

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Judiciary to which was referred House Bill No. 534  
3 entitled “An act relating to sealing criminal history records” respectfully  
4 reports that it has considered the same and recommends that the bill be  
5 amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu  
6 thereof the following:

7 Sec. 1. 13 V.S.A. § 7601 is amended to read:

8 § 7601. DEFINITIONS

9 As used in this chapter:

10 (1) “Court” means the Criminal Division of the Superior Court.

11 (2) “Criminal history record” means all information documenting an  
12 individual’s contact with the criminal justice system, including data regarding  
13 identification, arrest or citation, arraignment, judicial disposition, custody, and  
14 supervision.

15 (3) ~~“Predicate offense” means a criminal offense that can be used to~~  
16 ~~enhance a sentence levied for a later conviction and includes operating a~~  
17 ~~vehicle under the influence of alcohol or other substance in violation of~~  
18 ~~23 V.S.A. § 1201, domestic assault in violation of section 1042 of this title,~~  
19 ~~and stalking in violation of section 1062 of this title. “Predicate offense” shall~~  
20 ~~not include misdemeanor possession of cannabis, a disorderly conduct offense~~  
21 ~~under section 1026 of this title, or possession of a controlled substance in~~

1 ~~violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4230(a), 4231(a), 4232(a), 4233(a), 4234(a), 4234a(a),~~  
2 ~~4234b(a), 4235(b), or 4235a(a). [Repealed.]~~

3 (4) “Qualifying crime” means:

4 (A) ~~a misdemeanor offense that is not:~~

5 (i) ~~a listed crime as defined in subdivision 5301(7) of this title;~~

6 (ii) ~~an offense involving sexual exploitation of children in~~  
7 ~~violation of chapter 64 of this title;~~

8 (iii) ~~an offense involving violation of a protection order in~~  
9 ~~violation of section 1030 of this title;~~

10 (iv) ~~prostitution as defined in section 2632 of this title, or~~  
11 ~~prohibited conduct under section 2601a of this title; or~~

12 (v) ~~a predicate offense;~~

13 (B) ~~a violation of subsection 3701(a) of this title related to criminal~~  
14 ~~mischief;~~

15 (C) ~~a violation of section 2501 of this title related to grand larceny;~~

16 (D) ~~a violation of section 1201 of this title related to burglary,~~  
17 ~~excluding any burglary into an occupied dwelling, as defined in subdivision~~  
18 ~~1201(b)(2) of this title;~~

19 (E) ~~a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4223 related to fraud or deceit;~~

20 (F) ~~a violation of section 1802 of this title related to uttering a forged~~  
21 ~~or counterfeited instrument;~~

1           ~~(G) a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4230(a) related to possession and~~  
2           ~~cultivation of cannabis;~~

3           ~~(H) a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4231(a) related to possession of~~  
4           ~~cocaine;~~

5           ~~(I) a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4232(a) related to possession of LSD;~~

6           ~~(J) a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4233(a) related to possession of heroin;~~

7           ~~(K) a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4234(a) related to possession of~~  
8           ~~depressant, stimulant, and narcotic drugs;~~

9           ~~(L) a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4234a(a) related to possession of~~  
10          ~~methamphetamine;~~

11          ~~(M) a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4234b(a) related to possession of~~  
12          ~~ephedrine and pseudoephedrine;~~

13          ~~(N) a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4235(b) related to possession of~~  
14          ~~hallucinogenic drugs;~~

15          ~~(O) a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4235a(a) related to possession of~~  
16          ~~ecstasy; or~~

17          ~~(P) any offense for which a person has been granted an unconditional~~  
18          ~~pardon from the Governor.~~

19          (A) all misdemeanor offenses except:

20               (i) a listed crime as defined in subdivision 5301(7) of this title;

- 1                    (ii) a violation of chapter 64 of this title relating to sexual  
2                    exploitation of children;
- 3                    (iii) a violation of section 1030 of this title relating to a violation  
4                    of an abuse prevention order, an order against stalking or sexual assault, or a  
5                    protective order concerning contact with a child;
- 6                    (iv) a violation of chapter 28 of this title related to abuse, neglect,  
7                    and exploitation of a vulnerable adult;
- 8                    (v) a violation of subsection 2605(b) or (c) of this title related to  
9                    voyeurism;
- 10                   (vi) a violation of subdivisions 352(1)–(10) of this title related to  
11                   cruelty to animals;
- 12                   (vii) a violation of section 1026a of this title related to aggravated  
13                   disorderly conduct;
- 14                   (viii) a violation of section 3006 of this title related to neglect of  
15                   duty by a public officer;
- 16                   (ix) a violation of section 5409 of this title related to failure to  
17                   comply with sex offender registry requirements;
- 18                   (x) a violation of section 2802, 2802a, 2803, 2804, or 2804b of  
19                   this title related to obscenity;
- 20                   (xi) a violation of section 1455 of this title related to hate  
21                   motivated crimes; and

