

S.148

An act relating to criminal investigation records and the Vermont Public Records Act

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 1 V.S.A. § 317 is amended to read:

§ 317. DEFINITIONS; PUBLIC AGENCY; PUBLIC RECORDS AND
DOCUMENTS

* * *

(c) The following public records are exempt from public inspection and copying:

* * *

(5)(A) records dealing with the detection and investigation of crime, ~~including those maintained on any individual or compiled in the course of a criminal or disciplinary investigation by any police or professional licensing agency; but only to the extent that the production of such records:~~

(i) could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings;

(ii) would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication;

(iii) could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;

(iv) could reasonably be expected to disclose the identity of a confidential source, including a state, local, or foreign agency or authority or any private institution which furnished information on a confidential basis, and, in the case of a record or information compiled by criminal law enforcement authority in the course of a criminal investigation or by an agency conducting a lawful national security intelligence investigation, information furnished by a confidential source;

(v) would disclose techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or would disclose guidelines for law enforcement investigations or prosecution if such disclosure could reasonably be expected to risk circumvention of the law;

(vi) could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or physical safety of any individual;

(B) Notwithstanding subdivision (A) of this subdivision (5), a public entity shall not reveal information that could be used to facilitate the commission of a crime or the name of a private individual who is a witness to or victim of a crime, unless withholding the name or information would conceal government wrongdoing;

(C) ~~provided, however, that~~ Notwithstanding subdivision (A) of this subdivision (5), records relating to management and direction of a law enforcement agency; records reflecting the initial arrest of a person, including

any ticket, citation, or complaint issued for a traffic violation, as that term is defined in 23 V.S.A. § 2302; and records reflecting the charge of a person shall be public;

(D) It is the intent of the General Assembly that in construing subdivision (A) of this subdivision (5), the courts of this State will be guided by the construction of similar terms contained in 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(7) (Freedom of Information Act) by the courts of the United States;

* * *

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.