

1 State of Arkansas  
2 92nd General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2019  
4

# A Bill

SENATE BILL 152

5 By: Senators Irvin, Bledsoe, B. Davis, J. English  
6 By: Representatives Barker, Bentley, Brown, Capp, Cavanaugh, Crawford, Dalby, Della Rosa, M. Gray,  
7 Lundstrum, J. Mayberry, Petty, Rushing, Speaks, Vaught  
8

## For An Act To Be Entitled

9  
10 AN ACT TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH AND FAMILIES  
11 THROUGH THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE  
12 SYSTEM; AND TO REFORM THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM TO  
13 UTILIZE A VALIDATED RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL, CREATE A  
14 PLAN FOR DIVERSION OPTIONS TO MAXIMIZE THE BENEFITS  
15 FOR JUVENILE OFFENDERS, AND DEVELOP A PLAN FOR THE  
16 REINVESTMENT OF FUNDS INTO COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES.  
17

## Subtitle

18  
19 AN ACT RESTORING ARKANSAS FAMILIES.  
20  
21  
22

23 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
24

25 SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. This act shall be known and may be cited as  
26 the "Reclaim Arkansas Act".  
27

28 SECTION 2. DO NOT CODIFY. Legislative findings and intent.

29 (a) The General Assembly finds:

30 (1) The Youth Justice Reform Board was established by Acts 2015,  
31 No. 1010, bringing together stakeholders from across the state to develop a  
32 series of recommendations for youth justice reform in Arkansas;

33 (2) Stakeholder groups represented on the board include:

34 (A) Families and youth involved in the juvenile system;

35 (B) The Department of Education;

36 (C) The Department of Workforce Services;



- (D) The Department of Human Services;
- (E) Youth services providers;
- (F) Juvenile judges;
- (G) The Administrative Office of the Courts;
- (H) Prosecuting attorneys;
- (I) Public defenders;
- (J) Youth advocates; and
- (K) Experts in adolescent development; and

(3) In 2017, the board worked with the Arkansas Supreme Court Commission on Children, Youth, and Families to identify concerns and priorities for legislative action.

(b) The purpose of this act is to:

(1) Maintain public safety and improve outcomes for Arkansas youth and families involved in the juvenile justice system through validated risk assessments;

(2) Reduce the number of secure out-of-home placements;

(3) Redirect funding from secure residential facilities to evidence-based community services;

(4) Equitably allocate services in and across each judicial district;

(5) Enhance treatment for youth committed to the Division of Youth Services; and

(6) Serve youth and families through evidence-based programs selected through a collaboration between the Department of Human Services, the judiciary, and community-based providers.

SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 9-27-323(e), concerning diversion agreements in juvenile delinquency cases, is amended to read as follows:

(e) Diversion agreements shall be:

(1) Implemented by all juvenile courts based on validated assessment tools; and

(2) ~~limited~~ Used to ~~providing~~ provide for:

~~(1)~~(A) Nonjudicial probation under the supervision of the intake officer or probation officer for a period during which the juvenile may be required to comply with specified conditions concerning his or her conduct and activities;



1 division if the juvenile is adjudicated delinquent of only a misdemeanor  
2 offense unless the:

3 (1) Juvenile is determined to be  
4 moderate risk or high risk by the validated risk assessment; and

5 (2) Court makes specific findings as to  
6 the factors considered for the disposition to be in the juvenile’s best  
7 interest.

8 (d) A court may not commit a juvenile to the  
9 division if the juvenile is adjudicated delinquent of only a misdemeanor  
10 offense and the juvenile is determined to be low risk by the validated risk  
11 assessment.

12 (iv) A circuit court committing a juvenile to the  
13 division under subdivision (a)(1)(B)(iii) of this section shall make written  
14 findings and consider the following factors in making its determination to  
15 commit the juvenile to the division:

16 (a) The previous history of the juvenile,  
17 including without limitation whether:

18 (1) The juvenile has been adjudicated  
19 delinquent and, if so, whether the offense was against a person or property;  
20 and

21 (2) Any other previous history of  
22 antisocial behavior or patterns of physical violence exist;

23 (b) Whether the circuit court has previously  
24 offered less restrictive programs or services to the juvenile and whether  
25 there are less restrictive programs or services available to the court that  
26 are likely to rehabilitate the juvenile before the expiration of the court’s  
27 jurisdiction;

28 (c) Written reports and other materials  
29 relating to the juvenile’s mental, physical, educational, and social history;  
30 and

31 (d) Any other factors deemed relevant by the  
32 circuit court.

33 ~~(iv)~~(v) Upon receipt of an order of commitment with  
34 recommendations for placement, the division shall consider the  
35 recommendations of the committing court in placing a juvenile in a youth  
36 services facility or a community-based program.

