CHAPTER 19

Judge William R. Byars Youthful Offender Act

**SECTION 24-19-5. Short title.**

This chapter may be cited as the "Judge William R. Byars Youthful Offender Act".

HISTORY: 2016 Act No. 164 (S.1090), § 1, eff April 29, 2016.

**SECTION 24-19-10. Definitions.**

As used herein:

(a) "Department" means the Department of Corrections.

(b) "Division" means the Youthful Offender Division.

(c) "Director" means the Director of the Department of Corrections.

(d) "Youthful offender" means an offender who is:

(i) under seventeen years of age and has been bound over for proper criminal proceedings to the court of general sessions pursuant to Section 63-19-1210, for allegedly committing an offense that is not a violent crime, as defined in Section 16-1-60, and that is a misdemeanor, a Class D, Class E, or Class F felony, as defined in Section 16-1-20, or a felony which provides for a maximum term of imprisonment of fifteen years or less;

(ii) seventeen but less than twenty-five years of age at the time of conviction for an offense that is not a violent crime, as defined in Section 16-1-60, and that is a misdemeanor, a Class D, Class E, or Class F felony, or a felony which provides for a maximum term of imprisonment of fifteen years or less;

(iii) under seventeen years of age and has been bound over for proper criminal proceedings to the court of general sessions pursuant to Section 63-19-1210, for allegedly committing burglary in the second degree (Section 16-11-312). If the offender committed burglary in the second degree pursuant to Section 16-11-312(B), the offender must receive and serve a minimum sentence of at least three years, no part of which may be suspended, and the person is not eligible for conditional release until the person has served the three-year minimum sentence;

(iv) seventeen but less than twenty-one years of age at the time of conviction for burglary in the second degree (Section 16-11-312). If the offender committed burglary in the second degree pursuant to Section 16-11-312(B), the offender must receive and serve a minimum sentence of at least three years, no part of which may be suspended, and the person is not eligible for conditional release until the person has served the three-year minimum sentence;

(v) under seventeen years of age and has been bound over for proper criminal proceedings to the court of general sessions pursuant to Section 63-19-1210 for allegedly committing criminal sexual conduct with a minor in the third degree, pursuant to Section 16-3-655(C), and the alleged offense involved consensual sexual conduct with a person who was at least fourteen years of age at the time of the act; or

(vi) seventeen but less than twenty-five years of age at the time of conviction for committing criminal sexual conduct with a minor in the third degree, pursuant to Section 16-3-655(C), and the conviction resulted from consensual sexual conduct, provided the offender was eighteen years of age or less at the time of the act and the other person involved was at least fourteen years of age at the time of the act.

(e) "Treatment" means corrective and preventive guidance and training designed to protect the public by correcting the antisocial tendencies of youthful offenders; this may also include vocational and other training considered appropriate and necessary by the division.

(f) "Conviction" means a judgment in a verdict or finding of guilty, plea of guilty, or plea of nolo contendere to a criminal charge where the imprisonment is at least one year, but excluding all offenses in which the maximum punishment provided by law is death or life imprisonment.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 55-392; 1968 (55) 3031; 1993 Act No. 181, § 449; 1995 Act No. 7, Part I, § 29; 1996 Act No. 441, § 4; 2003 Act No. 25, § 1; 2010 Act No. 273, § 31, eff June 2, 2010; 2012 Act No. 255, § 10, eff June 18, 2012; 2016 Act No. 154 (H.3545), § 4, eff April 21, 2016.

**SECTION 24-19-20. Youthful Offender Division created in Department of Corrections; staff.**

There is hereby created within the Department of Corrections a Youthful Offender Division. The division shall be staffed by appointees and designees of the Director of the Department of Corrections. The staff members shall be delegated such administrative duties and responsibilities as may be required to carry out the purpose of this chapter.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 55-391; 1968 (55) 3031; 1993 Act No. 181, § 450.

**SECTION 24-19-30. Duties of Division.**

The division shall consider problems of treatment and correction; shall consult with and make recommendations to the director with respect to general treatment and correction policies and procedures for committed youthful offenders, and recommend orders to direct the release of youthful offenders conditionally under supervision and the unconditional discharge of youthful offenders; and take such further action and recommend such other orders to the director as may be necessary or proper to carry out the purpose of this chapter.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 55-393; 1968 (55) 3031; 1993 Act No. 181, § 451.

**SECTION 24-19-40. Adoption of rules.**

The division shall adopt such rules as the South Carolina Department of Corrections approves and promulgate them as they apply directly or indirectly to its procedure.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 55-394; 1968 (55) 3031; 1993 Act No. 181, § 452.

