

1 HB553  
2 149696-1  
3 By Representative Colston (N & P)  
4 RFD: Local Legislation  
5 First Read: 04-APR-13

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9 A BILL  
10 TO BE ENTITLED  
11 AN ACT  
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13 Relating to Wilcox County; authorizing the sheriff  
14 to sell certain abandoned, stolen, and unclaimed property at  
15 public auction; providing for such an auction and for the  
16 disposition of proceeds; and authorizing the sheriff to sell  
17 or destroy certain abandoned, stolen, or unclaimed firearms.  
18 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

19 Section 1. (a) The Sheriff of Wilcox County shall  
20 keep and maintain a permanent record of all abandoned and  
21 stolen personal property recovered by the sheriff's office.  
22 These records shall state the description of the property, the  
23 date of recovery of the property, and the serial or other  
24 identifying number of the property. The records shall be open  
25 to public inspection at all reasonable times.

1 (b) All abandoned or stolen property recovered by  
2 the sheriff's office shall be stored in a suitable place to  
3 protect the property from deterioration.

4 Section 2. If the abandoned or stolen personal  
5 property is of a perishable nature and reasonable attempts to  
6 locate and identify the owner of the property are not  
7 successful, the property may be sold at once without notice.  
8 The sheriff shall attempt to obtain the best possible price  
9 for the property. The proceeds of such a sale shall be held in  
10 a separate account for a period of six months for the owner.  
11 During this period, the proceeds will be paid to the owner  
12 upon demand, less any cost of recovery, storage, maintenance,  
13 and sale. If the proceeds are not claimed within six months,  
14 after deducting and paying all expenses incurred in the  
15 recovery, storage, maintenance, and sale of the property, the  
16 net funds shall be paid to the office of the Sheriff of Wilcox  
17 County.

18 Section 3. (a) The sheriff shall keep and maintain a  
19 permanent record of all abandoned or stolen firearms, not  
20 subject to disposition by general law. The records shall state  
21 the description of the firearm, the date of recovery of the  
22 firearm, and the serial or other identifying number, if any,  
23 of the firearm. Firearm as used in this act shall have the  
24 same meaning as defined in Section 13A-8-1 of the Code of  
25 Alabama 1975.

26 (b) Unless otherwise provided by law, the sheriff  
27 may sell or destroy these firearms if the owner of the firearm

1 does not claim the firearm within six months of the date the  
2 sheriff obtained it.

3 (c) The sheriff may sell the firearms only to gun  
4 dealers who have held an active business license in this state  
5 for at least one year immediately prior to the date of the  
6 sale. The sheriff shall establish a procedure to notify gun  
7 dealers of a sale. A firearm shall be sold to the gun dealer  
8 submitting the highest sealed bid. All sales shall be on a  
9 cash basis. The proceeds of the sale, after deducting and  
10 paying all expenses incurred in the recovery, maintenance, and  
11 sale of the firearms shall be paid to the office of the  
12 Sheriff of Wilcox County.

13 (d) The sheriff may establish a procedure to destroy  
14 firearms and may expend necessary sheriff's office funds for  
15 that purpose.

16 (e) Any firearm held by the sheriff on the effective  
17 date of this act shall be subject to this section, but shall  
18 be held for at least six months after the effective date of  
19 this act.

20 Section 4. (a) As often as necessary, the sheriff  
21 shall sell at public auction to the highest bidder all  
22 abandoned or stolen personal property, other than firearms,  
23 which has been recovered by the sheriff's office and has  
24 remained unclaimed by the rightful owner for a six-month  
25 period.

26 (b) Prior to the sale, notice shall be given by  
27 publication in a newspaper of general circulation in Wilcox

1 County once a week for two successive weeks or by posting  
2 notice in a conspicuous place at the Wilcox County Courthouse  
3 and by posting on the sheriff's office website for a period of  
4 at least 20 days. The notice shall contain the place, date,  
5 and time of each auction and a general description of items of  
6 personal property to be sold at the auction. If publication of  
7 notice is made in the newspaper, the first notice shall run at  
8 least 20 days prior to the auction.

9 Section 5. The owner of any abandoned or stolen  
10 personal property recovered by the Wilcox County Sheriff's  
11 Office, including firearms, may claim the property at any time  
12 prior to its sale by submitting sufficient proof of ownership  
13 as determined by the sheriff. The sheriff may require the  
14 owner to pay a pro rata share of the costs, if any, of  
15 publication of notice of the sale of the property.

16 Section 6. If property is sold at public auction, as  
17 provided in this act, a notation in the storage record shall  
18 be made of the sale and of the amount received for the  
19 property. The person making the sale may reject any and all  
20 bids if the amount bid is unreasonably low and may continue  
21 the sale, from time to time, if no bidders are present.

22 Section 7. The proceeds from the sale of property at  
23 an auction conducted under the authority of this act, after  
24 deducting and paying all expenses incurred in the recovery,  
25 storage, maintenance, and sale of property, shall be paid to  
26 the office of the Sheriff of Wilcox County and shall be used  
27 solely for law enforcement purposes. The receipts and

1 expenditures of funds shall be audited by the Examiners of  
2 Public Accounts.

3 Section 8. This act shall become effective on the  
4 first day of the third month following its passage and  
5 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.