1                   ~~(v)~~(vi) Upon receipt of an order of commitment, the  
2 division or its contracted provider or designee shall prepare a written  
3 treatment plan that:

4                   (a) States the treatment plan for the  
5 juvenile, including the types of programs and services that will be provided  
6 to the juvenile;

7                   (b) States the anticipated length of the  
8 juvenile's commitment;

9                   (c)(1) States recommendations as to the most  
10 appropriate post-commitment placement for the juvenile.

11                   (2) If the juvenile cannot return to the  
12 custody of his or her parent, guardian, or custodian because of child  
13 maltreatment, which includes the parent, guardian, or custodian refusing to  
14 take responsibility for the juvenile, the division shall immediately contact  
15 the Office of Chief Counsel of the Department of Human Services.

16                   (3) The Office of Chief Counsel of the  
17 Department of Human Services shall petition the committing court to determine  
18 the issue of custody of the juvenile;

19                   (d) States any postcommitment community-based  
20 services that will be offered to the juvenile and to his or her family by the  
21 division or the community-based provider;

22                   (e)(1) Outlines an aftercare plan, if  
23 recommended, including specific terms and conditions required of the juvenile  
24 and the community-based provider.

25                   (2) If the juvenile progresses in  
26 treatment and an aftercare plan is no longer recommended or the terms of the  
27 aftercare plan need to be amended as a result of treatment changes, any  
28 change in the terms of the aftercare plan and conditions shall be provided in  
29 writing and shall be explained to the juvenile.

30                   (3) The terms and conditions shall be  
31 provided also to the prosecuting attorney, the juvenile's attorney, and to  
32 the juvenile's legal parent, guardian, or custodian by the division or its  
33 designee before the juvenile's release from the division.

34                   (4) All aftercare terms shall be  
35 provided to the committing court; and

36                   (f)(1) The treatment plan shall be filed with

1 the committing court no later than thirty (30) days from the date of the  
2 commitment order or before the juvenile’s release, whichever is sooner.

3 (2) A copy of the written treatment plan  
4 shall be provided and shall be explained to the juvenile.

5 (3) A copy shall be provided to the  
6 prosecutor, the juvenile’s attorney, and to the juvenile’s legal parent,  
7 guardian, or custodian and shall be filed in the court files of any circuit  
8 court where a dependency-neglect or family in need of services case  
9 concerning that juvenile is pending.

10  
11 SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 9-28-201 is amended to read as follows:  
12 9-28-201. Legislative intent and purpose.

13 (a) The General Assembly recognizes that the state has a  
14 responsibility to provide its youth with appropriate services and programs to  
15 help decrease the number of juvenile offenders in the state and to create a  
16 better future for the state’s youth and that reforms in the juvenile justice  
17 system require oversight by an organization with special expertise in the  
18 problems of juvenile offenders. Therefore, the General Assembly declares that  
19 this subchapter is necessary to create a single entity within the Department  
20 of Human Services with primary responsibility for coordinating, sponsoring,  
21 and providing services to Arkansas’s youth and to create a structure within  
22 state government that will be responsive to the needs of the state’s youth.

23 (b) The purposes of this subchapter include without limitation to:

24 (1) Maintain public safety and improve outcomes for Arkansas  
25 youth and families involved in the juvenile justice system through validated  
26 risk assessments;

27 (2) Reduce the number of secure out-of-home placements;

28 (3) Redirect funding from secure residential facilities to  
29 evidence-based community services; and

30 (4) Enhance treatment for youth committed to the Division of  
31 Youth Services.

32  
33 SECTION 6. Arkansas Code § 9-28-203(a), concerning the powers and  
34 duties of the Division of Youth Services, is amended to read as follows:

35 (a) The Division of Youth Services ~~of the Department of Human Services~~  
36 shall perform the following functions and have the authority and

1 responsibility to:

2 (1) Coordinate communication among the various components of the  
3 juvenile justice system;

4 (2) Oversee reform of the state’s juvenile justice system,  
5 review the quality and consistency of reforms and reform proposals, and  
6 monitor youth and family outcomes related to reforms;

7 (3) Provide services to delinquent and families-in-need-of-  
8 services youths;

9 (4) Conduct research into the causes, nature, and treatment of  
10 juvenile delinquency and related problems;

11 (5) Develop programs for early intervention and prevention of  
12 juvenile delinquency;

13 (6) Maintain information files on juvenile delinquents in the  
14 state;

15 (7) Develop effective community-based alternatives to  
16 confinement, incarceration, and commitment of youths;

17 (8) Actively pursue the maximization of federal funding for  
18 juvenile delinquency and related programs;

19 (9) Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the programs  
20 and services offered by the division and recommend changes to the Governor;

21 (10) Provide a system of education in residential facilities  
22 operated by the division that conform to the guidelines established by the  
23 Department of Education and as set forth in § 9-28-205; ~~and~~

24 (11) Develop a reinvestment plan to redirect savings realized  
25 from reductions in the number of secure out-of-home placements under § 9-28-  
26 1203;

27 (12) Develop a collaborative information-sharing system among  
28 the Department of Human Services, the Administrative Office of the Courts,  
29 and other stakeholders; and

30 ~~(11)~~(13) Do and perform all other actions and exercise all other  
31 authority not inconsistent with the provisions of this subchapter as  
32 necessary to carry out the purposes and intent of this subchapter.

