

**No. 153. An act relating to jurisdiction over delinquency proceedings by the Family Division of the Superior Court.**

(H.95)

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

Sec. 1. 33 V.S.A. § 5280 is added to read:

§ 5280. COMMENCEMENT OF YOUTHFUL OFFENDER

PROCEEDINGS IN THE FAMILY DIVISION

(a) A proceeding under this subchapter shall be commenced by:

(1) the filing of a youthful offender petition by a State's Attorney; or

(2) transfer to the Family Court of a proceeding from the Criminal

Division of the Superior Court as provided in section 5281 of this title.

(b) A State's Attorney may commence a proceeding in the Family Division of the Superior Court concerning a child who is alleged to have committed an offense after attaining 16 years of age, but not 22 years of age that could otherwise be filed in the Criminal Division.

(c) If a State's Attorney files a petition under subdivision (a)(1) of this section, the case shall proceed as provided under subsection 5281(b) of this title.

Sec. 2. 33 V.S.A. § 5281 is amended to read:

§ 5281. MOTION IN CRIMINAL DIVISION OF SUPERIOR COURT

(a) A motion may be filed in the Criminal Division of the Superior Court requesting that a defendant under ~~18~~ 22 years of age in a criminal proceeding who had attained ~~the age of 10~~ 12 years of age but not ~~the age of 18~~ 22 years of

age at the time the offense is alleged to have been committed be treated as a youthful offender. The motion may be filed by the State's Attorney, the defendant, or the Court on its own motion.

(b) Upon the filing of a motion under this section ~~and the entering of a conditional plea of guilty by the youth, the Criminal Division shall enter an order deferring the sentence and transferring the case to~~ or the filing of a youthful offender petition pursuant to section 5280 of this title, the Family Division ~~for~~ shall hold a hearing ~~on the motion pursuant to section 5283 of this title.~~ Copies of all records relating to the case shall be forwarded to the Family Division. Conditions of release and any Department of Corrections supervision or custody shall remain in effect until the Family Division ~~approves the motion~~ accepts the case for treatment as a youthful offender and orders conditions of juvenile probation pursuant to section 5284 of this title, or the case is otherwise concluded.

(c) ~~A plea of guilty entered by the youth pursuant to subsection (b) of this section shall be conditional upon the Family Division granting the motion for youthful offender status.~~

~~(d)(1)~~ If the Family Division ~~denies the motion~~ rejects the case for youthful offender treatment pursuant to subsection 5284 of this title, the case shall be ~~returned~~ transferred to the Criminal Division, ~~and the youth shall be permitted to withdraw the plea.~~ The conditions of release imposed by the Criminal Division shall remain in effect, and the case shall proceed as though the motion

for youthful offender treatment or youthful offender petition had not been ~~made~~ filed.

(2) Subject to Rule 11 of the Vermont Rules of Criminal Procedure and Rule 410 of the Vermont Rules of Evidence, the Family Division's denial of the motion for youthful offender treatment and any information related to the youthful offender proceeding shall be inadmissible against the youth for any purpose in the subsequent Criminal Division proceeding.

(d) If the Family Division accepts the case for youthful offender treatment, the case shall proceed to a confidential merits hearing or admission pursuant to sections 5227–5229 of this title. If the youth is adjudicated, the Court will create a criminal case reflecting the charge and conviction.

Sec. 3. 33 V.S.A. § 5282 is amended to read:

§ 5282. REPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT

(a) Within 30 days after the case is transferred to the Family Division or a youthful offender petition is filed in the Family Division, unless the Court extends the period for good cause shown, the Department shall file a report with the Family Division of the Superior Court.

(b) A report filed pursuant to this section shall include the following elements:

(1) a recommendation as to whether youthful offender status is appropriate for the youth;

(2) a disposition case plan including proposed services and proposed conditions of juvenile probation in the event youthful offender status is approved and the youth is adjudicated;

(3) a description of the services that may be available for the youth when he or she reaches 18 years of age.

(c) A report filed pursuant to this section is privileged and shall not be disclosed to any person other than the Department, the Court, the State's Attorney, the youth, the youth's attorney, the youth's guardian ad litem, the Department of Corrections, or any other person when the Court determines that the best interests of the youth would make such a disclosure desirable or helpful.

Sec. 4. 33 V.S.A. § 5283 is amended to read:

§ 5283. HEARING IN FAMILY DIVISION

(a) Timeline. A hearing on the motion for youthful offender status shall be held no later than 35 days after the transfer of the case from the Criminal Division or filing of a youthful offender petition in the Family Division.

(b) Notice. Notice of the hearing shall be provided to the State's Attorney; the youth; the youth's parent, guardian, or custodian; the Department; and the Department of Corrections.

(c) Hearing procedure.

(1) If the motion is contested, all parties shall have the right to present evidence and examine witnesses. Hearsay may be admitted and may be relied

on to the extent of its probative value. If reports are admitted, the parties shall be afforded an opportunity to examine those persons making the reports, but sources of confidential information need not be disclosed.

(2) Hearings under subsection 5284(a) of this title shall be open to the public. All other youthful offender proceedings shall be confidential.

(d) The burden of proof shall be on the moving party to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that a child should be granted youthful offender status. If the Court makes the motion, the burden shall be on the youth.

(e) Further hearing. On its own motion or the motion of a party, the Court may schedule a further hearing to obtain reports or other information necessary for the appropriate disposition of the case.

