

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

State of Arkansas As Engrossed: H3/4/25 H3/10/25 H3/18/25 H3/20/25

95th General Assembly

A Bill

Regular Session, 2025

HOUSE BILL 1504

By: Representative S. Meeks

By: Senator M. Johnson

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO CREATE THE OFFENSE OF MANUFACTURING,
MODIFYING, SELLING, TRANSFERRING, OR OPERATING A
ROBOTIC DEVICE OR AN UNCREWED AIRCRAFT THAT IS
EQUIPPED OR MOUNTED WITH A WEAPON; AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO CREATE THE OFFENSE OF MANUFACTURING,
MODIFYING, SELLING, TRANSFERRING, OR
OPERATING A ROBOTIC DEVICE OR AN
UNCREWED AIRCRAFT THAT IS EQUIPPED OR
MOUNTED WITH A WEAPON.

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

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 5, Subtitle 6, is amended to add an additional chapter to read as follows:

Chapter 80 – Robotic Devices and Uncrewed Aircraft

5-80-101. Definitions.

As used in this chapter:

(1) "Robot competition" means an event or instructional course or meeting organized and supervised by an educational institution, summer camp, sports league, television or film entertainment company, or similar organization for which reasonable safety precautions have been taken to protect participants, event staff, and spectators;

(2) "Robotic device" means a fully or partially automated



mechanical device that:

(A) Is capable of locomotion, navigation, or movement on the ground; and

(B) Operates at a distance from its operator based on commands or in response to sensor data or a combination of commands and response to sensor data;

(3) "Uncrewed aircraft" means an aircraft, as defined by § 5-75-101, that is operated without the possibility of direct human operation or intervention from within or on the aircraft; and

(4) "Weapon means a device that is designed to threaten or cause death, incapacitation, or physical injury to a person, including without limitation:

(A) A stun gun;

(B) A firearm;

(C) A machine gun;

(D) A chemical agent or irritant;

(E) A kinetic impact projectile;

(F) A weaponized laser;

(G) An explosive device; and

(H) A flame thrower.

5-80-102. Unlawful acts.

(a)(1) It is unlawful for a person knowingly to manufacture, modify, sell, transfer, or operate a robotic device equipped or mounted with a weapon or an uncrewed aircraft equipped or mounted with a weapon.

(2) It is unlawful for a person to knowingly modify the programming of a robotic device for the purpose of harming a human being or property.

(b) A person who commits an offense under this section is guilty of a violation and upon conviction shall be fined in a sum of not less than five thousand dollars (\$5,000) nor more than twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000).

(c) A person who knowingly uses or directs a robotic device equipped or mounted with a weapon or an uncrewed aircraft equipped or mounted with a weapon to commit or facilitate the commission of another offense shall be held criminally liable for that offense as if the person had personally

committed the act.

(d) This section does not sanction, authorize, prohibit, or regulate the procurement or operation of a robotic device by a governmental entity.

5-80-103. Exceptions.

(a) This chapter shall not apply to:

(1) A defense industrial company that is under contract with the United States Department of Defense with respect to robotic devices and uncrewed aircraft being developed or produced under that contract;

(2) A defense industrial company that obtains a waiver from the Attorney General regarding robotic devices and uncrewed aircraft;

(3) A robotics company that obtains a waiver from the Attorney General for the purpose of testing anti-weaponization technologies with respect to robotic devices and uncrewed aircraft;

(4)(A) A person operating a nonautonomous robotic device that is designed and built specifically for the purpose of participating in a robot competition and equipped with weapons typically used for the purpose of participating in a robot competition.

(B) Subdivision (a)(4)(A) of this section does not allow the use of a firearm on a robotic device used in a robot competition; or

(5) A person operating a robotic device equipped with a blank-firing weapon or attachments to a blank-firing weapon when the person is authorized or permitted to acquire and possess a blank-firing weapon or attachments to a blank-firing weapon for use solely as a prop in a motion picture, television program, digital video production, or an entertainment event.

(b) It shall not be a violation of this chapter for an individual employed by the United States Government, the state, a county or municipal law enforcement agency, or an accredited bomb squad who is acting in the public performance of his or her duties to operate a robotic device that is equipped or mounted with a weapon or an uncrewed aircraft that is equipped or mounted with a weapon if the individual is doing so for the purpose of the following without limitation:

(1) Disposing of explosives or suspected explosives;

(2) Developing, evaluating, testing, providing education on, or providing training on a robotic device or an uncrewed aircraft for the

purpose of disposing of explosives or suspected explosives;

(3) Destroying property in cases where there is an imminent, deadly threat to human life; or

(4) Using physical force in compliance with § 5-2-610.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code Title 16, Chapter 118 is amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

16-118-119. Civil action for unlawful use of robotic device or uncrewed aircraft.

(a) The Attorney General may bring an action against a person who is suspected of violating this chapter.

(b)(1) A person whose property or person is injured by reason of a violation of § 5-80-101 et seq. or rules promulgated pursuant to § 5-80-101 et seq. may sue for the injury and recover for any damages sustained and the costs of the suit.

(2) A civil action brought under subdivision (b)(1) of this section shall be brought against the government agency alleged to have violated this chapter, or, in the case of an individual, to the person alleged to have violated this chapter.

(3) In a civil action in which the plaintiff prevails, a court may award:

(A) Liquidated damages of not less than five hundred dollars (\$500) nor more than two thousand dollars (\$2,000);

(B) Punitive damages; or

(C) Any other relief that the court deems appropriate, including without limitation injunctive relief.

(4) In a civil action in which the plaintiff prevails, a court shall award reasonable attorney's fees and costs.

(5) A person may not bring a civil action against a law enforcement officer or a member of an accredited bomb squad under subsection (b) of this section for using a robotic device or an uncrewed aircraft in good faith and in the line of duty.

/s/S. Meeks