

Fiscal Note



Fiscal Services Division

<u>HF 625</u> – Mandatory Minimum Sentences, Possession of Firearms by Felons (LSB1356HV.1) Staff Contact: Molly Kilker (515.725.1286) <u>molly.kilker@legis.iowa.gov</u> Fiscal Note Version – Revised for new data

Description

<u>House File 625</u> modifies the penalties for and applies a mandatory minimum sentence to the control, possession, receipt, or transportation of a firearm or offensive weapon by a felon. The penalty is increased from a Class D felony to the following:

- For a first offense, a Class D felony with a mandatory minimum sentence of two years.
- For a second offense, a Class D felony with a mandatory minimum sentence of four years.
- For a third offense, a Class C felony with a mandatory minimum sentence of seven years.
- For a fourth or subsequent offense, a Class C felony with a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years.

The Bill provides that the court may not defer judgment or sentencing, or suspend the execution of a mandatory minimum sentence, for this offense.

Background

Under Iowa Code section <u>724.26(1)</u>, a person who is convicted of a felony in a State or federal court, or who is adjudicated delinquent based on conduct that would constitute a felony if committed by an adult, and who knowingly has under the person's dominion and control or possession, receives, or transports or causes to be transported a firearm or offensive weapon is guilty of a Class D felony.

A Class D felony is punishable by confinement of up to five years and a fine of at least \$1,025 but not more than \$10,245. A Class C felony is punishable by confinement of up to 10 years and a fine of at least \$1,370 but not more than \$13,660.

Assumptions

- The following will not change over the projection period: charge, conviction, and sentencing patterns and trends; revocation rates; plea bargaining; and other criminal justice system policies and practices.
- A lag effect of six months is assumed from the effective date of this Bill to the date of first entry of affected offenders into the correctional system.
- Marginal costs for county jails cannot be estimated due to a lack of data. For purposes of this analysis, the marginal cost for county jails is assumed to be \$50 per day.
- Admissions include only individuals admitted to Department of Corrections (DOC) supervision whose most serious offense is the control, possession, receipt, or transportation of a firearm or offensive weapon by a felon.
- The distribution of admissions to DOC supervision between a first, second, third, and fourth or subsequent offense cannot be estimated.
- The marginal cost per day in prison is \$24.94. The marginal cost per day on probation and parole is \$7.67.

Correctional Impact

In FY 2023, there were 62 individuals admitted to prison and 155 individuals admitted to Community-Based Corrections (CBC) under Iowa Code section 724.26(1). Under the Bill, all 217 individuals would be admitted to prison and no individuals would be admitted to CBC. The distribution of these admissions across the offense categories created in the Bill cannot be estimated. The estimated length of stay (LOS) for individuals admitted to prison for this offense would increase from approximately 13.0 months to a minimum of 24.0 to 120.0 months, depending on whether the individual was admitted for a first, second, third, or fourth or subsequent offense. **Figure 1** shows the minimum LOS for each of these offense categories. Refer to the Legislative Services Agency (LSA) memo addressed to the General Assembly, Cost Estimates Used for Correctional Impact Statements, dated January 16, 2023, for information related to the correctional system.

Offense Category	LOS (Months)		
1st Offense	24		
2nd Offense	48		
3rd Offense	84		

120

4th or Subsequent Offense

Figure 1 — Minimum LOS Under HF 625

Minority Impact

House File 625 increases the penalty for the control, possession, receipt, or transportation of a firearm or offensive weapon by a felon and may disproportionately impact Black individuals if trends remain constant. Of the 479 convictions under lowa Code section 724.26(1) in FY 2023, 41.1% were White, 46.6% were Black, and 4.1% were other races. Iowa's population is 89.8% White, 4.4% Black, and 5.8% other races. Refer to the LSA memo addressed to the General Assembly, *Minority Impact Statement*, dated January 16, 2024, for information related to minorities in the criminal justice system.

Fiscal Impact

House File 625 is estimated to increase costs to the DOC by at least \$2.1 million for each group of individuals annually admitted to DOC supervision for an offense under lowa Code section 724.26(1). This cost is incurred across the entire LOS. Because the distribution of admissions between a first, second, third, and fourth or subsequent offense cannot be estimated, **Figure 2** demonstrates the cost to the DOC if all individuals were admitted on a first offense. **Figure 2** represents the cost of all individuals admitted to DOC supervision for this offense in one year. This cost would recur for each annual group of admissions.

Figure 2 — Minimum Cost Increase to DOC Under HF 625

Supervision	Annual	Cost Per	LOS					
Status	Admissions	Day	(Days)	Total Cost				
Current Penalties								
Prison	62	\$ 24.94	395.2	\$	611,090			
Parole Admits	35	7.67	477.3		128,126			
Probation Admits	120	7.67	1,200.8		1,105,216			
Total	217			\$	1,844,432			
Penalties Under HF 625								
Prison (1st Offense)	217	\$ 24.94	729.6	\$	3,948,581			
Total	217			\$	3,948,581			

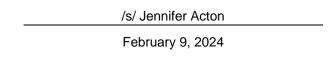
The DOC expects that individuals will be admitted for crimes under all new offense categories. As a result, the actual cost to the DOC is expected to be higher, but the extent of these costs cannot be estimated. The cost per individual admitted for a second, third, or fourth or subsequent offense will be higher than the cost per individual admitted for a first offense due to higher mandatory minimum sentences, as shown in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3 — Total Prison Supervision Cost Per Person Under HF 625

	Cost Per	LOS	Total Cost
Offense Catergory	Day	(Days)	Per Person
1st Offense	\$ 24.94	730	\$ 18,196
2nd Offense	24.94	1,459	36,395
3rd Offense	24.94	2,554	63,687
4th or Subsequent Offense	24.94	3,648	90,981

Sources

Department of Corrections Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning, Department of Management Legislative Services Agency



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The fiscal note for this Bill was prepared pursuant to <u>Joint Rule 17</u> and the Iowa Code. Data used in developing this fiscal note is available from the Fiscal Services Division of the Legislative Services Agency upon request.