**SECTION 24-19-50. Powers of courts upon conviction of youthful offenders.**

In the event of a conviction of a youthful offender the court may:

(1) suspend the sentence and place the youthful offender on probation;

(2) release the youthful offender to the custody of the division before sentencing for an observation and evaluation period of not more than sixty days. The observation and evaluation must be conducted by the Reception and Evaluation Center operating under joint agreement between the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Department of Corrections and the findings and recommendations for sentencing must be returned with the youthful offender to the court for sentencing;

(3) if the offender is under the age of twenty-one, without his consent, sentence the youthful offender indefinitely to the custody of the department for treatment and supervision pursuant to this chapter until discharged by the division, the period of custody not to exceed six years. If the offender is twenty-one years of age but less than twenty-five years of age, he may be sentenced in accordance with this item if he consents in writing;

(4) if the court finds that the youthful offender will not derive benefit from treatment, may sentence the youthful offender under any other applicable penalty provision. The youthful offender must be placed in the custody of the department;

(5) not sentence a youthful offender more than once under this chapter.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 55-395; 1968 (55) 3031; 1996 Act No. 441, § 5.

**SECTION 24-19-60. Institutions for treatment of youthful offenders.**

Youthful offenders shall undergo treatment in minimum security institutions, including training schools, hospitals, farms, forestry and other camps, including vocational training facilities and other institutions and agencies that will provide the essential varieties of treatment.

The director, as far as is advisable and necessary, shall designate, set aside and adopt institutions and agencies under the control of the department and the division for the purpose of carrying out the objectives of this chapter. The director may further maintain a cooperative program with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation involving the operation of reception and evaluation centers, utilizing funds and staffing services of the department which are appropriate for matching with Federal Vocational Rehabilitation funds.

Insofar as practical and to the greatest degree possible, such institutions, facilities and agencies shall be used only for the treatment of committed youthful offenders, and such youthful offenders shall be segregated from other offenders, and classes of committed youthful offenders shall be segregated according to their needs for treatment.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 55-396; 1968 (55) 3031; 1993 Act No. 181, § 453.

**SECTION 24-19-70. Facilities for Division provided by Department.**

Facilities for the Division are to be provided from facilities of the Department.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 55-397; 1968 (55) 3031.

**SECTION 24-19-80. Reception and evaluation centers.**

The director may establish agreements with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation for the operation of reception and evaluation centers. The reception and evaluation centers shall make a complete study of each committed youthful offender, including a mental and physical examination, to ascertain his personal traits, his capabilities, pertinent circumstances of his school, family life, any previous delinquency or criminal experience, and any mental or physical defect or other factor contributing to his delinquency. In the absence of exceptional circumstances, such study shall be completed within a period of thirty days. The reception and evaluation center shall forward to the director and to the division a report of its findings with respect to the youthful offender and its recommendations as to his treatment. At least one member of the division shall, as soon as practicable after commitment, interview the youthful offender, review all reports concerning him and make such recommendations to the director and to the division as may be indicated.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 55-398; 1968 (55) 3031; 1993 Act No. 181, § 454.

**SECTION 24-19-90. Reports and recommendations, director's options.**

On receipt of the report and recommendations from the Reception and Evaluation Center and from the members of the division, the director may:

(a) recommend to the division that the committed youthful offender be released conditionally under supervision; or

(b) allocate and direct the transfer of the committed youthful offender to an agency or institution for treatment; or

(c) order the committed youthful offender confined and afforded treatment under such conditions as he believes best designed for the protection of the public.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 55-399; 1968 (55) 3031; 1993 Act No. 181, § 455.

**SECTION 24-19-100. Transfer of youthful offenders.**

The director may transfer at any time a committed youthful offender from one agency or institution to any other agency or institution.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 55-400; 1968 (55) 3031; 1993 Act No. 181, § 456.

**SECTION 24-19-110. Conditional release of youthful offenders; search and seizure; fee; victim notification.**

(A) The division may at any time after reasonable notice to the director release conditionally under supervision a committed youthful offender. Before a youthful offender may be conditionally released, the youthful offender must agree in writing to be subject to search or seizure, without a search warrant, with or without cause, of the youthful offender's person, any vehicle the youthful offender owns or is driving, and any of the youthful offender's possessions by:

(1) his supervisory agent;

(2) any probation agent employed by the Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services; or

(3) any other law enforcement officer. A youthful offender must not be conditionally released by the division if he fails to comply with this provision.

However, a youthful offender who was convicted of or pled guilty or nolo contendere to a Class C misdemeanor or an unclassified misdemeanor that carries a term of imprisonment of not more than one year may not be required to agree to be subject to search or seizure, without a search warrant, with or without cause, of the youthful offender's person, any vehicle the youthful offender owns or is driving, or any of the youthful offender's possessions. When, in the judgment of the director, a committed youthful offender should be released conditionally under supervision, he shall so report and recommend to the division. The conditions of release must include the requirement that the youthful offender must permit the search or seizure, without a search warrant, with or without cause, of the youthful offender's person, any vehicle the youthful offender owns or is driving, and any of the youthful offender's possessions by:

(1) his supervisory agent;

(2) any probation agent employed by the Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services; or

(3) any other law enforcement officer.