1                    (xii) a violation of section 1456 of this title related to burning of a  
2                    religious symbol; and

3                    (B) the following felonies:

4                    (i) a violation of section 1201 of this title related to burglary,  
5                    excluding any burglary into an occupied dwelling, unless the person was  
6                    25 years of age or younger at the time of the offense and did not carry a  
7                    dangerous or deadly weapon during the commission of the offense;

8                    (ii) designated felony property offenses as defined in subdivision  
9                    (5) of this subsection;

10                    (iii) offenses relating to possessing, cultivating, selling,  
11                    dispensing, or transporting regulated drugs, including violations of 18 V.S.A.  
12                    § 4230(a) and (b), 4231(a) and (b), 4232(a) and (b), 4233(a) and (b), 4233a(a),  
13                    4234(a) and (b), 4234a(a) and (b), 4234b(a) and (b), 4235(b) and (c), or  
14                    4235a(a) and (b); and

15                    (iv) any offense for which a person has been granted an  
16                    unconditional pardon from the Governor.

17                    (5) “Designated felony property offense” means:

18                    (A) a felony violation of 9 V.S.A. § 4043 related to fraudulent use of  
19                    a credit card;

20                    (B) section 1801 of this title related to forgery and counterfeiting;

- 1           (C) section 1802 of this title related to uttering a forged or  
2           counterfeited instrument;
- 3           (D) section 1804 of this title related to counterfeiting paper money;
- 4           (E) section 1816 of this title related to possession or use of credit  
5           card skimming devices;
- 6           (F) section 2001 of this title related to false personation;
- 7           (G) section 2002 of this title related to false pretenses or tokens;
- 8           (H) section 2029 of this title related to home improvement fraud;
- 9           (I) section 2030 of this title related to identity theft;
- 10          (J) section 2501 of this title related to grand larceny;
- 11          (K) section 2531 of this title related to embezzlement;
- 12          (L) section 2532 of this title related to embezzlement by officers or  
13          servants of an incorporated bank;
- 14          (M) section 2533 of this title related to embezzlement by a receiver  
15          or trustee;
- 16          (N) section 2561 of this title related to receiving stolen property;
- 17          (O) section 2575 of this title related to retail theft;
- 18          (P) section 2582 of this title related to theft of services;
- 19          (Q) section 2591 of this title related to theft of rented property;
- 20          (R) section 2592 of this title related to failure to return a rented or  
21          leased motor vehicle;



1           ~~(B) the person was convicted of an offense for which the underlying~~  
2           ~~conduct is no longer prohibited by law or designated as a criminal offense;~~

3           ~~(C) pursuant to the conditions set forth in subsection (g) of this~~  
4           ~~section, the person was convicted of a violation of 23 V.S.A. § 1201(a) related~~  
5           ~~to operating under the influence of alcohol or other substance, excluding a~~  
6           ~~violation of that section resulting in serious bodily injury or death to any~~  
7           ~~person other than the operator, or related to operating a school bus with a blood~~  
8           ~~alcohol concentration of 0.02 or more or operating a commercial vehicle with a~~  
9           ~~blood alcohol concentration of 0.04 or more; or~~

10           ~~(D) pursuant to the conditions set forth in subsection (h) of this~~  
11           ~~section, the person was convicted under 1201(c)(3)(A) of a violation of~~  
12           ~~subdivision 1201(a) of this title related to burglary when the person was~~  
13           ~~25 years of age or younger, and the person did not carry a dangerous or deadly~~  
14           ~~weapon during commission of the offense.~~

15           ~~(2) The State's Attorney or Attorney General shall be the respondent in~~  
16           ~~the matter.~~

17           ~~(3) The court shall grant the petition without hearing if the petitioner~~  
18           ~~and the respondent stipulate to the granting of the petition. The respondent~~  
19           ~~shall file the stipulation with the court, and the court shall issue the petitioner~~  
20           ~~an order of expungement and provide notice of the order in accordance with~~  
21           ~~this section.~~

1           ~~(4) This section shall not apply to an individual licensed as a~~  
2           ~~commercial driver pursuant to 23 V.S.A. chapter 39 seeking to seal or expunge~~  
3           ~~a record of a conviction for a felony offense committed in a motor vehicle as~~  
4           ~~defined in 23 V.S.A. § 4.~~

5           ~~(b)(1) The court shall grant the petition and order that the criminal history~~  
6           ~~record be expunged pursuant to section 7606 of this title if the following~~  
7           ~~conditions are met:~~

