

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Judiciary to which was referred Senate Bill No. 134  
3 entitled “An act relating to court diversion and pretrial services” respectfully  
4 reports that it has considered the same and recommends that the House propose  
5 to the Senate that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting  
6 clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 Sec. 1. 3 V.S.A. § 164 is amended to read:

8 § 164. ADULT COURT DIVERSION ~~PROJECT~~ PROGRAM

9 (a) The Attorney General shall develop and administer an adult court  
10 diversion ~~project program~~ in all counties. The ~~project program~~ shall be  
11 operated through the juvenile diversion project ~~and shall be designed to assist~~  
12 ~~adults who have been charged with a first or second misdemeanor or a first~~  
13 ~~nonviolent felony~~. The Attorney General shall adopt only such rules as are  
14 necessary to establish an adult court diversion ~~project program~~ for adults, in  
15 compliance with this section.

16 (b) The program shall be designed for two purposes:

17 (1) To assist adults who have been charged with a first or a second  
18 misdemeanor or a first nonviolent felony.

19 (2) To assist adults with substance abuse or mental health treatment  
20 needs regardless of the person’s prior criminal history record. Programming  
21 for these persons is intended to support access to appropriate treatment or other

1 resources with the aim of improving the person's health and reducing future  
2 adverse involvement in the justice system. A person charged with a felony  
3 offense that is a listed crime pursuant to 13 V.S.A. § 5301 shall not be eligible  
4 under this section.

5 (c) ~~The adult court diversion project administered by the Attorney General~~  
6 program shall encourage the development of diversion projects programs in  
7 local communities through grants of financial assistance to municipalities,  
8 private groups or other local organizations. The Attorney General may require  
9 local financial contributions as a condition of receipt of project program grants.

10 (d) The Office of the Attorney General shall develop program outcomes  
11 following the designated State of Vermont performance accountability  
12 framework and, in consultation with the Department of State's Attorneys and  
13 Sheriffs, the Office of the Defender General, the Center for Crime Victim  
14 Services, and the Judiciary, report annually on or before December 1 to the  
15 General Assembly on services provided and outcome indicators.

16 (e) All adult court diversion ~~projects programs~~ receiving financial  
17 assistance from the Attorney General shall adhere to the following provisions:

18 (1) The diversion ~~project program~~ shall accept only persons against  
19 whom charges have been filed and the court has found probable cause, but are  
20 not yet adjudicated. The prosecuting attorney may refer a person to diversion  
21 either before or after arraignment and shall notify in writing the diversion

1 program and the court of his or her intention to refer the person to diversion.

2 ~~The court may also refer a person to diversion at or after arraignment and shall~~

3 ~~notify in writing the diversion program of its intention to refer the person to~~

4 ~~diversion.~~ The prosecutor shall provide a person with the opportunity to

5 participate in the Court Diversion Program unless the prosecutor states on the

6 record why a referral to the Program would not serve the ends of justice If the

7 prosecuting attorney ~~or the court~~ refers a case to diversion, the prosecuting

8 attorney may release information to the victim upon a showing of legitimate

9 need and subject to an appropriate protective agreement defining the purpose

10 for which the information is being released and in all other respects

11 maintaining the confidentiality of the information; otherwise files held by the

12 court, the prosecuting attorney, and the law enforcement agency related to the

13 charges shall be confidential and shall remain confidential unless:

14 (A) the Board declines to accept the case;

15 (B) the person declines to participate in diversion;

16 (C) the Board accepts the case, but the person does not successfully  
17 complete diversion;

18 (D) the prosecuting attorney recalls the referral to diversion.

19 (2) Alleged offenders shall be informed of their right to the advice and

20 assistance of private counsel or the public defender at all stages of the

21 diversion process, including the initial decision to participate, and the decision

1 to accept the adult diversion contract, so that the candidate may give informed  
2 consent.

3 (3) The participant shall be informed that his or her selection of the adult  
4 diversion contract is voluntary.

5 (4) Each State's Attorney, in cooperation with the Office of the Attorney  
6 General and the adult court diversion project program, shall develop clear  
7 criteria for deciding what types of offenses and offenders will be eligible for  
8 diversion; however, the State's Attorney shall retain final discretion over the  
9 referral of each case for diversion.

10 (5) All information gathered in the course of the adult diversion process  
11 shall be held strictly confidential and shall not be released without the  
12 participant's prior consent (except that research and reports that do not require  
13 or establish the identity of individual participants are allowed).

14 (6) Information related to the present offense that is divulged during the  
15 adult diversion program shall not be used ~~in the prosecutor's case~~ against the  
16 person in the person's criminal or juvenile case for any purpose, including  
17 impeachment or cross-examination. However, the fact of participation and  
18 success, or reasons for failure may become part of the prosecutor's records.

