a defense, the victim played an
 27 aggressive role in the incident or provoked or willingly participated in it;

28 (B) While falling short of a defense, the offender lacked
 29 substantial capacity for judgment because of physical or mental impairment.

30 Voluntary use of drugs or alcohol does not fall within this factor;

31 (C) The offender played a minor or passive role in the
 32 crime;

33 (D) Before detection, the offender compensated or made a
 34 good faith effort to compensate the victim for any damage or injury
 35 sustained;

36 (E) The offense was principally accomplished by another

1 person, and the offender manifested extreme caution or sincere concern for
2 the safety or well-being of the victim;

3 (F) The offender or the offender’s children suffered a
4 continuing pattern of physical or sexual abuse by the victim of the offense,
5 and the offense is a response to that abuse;

6 (G) The operation of the multiple offense policy results
7 in a presumptive sentence that is clearly excessive in light of the purpose
8 of this chapter;

9 (H) Before detection in sexual offenses, the offender has
10 voluntarily admitted the nature and extent of the sexual offense and has
11 sought and participated in professional treatment or counseling for such
12 offenses;

13 (I) Upon motion of the state stating that the defendant
14 has made a good faith effort to provide substantial assistance to the
15 investigation or prosecution of another person who has committed an offense,
16 the circumstances listed below may be weighed as mitigating factors with
17 respect to the defendant’s offense:

18 (i) The timeliness of the defendant’s assistance;
19 (ii) The nature and extent of the defendant’s
20 assistance;

21 (iii) The truthfulness, completeness, and
22 demonstrable reliability of any information or testimony provided by the
23 defendant.

24 (2) Aggravating factors:

25 (A) The offender’s conduct during the commission of the
26 current offense manifested deliberate cruelty to the victim exhibited by
27 degrading, gratuitous, vicious, torturous, and demeaning physical or verbal
28 abuse, unusual pain, or violence in excess of that necessary to accomplish
29 the criminal purpose;

30 (B) The offender knew or should have known that the victim
31 was particularly vulnerable or incapable of resistance due to extreme youth,
32 advanced age, disability, or ill health;

33 (C) The current offense was a major economic offense or
34 series of offenses, so identified by a consideration of any of the following
35 factors:

36 (i) The current offense involved multiple victims or

1 multiple incidents per victim;

2 (ii) The current offense involved attempted or
3 actual monetary loss substantially greater than typical for the offense;

4 (iii) The current offense involved a high degree of
5 sophistication or planning or occurred over a lengthy period of time;

6 (iv) The defendant used his or her position of
7 trust, confidence, or fiduciary responsibility to facilitate the commission
8 of the current offense. This factor does not apply if it constitutes an
9 element of the crime;

10 (v) The defendant has been involved in other conduct
11 similar to the current offense as evidenced by the findings of civil or
12 administrative law proceedings or the imposition of professional sanctions;

13 (D) The offense was a major controlled substance offense,
14 identified as an offense or series of offenses related to trafficking in
15 controlled substances under circumstances more onerous than the usual
16 offense. The presence of two (2) or more of the circumstances listed below
17 is an aggravating factor with respect to the offense:

18 (i) The offense involved at least three (3) separate
19 transactions wherein controlled substances were sold, transferred, or
20 possessed with intent to do so; or

21 (ii) The offense involved an attempted or actual
22 sale or transfer of controlled substances in amounts substantially larger
23 than the statutory minimum which defines the offense; or

24 (iii) The offense involved a high degree of
25 sophistication or planning or occurred over a lengthy period of time or
26 involved a broad geographic area of disbursement; or

27 (iv) The circumstances of the offense reveal the
28 offender to have occupied a high position in the drug distribution hierarchy;
29 or

30 (v) The offender used his position or status to
31 facilitate the commission of the offense, including positions of trust,
32 confidence, or fiduciary relationships, e.g., a pharmacist, physician, or
33 other medical professional; or

34 (vi) The offender has received substantial income or
35 resources from his involvement in drug trafficking;

36 (E) The offender employed a firearm in the course of or in

1 furtherance of the felony, or in immediate flight therefrom. This factor does
 2 not apply to an offender convicted of a felony, an element of which is:

3 (i) Employing or using, or threatening or attempting
 4 to employ or use, a deadly weapon; or

5 (ii) Being armed with a deadly weapon; or

6 (iii) Possessing a deadly weapon; or

7 (iv) Furnishing a deadly weapon; or

8 (v) Carrying a deadly weapon;

9 (F) The offense was a sexual offense and was part of a
 10 pattern of criminal behavior with the same or different victims under the age
 11 of eighteen (18) years manifested by multiple incidents over a prolonged
 12 period of time;

13 (G) The operation of the multiple offense policy results
 14 in a presumptive sentence that is clearly too lenient in light of the purpose
 15 of this chapter;

16 (H) The offense was committed in a manner that exposed
 17 risk of injury to individuals other than the victim or victims, e.g.,
 18 shooting into a crowd;

19 (I) The offense was a violent or sexual offense committed
 20 in the victim's zone of privacy, e.g., his home or the curtilage thereof;

21 (J) The offender attempts to cover the offense by
 22 intimidation of witnesses, destruction or tampering with evidence, or
 23 purposely misleading authorities;

24 (K) The offense was committed for the purpose of avoiding
 25 or preventing an arrest or effecting an escape from custody; or

26 (L) In offenses related to vehicular homicides, the
 27 offender does not have the minimum insurance required by law.

28 ~~(e)~~ (d) This section shall not apply when a jury has recommended a
 29 sentence to the trial judge.

30 (e) For all arrests or offenses occurring before July 1, 2005, that
 31 have not reached a final disposition as to judgment in court, sentencing
 32 should follow the law in effect at the time the offense occurred, and any
 33 defendant is subject to the sentencing guidelines in effect at that time and
 34 not under the provisions of this section.

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 36 SECTION 2. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the

1 General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that the United States Supreme
2 Court has held that the federal sentencing guidelines are unconstitutional;
3 that the voluntary presumptive standards of the State of Arkansas may be
4 challenged as unconstitutional; and that this act is immediately necessary in
5 order to clarify that the sentencing guidelines are merely advisory.
6 Therefore, an emergency is declared to exist and this act being necessary for
7 the preservation of the public peace, health, and safety shall become
8 effective on July 1, 2005.

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