Sec. 5. 33 V.S.A. § 5284 is amended to read:

§ 5284. YOUTHFUL OFFENDER DETERMINATION AND DISPOSITION  
ORDER

(a) In a hearing on a motion for youthful offender status, the Court shall first consider whether public safety will be protected by treating the youth as a youthful offender. If the Court finds that public safety will not be protected by treating the youth as a youthful offender, the Court shall deny the motion and ~~return~~ transfer the case to the Criminal Division of the Superior Court pursuant to subsection 5281(d) of this title. If the Court finds that public safety will be protected by treating the youth as a youthful offender, the Court shall proceed to make a determination under subsection (b) of this section.

(b)(1) The Court shall deny the motion if the Court finds that:

(A) the youth is not amenable to treatment or rehabilitation as a youthful offender; or

(B) there are insufficient services in the juvenile court system and the Department to meet the youth's treatment and rehabilitation needs.

(2) The Court shall grant the motion if the Court finds that:

(A) the youth is amenable to treatment or rehabilitation as a youthful offender; and

(B) there are sufficient services in the juvenile court system and the Department to meet the youth's treatment and rehabilitation needs.

(c) If the Court approves the motion for youthful offender treatment after an adjudication pursuant to subsection 5281(d) of this title, the Court:

(1) shall approve a disposition case plan and impose conditions of juvenile probation on the youth; and

(2) may transfer legal custody of the youth to a parent, relative, person with a significant relationship with the youth, or Commissioner, provided that any transfer of custody shall expire on the youth's 18th birthday.

(d) The Department shall be responsible for supervision of and providing services to the youth until he or she reaches ~~the age of 18~~ years of age. A lead case manager shall be designated who shall have final decision-making authority over the case plan and the provision of services to the youth. The

youth shall be eligible for appropriate community-based programming and services provided by the Department.

(e) The youth shall not be permitted to withdraw his or her plea of guilty after youthful offender status is approved except to correct manifest injustice pursuant to Rule 32(d) of the Vermont Rules of Criminal Procedure.

\* \* \* Effective January 1, 2018 \* \* \*

Sec. 6. 33 V.S.A. § 5103 is amended to read:

§ 5103. JURISDICTION

(a) The Family Division of the Superior Court shall have exclusive jurisdiction over all proceedings concerning a child who is or who is alleged to be a delinquent child or a child in need of care or supervision brought under the authority of the juvenile judicial proceedings chapters, except as otherwise provided in such chapters.

(b) Orders issued under the authority of the juvenile judicial proceedings chapters shall take precedence over orders in other Family Division proceedings and any order of another court of this State, to the extent they are inconsistent. This section shall not apply to child support orders in a divorce, parentage, or relief from abuse proceedings until a child support order has been issued in the juvenile proceeding.

(c)(1) Except as otherwise provided by this title and by subdivision (2) of this subsection, jurisdiction over a child shall not be extended beyond the child's 18th birthday.

(2)(A) Jurisdiction over a child who has been adjudicated delinquent may be extended until six months beyond the child's ~~18th~~ 19th birthday if ~~the offense for which the child has been adjudicated delinquent is a nonviolent misdemeanor~~ and the child was 16 or 17 years old when he or she committed the offense.

(B) In no case shall custody of a child ~~aged~~ 18 years of age or older be retained by or transferred to the Commissioner for Children and Families.

(C) Jurisdiction over a child in need of care or supervision shall not be extended beyond the child's 18th birthday.

~~(D) As used in this subdivision, "nonviolent misdemeanor" means a misdemeanor offense which is not a listed crime as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 5301(7), an offense involving sexual exploitation of children in violation of 13 V.S.A. chapter 64, or an offense involving violation of a protection order in violation of 13 V.S.A. § 1030.~~

(d) The Court may terminate its jurisdiction over a child prior to the child's 18th birthday by order of the Court. If the child is not subject to another juvenile proceeding, jurisdiction shall terminate automatically in the following circumstances:

(1) upon the discharge of a child from juvenile probation, providing the child is not in the legal custody of the Commissioner;

(2) upon an order of the Court transferring legal custody to a parent, guardian, or custodian without conditions or protective supervision;

(3) upon the adoption of a child following a termination of parental rights proceeding.

Sec. 7. 33 V.S.A. § 5201 is amended to read:

§ 5201. COMMENCEMENT OF DELINQUENCY PROCEEDINGS

(a) Proceedings under this chapter shall be commenced by:

(1) transfer to the Court of a proceeding from another court as provided in section 5203 of this title; or

(2) the filing of a delinquency petition by a State's Attorney.

(b) If the proceeding is commenced by transfer from another court, no petition need be filed; however, the State's Attorney shall provide to the Court the name and address of the child's custodial parent, guardian, or custodian and the name and address of any noncustodial parent if known.

(c) Any proceeding concerning a child who is alleged to have committed an act specified in subsection 5204(a) of this title after attaining 14 years of age, but not 18 years of age, shall originate in the Criminal Division of the Superior Court, provided that jurisdiction may be transferred in accordance with this chapter.

(d) Any proceeding concerning a child who is alleged to have committed a misdemeanor offense before attaining ~~17~~ 18 years of age shall originate in the Family Division of the Superior Court.

(e) Any proceeding concerning a child who is alleged to have committed a felony offense other than those specified in subsection 5204(a) of this title