19 (7)(A) The adult court diversion ~~project~~ program shall maintain  
20 sufficient records so that the reasons for success or failure of the program in  
21 particular cases and overall can be investigated by program staff. These

1 records shall include a centralized statewide filing system that will include the  
2 following information about individuals who have successfully completed an  
3 adult court diversion program:

- 4 (i) name and date of birth;
- 5 (ii) offense charged and date of offense;
- 6 (iii) place of residence;
- 7 (iv) county where diversion process took place; and
- 8 (v) date of completion of diversion process.

9 (B) These records shall not be available to anyone other than the  
10 participant and his or her attorney, State's Attorneys, the Attorney General and  
11 directors of adult court diversion projects.

12 (8) Adult court diversion ~~projects~~ programs shall be set up to respect the  
13 rights of participants.

14 (9) Each participant shall pay a fee to the local adult court diversion  
15 project. The amount of the fee shall be determined by project officers or  
16 employees based upon the financial capabilities of the participant. The fee  
17 shall not exceed \$300.00. The fee shall be a debt due from the participant, and  
18 payment of such shall be required for successful completion of the program.  
19 Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 502(a), fees collected under this subdivision shall  
20 be retained and used solely for the purpose of the court diversion program.

1       ~~(f)~~(f) The Attorney General is authorized to accept grants and gifts for the  
2 purposes of this section, such acceptance being pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5.

3       ~~(e)~~(g) Within 30 days of the two-year anniversary of a successful  
4 completion of adult diversion, the court shall provide notice to all parties of  
5 record of the court's intention to order the sealing of all court files and records,  
6 law enforcement records other than entries in the adult court diversion  
7 project's centralized filing system, fingerprints, and photographs applicable to  
8 the proceeding. The court shall give the State's Attorney an opportunity for a  
9 hearing to contest the sealing of the records. The court shall seal the records if  
10 it finds:

11           (1) two years have elapsed since the successful completion of the adult  
12 diversion program by the participant and the dismissal of the case by the  
13 State's Attorney; and

14           (2) the participant has not been convicted of a subsequent felony or  
15 misdemeanor during the two-year period, and no proceedings are pending  
16 seeking such conviction; and

17           (3) rehabilitation of the participant has been attained to the satisfaction  
18 of the court.

19       ~~(f)~~(h) Upon the entry of an order sealing such files and records under this  
20 section, the proceedings in the matter under this section shall be considered  
21 never to have occurred, all index references thereto shall be deleted, and the

1 participant, the court, and law enforcement officers and departments shall reply  
2 to any request for information that no record exists with respect to such  
3 participant inquiry in any matter. Copies of the order shall be sent to each  
4 agency or official named therein.

5 ~~(g)~~(i) Inspection of the files and records included in the order may  
6 thereafter be permitted by the court only upon petition by the participant who  
7 is the subject of such records, and only to those persons named therein.

8 ~~(h)~~(j) The process of automatically sealing records as provided in this  
9 section shall only apply to those persons who completed diversion on or after  
10 July 1, 2002. Any person who completed diversion prior to July 1, 2002 must  
11 apply to the court to have his or her records sealed. Sealing shall occur if the  
12 requirements of subsection ~~(e)~~(g) of this section are met.

13 ~~(i)~~(k) Subject to the approval of the Attorney General, the Vermont  
14 Association of Court Diversion Programs may develop and administer  
15 programs to assist persons under this section charged with delinquent,  
16 criminal, and civil offenses.

17 Sec. 2. 13 V.S.A. § 7554c is amended to read:

18 § 7554c. PRETRIAL RISK ASSESSMENTS; NEEDS SCREENINGS

19 (a)(1) The objective of a pretrial risk assessment is to provide information  
20 to the ~~Court~~ court for the purpose of determining whether a person presents a  
21 risk of nonappearance ~~or a threat to public safety~~ or a risk of re-offense so the

1 ~~Court~~ court can make an appropriate order concerning bail and conditions of  
2 pretrial release. The assessment shall not assess victim safety or risk of  
3 lethality in domestic assaults.

4 (2) The objective of a pretrial needs screening is to obtain a preliminary  
5 indication of whether a person has a substantial substance abuse or mental  
6 health issue that would warrant a subsequent court order for a more detailed  
7 clinical assessment.

8 (3) Participation in a risk assessment or needs screening pursuant to this  
9 section does not create any entitlement for the assessed or screened person.