However, the conditions of release of a youthful offender who was convicted of or pled guilty or nolo contendere to a Class C misdemeanor or an unclassified misdemeanor that carries a term of imprisonment of not more than one year may not include the requirement that the youthful offender agree to be subject to search or seizure, without a search warrant, with or without cause, of the youthful offender's person, any vehicle the youthful offender owns or is driving, or any of the youthful offender's possessions.

By enacting this provision, the General Assembly intends to provide law enforcement with a means of reducing recidivism and does not authorize law enforcement officers to conduct searches for the sole purpose of harassment. Immediately before each search or seizure conducted pursuant to this section, the law enforcement officer seeking to conduct the search or seizure must verify with the Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services or by any other means available to the officer that the individual upon whom the search or seizure will be conducted is currently on parole or probation or that the individual is currently subject to the provisions of his conditional release. A law enforcement officer conducting a search or seizure without a warrant pursuant to this section shall report to the law enforcement agency that employs him all of these searches or seizures, which shall include the name, address, age, gender, and race or ethnicity of the person that is the subject of the search or seizure. The law enforcement agency shall submit this information at the end of each month to the Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services for review of abuse. A finding of abuse of the use of searches or seizures without a search warrant must be reported by the Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services to the State Law Enforcement Division for investigation. If the law enforcement officer fails to report each search or seizure pursuant to this subsection, he is subject to discipline pursuant to the employing agency's policies and procedures.

(B) The division may regularly assess a reasonable fee to be paid by the youthful offender who is on conditional release to offset the cost of his supervision.

(C) The division may discharge a committed youthful offender unconditionally at the expiration of one year from the date of conditional release.

(D) The division must notify a victim registered pursuant to Article 15, Chapter 3, Title 16 before conditionally releasing or unconditionally discharging a youthful offender. The division has the authority to deny conditional release and unconditional discharge based upon information received from the victim as to the suitability of the release.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 55-400.1; 1968 (55) 3031; 1980 Act No. 634; 1993 Act No. 181, § 457; 2010 Act No. 151, § 5, eff April 28, 2010; 2010 Act No. 273, § 33, eff June 2, 2010.

**SECTION 24-19-120. Release of youthful offenders.**

(A) A youthful offender shall be released conditionally under supervision on or before the expiration of four years from the date of his conviction and shall be discharged unconditionally on or before six years from the date of his conviction.

(B) The division must notify a victim registered pursuant to Article 15, Chapter 3, Title 16 before conditionally releasing or unconditionally discharging a youthful offender.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 55-400.2; 1968 (55) 3031; 2010 Act No. 273, § 34, eff June 2, 2010.

**SECTION 24-19-130. Orders, revocation or modification by the Division.**

The Division may revoke or modify any of its previous orders respecting a committed youthful offender except an order of unconditional discharge.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 55-400.3; 1968 (55) 3031.

**SECTION 24-19-140. Supervisory agents.**

Committed youthful offenders permitted to remain at liberty under supervision or conditionally released shall be under the supervision of supervisory agents appointed by the Division. The Division is authorized to encourage the formation of voluntary organizations composed of members who will serve without compensation as voluntary supervisory agents and sponsors. The powers and duties of voluntary supervisory agents and sponsors shall be limited and defined by regulations adopted by the Division.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 55-400.4; 1968 (55) 3031.

**SECTION 24-19-150. Further treatment; return to custody.**

If, at any time before the unconditional discharge of a committed youthful offender, the Division is of the opinion that such youthful offender will be benefited by further treatment in an institution or other facility any member of the Division may direct his return to custody or if necessary may issue a warrant for the apprehension and return to custody of such youthful offender and cause such warrant to be executed by an appointed supervisory agent, or any policeman. Upon return to custody, such youthful offender shall be given an opportunity to appear before the Division or a member thereof. The Division may then or at its discretion revoke the order of conditional release.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 55-400.5; 1968 (55) 3031.

**SECTION 24-19-160. Courts' powers not affected; jurisdiction of Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services.**

Nothing in this chapter limits or affects the power of a court to suspend the imposition or execution of a sentence and place a youthful offender on probation.

Nothing in this chapter may be construed to amend, repeal, or affect the jurisdiction of the Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services or the Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services Board. For purposes of community supervision or parole, a sentence pursuant to Section 24-19-50(e) shall be considered a sentence for six years.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 55-400.6; 1968 (55) 3031; 1988 Act No. 480, § 17; 1993 Act No. 181, § 458; 1995 Act No. 83, § 37.