33  
34 SECTION 7. Arkansas Code § 9-28-203(b)(7), concerning the observation  
35 and assessment services provided by the Division of Youth Services, is  
36 amended to read as follows:

1 (7)(A) Observation and assessment services shall consist of, but  
 2 not be limited to, those activities necessary to ensure appropriate  
 3 recommendations for intervention, services, and placement of low-risk and  
 4 medium-risk juveniles.

5 (B) Observation and assessment services may be acquired by  
 6 agreements with community providers or other agencies or individuals deemed  
 7 to have the appropriate level of expertise to perform observation and  
 8 assessment or diagnosis and evaluation.

9 (C)(i) The division shall use a validated risk assessment  
 10 for all juveniles committed to the division.

11 (ii) The division shall provide individualized  
 12 treatment and placement decisions, with measureable goals and regular  
 13 reassessments, based on the results of an initial assessment and the risk  
 14 level assigned to the juvenile by the validated risk assessment used in the  
 15 court's commitment decision under § 9-27-330(a)(1)(B);

16  
 17 SECTION 8. Arkansas Code § 9-28-203(b)(8), concerning the observation  
 18 and assessment services provided by the Division of Youth Services, is  
 19 amended to read as follows:

20 (8)(A) Residential observation and assessment services shall  
 21 consist of, but not be limited to, those activities necessary to ensure  
 22 appropriate recommendations for intervention, services, and placement of  
 23 high-risk juveniles.

24 (B) Residential observation and assessment services  
 25 may be performed by or at appropriate state-operated facilities or by  
 26 agreement with appropriate agencies or individuals deemed to have the  
 27 appropriate level of expertise to perform residential observation and  
 28 assessment or diagnosis and evaluation.

29 (C)(i) The division shall use a validated risk assessment  
 30 for all juveniles committed to the division.

31 (ii) The division shall provide individualized  
 32 treatment and placement decisions, with measurable goals and regular  
 33 reassessments, based on the results of an initial assessment and the risk  
 34 level assigned to the juvenile by the validated risk assessment used in the  
 35 court's commitment decision under § 9-27-330(a)(1)(B);

36



1 SECTION 9. Arkansas Code § 9-28-203(b)(9), concerning the observation  
 2 and assessment services provided by the Division of Youth Services, is  
 3 amended to read as follows:

4 (9)(A)(i) Community-based alternative basic services shall  
 5 consist of, but not be limited to, prevention, intervention, casework,  
 6 treatment, counseling, observation and assessment, case management, and  
 7 residential services.

8 (ii) Community-based alternative basic services  
 9 shall be provided through a treatment model that is evidence-based,  
 10 developmentally appropriate, family-centered, strength-based, and trauma-  
 11 informed.

12 ~~(ii)~~(iii) Primary goals for community-based  
 13 alternative basic services shall be the prevention of youths from entering  
 14 the juvenile justice system and the provision of professional, community-  
 15 based, least-cost services to youths.

16 (B) These services may be acquired by agreements with  
 17 comprehensive community-based providers capable of delivering the required  
 18 continuum of services; and  
 19

20 SECTION 10. Arkansas Code § 9-28-203(b), concerning the powers and  
 21 duties of the Division of Youth Services, is amended to add an additional  
 22 subdivision to read as follows:

23 (11) The division shall provide monitoring and technical  
 24 assistance to review the quality and consistency of reforms to the juvenile  
 25 justice system.  
 26

27 SECTION 11. Arkansas Code § 9-28-208(b)(1)(B), concerning orders of  
 28 detention and commitment, is amended to read as follows:

29 (B) A copy of the validated risk assessment instrument;  
 30 and  
 31

32 SECTION 12. Arkansas Code § 9-28-302(g)(1), concerning security  
 33 inspections, is amended to read as follows:

34 (g)(1)(A) The Department of Human Services or the division shall  
 35 develop an internal audit and review to evaluate and monitor all facilities  
 36 of the division.

1           (B) The internal audit and review shall include without  
 2 limitation monitoring of all facilities for security concerns.

3  
 4           SECTION 13. Arkansas Code § 9-28-1202 is amended to read as follows:  
 5           9-28-1202. Powers and duties – Definitions.