10 (b)(1) ~~A~~ Except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, a person  
11 ~~whose offense or status falls into any of the following categories shall be~~  
12 ~~offered a risk assessment and, if deemed appropriate by the pretrial monitor, a~~  
13 ~~needs screening prior to arraignment:~~

14 ~~(A) misdemeanors and felonies, excluding listed crimes and drug~~  
15 ~~trafficking, cited into court; and~~

16 ~~(B) persons who are arrested and lodged and unable to post bail~~  
17 ~~within 24 hours of lodging, excluding persons who are charged with an offense~~  
18 ~~for which registration as a sex offender is required upon conviction pursuant to~~  
19 ~~subchapter 3 of chapter 167 of this title or an offense punishable by up to life~~  
20 ~~imprisonment~~ who is arrested, lodged, and unable to post bail within 24 hours



1 of lodging shall be offered a risk assessment and, if deemed appropriate by the  
2 pretrial services coordinator, a needs screening prior to arraignment.

3 (2) ~~As used in this section, “listed crime” shall have the same meaning~~  
4 ~~as provided in section 5301 of this title and “drug trafficking” means offenses~~  
5 ~~listed as such in Title 18~~ A person charged with an offense for which  
6 registration as a sex offender is required pursuant to subchapter 3 of chapter  
7 167 of this title or an offense punishable by a term of life imprisonment shall  
8 not be eligible under this section.

9 (3) ~~Unless ordered as a condition of release under section 7554 of this~~  
10 ~~title, participation~~ Participation in risk assessment or needs screening shall be  
11 voluntary and a person’s refusal to participate shall not result in any criminal  
12 legal liability to the person.

13 (4) In the event an assessment or screening cannot be obtained prior to  
14 arraignment, the risk assessment and needs screening shall be conducted as  
15 soon as practicable.

16 (5) A person who qualifies pursuant to ~~subdivisions (1)(A)–(D)~~  
17 subdivision (1) of this subsection and who has an additional pending charge or  
18 a violation of probation shall not be excluded from being offered a risk  
19 assessment or needs screening unless the other charge is a listed crime.

20 (6)(A) ~~The Administrative Judge and Court Administrator, in~~  
21 ~~consultation with the Secretary of Human Services and the Commissioner of~~

1 ~~Corrections, shall develop a statewide plan for the phased, consistent rollout of~~  
2 ~~the categories identified in subdivisions (1)(A) through (D) of this subsection,~~  
3 ~~in the order in which they appear in this subsection. The Administrative Judge~~  
4 ~~and Court Administrator shall present the plan to the Joint Legislative~~  
5 ~~Corrections Oversight Committee on or before October 15, 2014~~ Any person  
6 charged with a criminal offense, except those persons identified in subdivision  
7 (b)(2) of this section, may choose to engage with a pretrial services  
8 coordinator.

9 ~~(B) All persons whose offense or status falls into one of the~~  
10 ~~categories shall be eligible for a risk assessment or needs screening on or after~~  
11 ~~October 15, 2015. Prior to that date, a person shall not be guaranteed the offer~~  
12 ~~of a risk assessment or needs screening solely because the person's offense or~~  
13 ~~status falls into one of the categories. Criminal justice professionals charged~~  
14 ~~with implementation shall adhere to the plan.~~

15 (c) The results of the risk assessment and needs screening shall be provided  
16 to the person and his or her attorney, the prosecutor, and the ~~Court~~ court.  
17 Pretrial services coordinators may share information only within the limitations  
18 of subsection (e) of this section.

19 (d)(1) At arraignment, ~~in consideration of the risk assessment and needs~~  
20 ~~screening, the Court~~ court may order ~~the~~ a person to ~~comply with~~ do the  
21 following conditions:

1           (A) meet with a pretrial ~~monitor~~ services coordinator on a schedule  
2 set by the ~~Court~~ court; and

3           (B) participate in a needs screening with a pretrial services  
4 coordinator; and

5           (C) participate in a clinical assessment by a substance abuse or  
6 mental health treatment provider and follow the recommendations of the  
7 provider.

8           (2) The ~~Court~~ court may order the person to ~~follow the recommendation~~  
9 ~~of the pretrial monitor if the person has completed a risk assessment or needs~~  
10 ~~screening~~ engage in pretrial services. Pretrial services may include the pretrial  
11 services coordinator:

12           (A) supporting the person in meeting conditions of release imposed  
13 by the court, including the condition to appear for judicial proceedings; and

14           (B) connecting the person with community-based treatment  
15 programs, rehabilitative services, recovery supports, and restorative justice  
16 programs.