8                     ~~(A) At least five years have elapsed since the date on which the~~  
9                     ~~person successfully completed the terms and conditions of the sentence for the~~  
10                    ~~conviction, or if the person has successfully completed the terms and~~  
11                    ~~conditions of an indeterminate term of probation that commenced at least five~~  
12                    ~~years previously.~~

13                   ~~(B) The person has not been convicted of a crime arising out of a new~~  
14                    ~~incident or occurrence since the person was convicted for the qualifying crime.~~

15                   ~~(C) Any restitution and surcharges ordered by the court have been~~  
16                    ~~paid in full, provided that payment of surcharges shall not be required if the~~  
17                    ~~surcharges have been waived by the court pursuant to section 7282 of this title.~~

18                   ~~(D) The court finds that expungement of the criminal history record~~  
19                    ~~serves the interests of justice.~~

20           ~~(2) The court shall grant the petition and order that all or part of the~~  
21           ~~criminal history record be sealed pursuant to section 7607 of this title if the~~

1 ~~conditions of subdivisions (1)(A), (B), and (C) of this subsection are met and~~  
2 ~~the court finds that:~~

3 ~~(A) sealing the criminal history record better serves the interests of~~  
4 ~~justice than expungement; and~~

5 ~~(B) the person committed the qualifying crime after reaching 19~~  
6 ~~years of age.~~

7 ~~(e)(1) The court shall grant the petition and order that the criminal history~~  
8 ~~record be expunged pursuant to section 7606 of this title if the following~~  
9 ~~conditions are met:~~

10 ~~(A) At least 10 years have elapsed since the date on which the person~~  
11 ~~successfully completed the terms and conditions of the sentence for the~~  
12 ~~conviction.~~

13 ~~(B) The person has not been convicted of a felony arising out of a~~  
14 ~~new incident or occurrence in the last seven years.~~

15 ~~(C) The person has not been convicted of a misdemeanor during the~~  
16 ~~past five years.~~

17 ~~(D) Any restitution and surcharges ordered by the court for any crime~~  
18 ~~of which the person has been convicted has been paid in full, provided that~~  
19 ~~payment of surcharges shall not be required if the surcharges have been waived~~  
20 ~~by the court pursuant to section 7282 of this title.~~

1           ~~(E) After considering the particular nature of any subsequent offense,~~  
2           ~~the court finds that expungement of the criminal history record for the~~  
3           ~~qualifying crime serves the interests of justice.~~

4           ~~(2) The court shall grant the petition and order that all or part of the~~  
5           ~~criminal history record be sealed pursuant to section 7607 of this title if the~~  
6           ~~conditions of subdivisions (1)(A), (B), (C), and (D) of this subsection are met~~  
7           ~~and the court finds that:~~

8                     ~~(A) sealing the criminal history record better serves the interests of~~  
9                     ~~justice than expungement; and~~

10                    ~~(B) the person committed the qualifying crime after reaching 19~~  
11                    ~~years of age.~~

12           ~~(d) For petitions filed pursuant to subdivision (a)(1)(B) of this section,~~  
13           ~~unless the court finds that expungement would not be in the interests of justice,~~  
14           ~~the court shall grant the petition and order that the criminal history record be~~  
15           ~~expunged in accordance with section 7606 of this title if the following~~  
16           ~~conditions are met:~~

17                     ~~(1) The petitioner has completed any sentence or supervision for the~~  
18                     ~~offense.~~

19                     ~~(2) Any restitution and surcharges ordered by the court have been paid~~  
20                     ~~in full, provided that payment of surcharges shall not be required if the~~  
21                     ~~surcharges have been waived by the court pursuant to section 7282 of this title.~~

1       ~~(e) For petitions filed pursuant to subdivision (a)(1)(B) of this section for a~~  
2       ~~conviction for possession of a regulated drug under 18 V.S.A. chapter 84,~~  
3       ~~subchapter 1 in an amount that is no longer prohibited by law or for which~~  
4       ~~criminal sanctions have been removed:~~

5             ~~(1) The petitioner shall bear the burden of establishing that his or her~~  
6             ~~conviction was based on possessing an amount of regulated drug that is no~~  
7             ~~longer prohibited by law or for which criminal sanctions have been removed.~~

8             ~~(2) There shall be a rebuttable presumption that the amount of the~~  
9             ~~regulated drug specified in the affidavit of probable cause associated with the~~  
10            ~~petitioner's conviction was the amount possessed by the petitioner.~~

11            ~~(f) Prior to granting an expungement or sealing under this section for~~  
12            ~~petitions filed pursuant to subdivision 7601(4)(D) of this title, the court shall~~  
13            ~~make a finding that the conduct underlying the conviction under section 1201~~  
14            ~~of this title did not constitute a burglary into an occupied dwelling, as defined~~  
15            ~~in subdivision 1201(b)(2) of this title. The petitioner shall bear the burden of~~  
16            ~~establishing this fact.~~