6           (a) As used in this section and § 9-28-1203:

7                   (1) “Proven effective community- based alternatives” means  
 8 interventions, supports, programs, and practices that are recognized as best  
 9 practices based on rigorous evaluation and research, or are based on a clear  
 10 and well-articulated theory or conceptual framework for delinquency  
 11 prevention. These include, without limitation, community-based services that  
 12 are currently provided or have been provided and have been demonstrated to be  
 13 effective in reducing the number of secure confinement out-of-home placements  
 14 and institutional placement of youthful offenders; and

15                   (2) “Secure ~~confinement~~ out-of-home placement” means ~~confinement~~  
 16 placement in a public or private residential facility that includes  
 17 construction fixtures designed to physically restrict the movements and  
 18 activities of individuals held in lawful custody and is used for the  
 19 placement and disposition of a juvenile adjudicated to be delinquent; ~~and~~

20                   ~~(3) “Serious risk to public safety” means a high risk that a~~  
 21 ~~youth will reoffend without intervention as measured by a validated risk~~  
 22 ~~assessment.~~

23           (b) The Youth Justice Reform Board shall:

24                   (1) Assist the Division of Youth Services ~~of the Department of~~  
 25 ~~Human Services~~ in determining the method for calculating savings realized  
 26 from reduced state commitments and in educating the public about the plan  
 27 developed to reduce reliance on secure ~~confinement~~ out-of-home placements;  
 28 and

29                   ~~(2)(A)~~ Make annual reports to the division, the Governor, and  
 30 the General Assembly regarding system reform and improvements needed to  
 31 implement the goals and purposes of this subchapter.

32                   ~~(B) By no later than June 30, 2016, the board shall submit~~  
 33 ~~to the division, the Governor, and the General Assembly a plan to reduce over~~  
 34 ~~a two-year period the use of secure confinement for youths who do not present~~  
 35 ~~a serious risk to public safety.~~

36                   ~~(C) The plan to reduce secure confinement shall include~~

1 ~~measurable objectives for developing and maintaining proven effective~~  
2 ~~alternatives to secure confinement in communities statewide, as well as~~  
3 ~~strategies to achieve those objectives throughout all parts of the juvenile~~  
4 ~~justice system.~~

5 (c) To provide needed expertise, the board may seek outside technical  
6 assistance to aid its work.

7  
8 SECTION 14. Arkansas Code § 9-28-1203 is amended to read as follows:

9 ~~9-28-1203. Summary of savings~~ Savings in state costs realized from  
10 reduction in number of secure out-of-home placements.

11 (a)(1) ~~The Division of Youth Services of the Department of Human~~  
12 ~~Services, through the Youth Justice Reform Board, no later than July 1, 2016,~~  
13 ~~shall establish a method to calculate state costs saved from the avoidance of~~  
14 ~~and reductions in youthful offender commitments by each judicial district~~  
15 that are realized from a reduction in the number of secure out-of-home  
16 placements.

17 (2)(A) The division shall develop a reinvestment plan to  
18 redirect savings realized from a reduction in the number of secure out-of-  
19 home placements.

20 (B) The division shall complete the development of the  
21 reinvestment plan under subdivision (a)(2)(A) of this section by July 1,  
22 2020.

23 (C) The reinvestment plan developed by the division  
24 shall:

25 (i) Support the legislative intent and purposes of  
26 this subchapter by redirecting savings in state costs that are realized from  
27 a reduction in the number of secure out-of-home placements;

28 (ii) Describe the methods and procedures to redirect  
29 savings in state costs from a reduction in the number of secure out-of-home  
30 placements through the reallocation of resources under § 19-4-522;

31 (iii) Describe the method to calculate savings in  
32 state costs from a reduction in the number of secure out-of-home placements;

33 (iv) Describe criteria to redirect savings in state  
34 costs to implement juvenile justice reform initiatives through evidence-based  
35 programs provided by community-based providers, including without limitation  
36 requirements for:

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36

- (a) Applications;
- (b) Awards;
- (c) Performance measures; and
- (d) Monitoring processes; and

(v) Describe the methods and procedures to be used to monitor the use of redirected savings in state costs.

(b) The division shall include in its annual report:

(1) a summary of the data and method used to calculate savings generated from a reduction in commitments, in state costs that are realized from the reduction in the number of secure out-of-home placements;

(2) the total amount of savings generated from the reduction in the number of secure out-of-home placements; , and

(3) the impact of such reduction reductions in secure out-of-home placements and the redirection of savings in state costs from the reduction in the number of secure out-of-home placements on public safety and youth outcomes for youths and families; and

(4) The overall residential budget and present and future facility needs.

(c) The General Assembly shall consider the summary of savings in making appropriations to the division to allow for the support and expansion of proven effective community-based alternatives to secure ~~confinement~~ out-of-home placements for youths who otherwise would have been committed to the division.

SECTION 15. EFFECTIVE DATE. This act shall be effective on and after July 1, 2020.