17           (3) If possible, the ~~Court~~ court shall set the date and time for the clinical  
18 assessment at arraignment. In the alternative, the pretrial ~~monitor~~ services  
19 coordinator shall coordinate the date, time, and location of the clinical  
20 assessment and advise the ~~Court~~ court, the person and his or her attorney, and  
21 the prosecutor.

1           (4) ~~The conditions~~ An order authorized in subdivision (1) or (2) of this  
2 subsection shall be in addition to any ~~other~~ conditions of release permitted by  
3 law and shall not limit the ~~Court~~ court in any way. Failure to comply with a  
4 court order authorized by subdivision (1) or (2) of this subsection shall not  
5 constitute a violation of section 7559 of this title.

6           (5) This section shall not be construed to limit a court's authority to  
7 impose sanctions pursuant to section 7554 of this title.

8           (e)(1) Information obtained from the person during the risk assessment or  
9 needs screening shall be exempt from public inspection and copying under the  
10 Public Records Act and, except as provided in subdivision (2) of this  
11 subsection, only may be used for determining bail, conditions of release, and  
12 appropriate programming for the person in the pending case. The information  
13 a pretrial services coordinator may report is limited to whether a risk  
14 assessment indicates risk of nonappearance, whether further substance use  
15 assessment or treatment is indicated, whether mental health assessment or  
16 treatment is indicated, whether a person participated in a clinical assessment,  
17 and whether further engagement with pretrial services is recommended unless  
18 the person provides written permission to release additional information.  
19 Information related to the present offense directly or indirectly derived from  
20 the risk assessment, needs screening, or other conversation with the pretrial  
21 services coordinator shall not be used against the person in the person's

1 criminal or juvenile case for any purpose, including impeachment or cross-  
2 examination. However, the fact of participation or nonparticipation in risk  
3 assessment or needs screening may be used in subsequent proceedings. The  
4 immunity provisions of this subsection apply only to the use and derivative use  
5 of information gained as a proximate result of the risk assessment or needs  
6 screening, or other conversation with the pretrial services coordinator.

7 (2) The person shall retain all of his or her due process rights throughout  
8 the risk assessment and needs screening process and may release his or her  
9 records at his or her discretion.

10 (3) ~~The Vermont Supreme Court in accordance with judicial rulemaking~~  
11 ~~as provided in 12 V.S.A. § 1 shall promulgate and the Department of~~  
12 ~~Corrections in accordance with the Vermont Administrative Procedure Act~~  
13 ~~pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 shall adopt rules related to the custody,~~  
14 ~~control, and preservation of information consistent with the confidentiality~~  
15 ~~requirements of this section. Emergency rules adopted prior to January 1, 2015~~  
16 ~~pursuant to this section shall be considered to meet the “imminent peril”~~  
17 ~~standard under 3 V.S.A. § 844(a)~~ All records of information obtained during  
18 risk assessment or needs screening shall be stored in a manner making them  
19 accessible only to the Director of Pretrial Services and Pretrial Service  
20 Coordinators for a period of three years, after which the records shall be  
21 maintained as required by sections 117 and 218 of this title and any other State

1 law. The Director of Pretrial Services shall be responsible for the destruction  
2 of records when ordered by the court.

3 (f) The Attorney General’s Office shall:

4 (1) contract for or otherwise provide the pretrial services described in  
5 this section, including performance of risk assessments, needs screenings, and  
6 pretrial monitoring services, and

7 (2) develop pretrial services outcomes following the designated State of  
8 Vermont performance accountability framework and, in consultation with the  
9 Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs, the Office of the Defender  
10 General, the Center for Crime Victim Services, and the Judiciary, report  
11 annually on or before December 1 to the General Assembly on services  
12 provided and outcome indicators.

13 Sec. 3. MISDEMEANOR POSSESSION OF DRUGS; PRETRIAL  
14 SERVICES

15 (a) It is the intent of the General Assembly to encourage persons cited or  
16 arrested for a misdemeanor drug possession charge the opportunity to engage  
17 with pretrial services, and, if appropriate, enter treatment, and that, in turn, a  
18 person who complies with such conditions will be eligible for dismissal of the  
19 charge.

20 (b) The Attorney General, the Defender General, and the Executive  
21 Director of the Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs shall work

1 collaboratively to develop a specific legislative proposal to accomplish this  
2 intent with an implementation date of July 1, 2018 and report to the Senate and  
3 House Committees on Judiciary and on Appropriations, the Senate Committee  
4 on Health and Welfare, and the House Committee on Human Services on or  
5 before November 1, 2017.

6 Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

7 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2017.

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15 (Committee vote: \_\_\_\_\_)

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\_\_\_\_\_

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Representative \_\_\_\_\_

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FOR THE COMMITTEE