

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

State of Arkansas
94th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2023

As Engrossed: S3/30/23
A Bill

SENATE BILL 469

By: Senators C. Tucker, Gilmore
By: Representative Gazaway

For An Act To Be Entitled

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

Subtitle

TO REDUCE VIOLENT CRIME IN ARKANSAS; TO ESTABLISH THE VIOLENT CRIME CLEARANCE GRANT FUND; TO PROVIDE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES WITH RESOURCES TO COMBAT VIOLENT CRIME; AND TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY.

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

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 12, Chapter 6, is amended to add an additional subchapter to read as follows:

Subchapter 8 – Violent Crime Clearance Grants

12-6-801. Legislative findings.

The General Assembly finds that:

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

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



justice to victims;

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

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

12-6-802. Grant funding.

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

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

(b) Grant awards under this subchapter:

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

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

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

(A) Improved investigatory resources;

(B) Technical assistance;

(C) Law enforcement training;

(D) Law enforcement equipment;

(E) Contractual support; and

(F) Information systems for criminal justice purposes; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

12-6-803. Additional duties.

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

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

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

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

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

(1) Hire personnel as necessary;

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

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

section.

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

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

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

(b) The fund shall consist of:

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

(2) Any other revenues authorized by law.

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

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

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

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

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

/s/C. Tucker