

State of Arkansas

As Engrossed: H2/21/19

92nd General Assembly

A Bill

Regular Session, 2019

HOUSE BILL 1380

By: Representatives C. Fite, McCullough

By: Senator Irvin

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT CREATING A PRIVILEGE OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN
A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THE PERSONNEL OF A
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER OR CENTER; TO MAKE
CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN A VICTIM AND A
VICTIM ADVOCATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

CREATING A PRIVILEGE OF COMMUNICATION
BETWEEN A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND
THE PERSONNEL OF A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
SHELTER OR CENTER; AND TO MAKE
CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN A
VICTIM AND A VICTIM ADVOCATE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

*SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 9, Chapter 6, is amended to add an
additional section to read as follows:*

9-6-112. Privileged communications made by victim of domestic
violence.

(a) As used in this section:

(1) "Advocate for victims of domestic violence" means an
employee, supervisor, administrator, or volunteer of a shelter or center for
victims of domestic violence authorized and regulated under this chapter;

(2) "Communication" means verbal, written, or electronic
communications of any kind;



1 (3) "Deviate sexual activity" means the same as defined in § 5-
2 14-101;

3 (4) "Domestic violence" means:

4 (A) Physical harm, bodily harm causing injury, or an
5 assault against a person caused by:

6 (i) A family or household member; or

7 (ii) Another person with whom a person is in a
8 dating relationship;

9 (B) Mental or emotional harm to a person caused by:

10 (i) A family or household member; or

11 (ii) Another person with whom a person is in a
12 dating relationship; or

13 (C) Sexual abuse against a person by another person;

14 (5) "Mentally defective" means the same as defined in § 5-14-
15 101;

16 (6) "Mentally incapacitated" means the same as defined in § 5-
17 14-101;

18 (7) "Physically helpless" means the same as defined in § 5-14-
19 101;

20 (8) "Sexual abuse" means:

21 (A) Sexual intercourse, deviate sexual activity, or sexual
22 contact by means of forcible compulsion; or

23 (B) Sexual intercourse, deviate sexual activity, or sexual
24 contact with a person who is:

25 (i) Physically helpless;

26 (ii) Mentally incapacitated;

27 (iii) Mentally defective; or

28 (iv) Less than sixteen (16) years of age, if the age
29 of the other person committing the sexual intercourse, deviate sexual
30 activity, or sexual contact is twenty (20) years of age or older;

31 (9) "Sexual contact" means the same as defined in § 5-14-101;

32 (10) "Sexual intercourse" means the same as defined in § 5-14-
33 101;

34 (11) "Shelter or center for victims of domestic violence" means
35 a domestic violence shelter that is authorized and regulated under this
36 chapter; and

1 (12) "Victim of domestic violence" means a person who has been
2 subjected to domestic violence by another person and who has sought out an
3 advocate for victims of domestic violence or a shelter or center for victims
4 of domestic violence.

5 (b)(1) Except as provided under subsection (e) of this section,
6 communication between a victim of domestic violence and an advocate for
7 victims of domestic violence is privileged and shall not be disclosed by the
8 advocate for victims of domestic violence without the consent of the victim
9 of domestic violence.

10 (2) A victim of domestic violence or an advocate for victims of
11 domestic violence may not be compelled to disclose the contents of any
12 communication made to the advocate for victims of domestic violence by the
13 victim of domestic violence.

14 (c) The privilege under this section only applies when the
15 communication was made to the advocate for victims of domestic violence while
16 the victim of domestic violence was seeking or in the course of advocacy,
17 help, refuge, treatment, housing, support, therapy, legal advice, counseling,
18 medical advice, or any other assistance related to the domestic violence to
19 which the victim of domestic violence was subjected.

20 (d) The privilege under this section may be claimed by:

21 (1) The victim of domestic violence, his or her attorney, or his
22 or her parent or guardian if the victim of domestic violence is less than
23 eighteen (18) years of age; and

24 (2) An advocate for victims of domestic violence on behalf of
25 the victim of domestic violence.

26 (e) A communication privileged under this section may be
27 disclosed if the communication is made to another person employed by or
28 volunteering at a shelter or center for victims of domestic violence and the
29 disclosure is for the purposes of furthering the advocacy process.

30 (f) The privilege under this section is waived if:

31 (1) The advocate for victims of domestic violence was a witness
32 or a party to the incident that prompted the providing of assistance by the
33 advocate for victims of domestic violence and the communication is required
34 by law enforcement to investigate the incident;

35 (2) The communication reveals the intended commission of a crime
36 or harmful act and the disclosure is determined to be necessary by the

1 advocate for victims of domestic violence to protect any person from a clear,
2 imminent risk of serious mental or physical harm or injury or to forestall a
3 serious threat to the public safety; or

4 (3) The victim of domestic violence waives the privilege created
5 under this section by voluntarily disclosing or consenting to disclosure of
6 any significant part of the privileged communication.

7 (g) A claim of privilege under this section is not defeated by a
8 disclosure that was erroneously, unlawfully, or improperly compelled or made
9 without opportunity to claim the privilege.

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