17            ~~(g) For petitions filed pursuant to subdivision (a)(1)(C) of this section, only~~  
18            ~~petitions to seal may be considered or granted by the court. This subsection~~  
19            ~~shall not apply to an individual licensed as a commercial driver pursuant to~~  
20            ~~23 V.S.A. chapter 39. Unless the court finds that sealing would not be in the~~  
21            ~~interests of justice, the court shall grant the petition and order that the criminal~~

1 ~~history record be sealed in accordance with section 7607 of this title if the~~  
2 ~~following conditions are met:~~

3 ~~(1) At least 10 years have elapsed since the date on which the person~~  
4 ~~successfully completed the terms and conditions of the sentence for the~~  
5 ~~conviction, or if the person has successfully completed the terms and~~  
6 ~~conditions of an indeterminate term of probation that commenced at least 10~~  
7 ~~years previously.~~

8 ~~(2) At the time of the filing of the petition:~~

9 ~~(A) the person has only one conviction of a violation of 23 V.S.A.~~  
10 ~~§ 1201, which shall be construed in accordance with 23 V.S.A. § 1211; and~~

11 ~~(B) the person has not been convicted of a crime arising out of a new~~  
12 ~~incident or occurrence since the person was convicted of a violation of~~  
13 ~~23 V.S.A. § 1201(a).~~

14 ~~(3) Any restitution ordered by the court has been paid in full.~~

15 ~~(4) The court finds that sealing of the criminal history record serves the~~  
16 ~~interests of justice.~~

17 ~~(h) For petitions filed pursuant to subdivision (a)(1)(D) of this section,~~  
18 ~~unless the court finds that expungement or sealing would not be in the interests~~  
19 ~~of justice, the court shall grant the petition and order that the criminal history~~  
20 ~~record be expunged or sealed in accordance with section 7606 or 7607 of this~~  
21 ~~title if the following conditions are met:~~

1           ~~(1) At least 15 years have elapsed since the date on which the person~~  
2           ~~successfully completed the terms and conditions of the sentence for the~~  
3           ~~conviction, or the person has successfully completed the terms and conditions~~  
4           ~~of an indeterminate term of probation that commenced at least 15 years~~  
5           ~~previously.~~

6           ~~(2) The person has not been convicted of a crime arising out of a new~~  
7           ~~incident or occurrence since the person was convicted of a violation of~~  
8           ~~subdivision 1201(c)(3)(A) of this title.~~

9           ~~(3) Any restitution ordered by the court has been paid in full.~~

10           ~~(4) The court finds that expungement or sealing of the criminal history~~  
11           ~~record serves the interests of justice.~~

12           (a) Petition.

13           (1) A person may file a petition with the court requesting sealing of a  
14           criminal history record related to a conviction under the following  
15           circumstances:

16           (A) The person was convicted of an offense for which the underlying  
17           conduct is no longer prohibited by law or designated as a criminal offense.

18           (B) The person was convicted of a qualifying crime or qualifying  
19           crimes arising out of the same incident or occurrence.

1           (C) The person was convicted of a violation of 23 V.S.A. § 1201(a)  
2 related to operating under the influence of alcohol or other substance, provided  
3 that:

4           (i) the violation did not:

5           (I) result in serious bodily injury or death to any person other  
6 than the operator;

7           (II) involve operating a school bus with a blood alcohol  
8 concentration of 0.02 or more; or

9           (III) involve operating a commercial vehicle with a blood  
10 alcohol concentration of 0.04 or more; and

11           (ii) the person is not licensed as a commercial driver pursuant to  
12 23 V.S.A. chapter 39.

13           (2) The State’s Attorney or Attorney General shall be the respondent in  
14 the matter.

15           (3) The court shall grant the petition without hearing if the petitioner  
16 and the respondent stipulate to the granting of the petition. The respondent  
17 shall file the stipulation with the court, and the court shall issue the petitioner  
18 an order of sealing and provide notice of the order in accordance with this  
19 section.

20           (4) This section shall not apply to an individual licensed as a  
21 commercial driver pursuant to 23 V.S.A. chapter 39 seeking to seal a record of

1 a conviction for a felony offense committed in a motor vehicle as defined in  
2 23 V.S.A. § 4.

3 (b) Offenses that are no longer prohibited by law.

4 (1) For petitions filed pursuant to subdivision (a)(1)(A) of this section,  
5 the court shall grant the petition and order that the criminal history record be  
6 sealed if the following conditions are met:

7 (A) The petitioner has completed any sentence or supervision for the  
8 offense.

9 (B) Any restitution and surcharges ordered by the court have been  
10 paid in full, provided that payment of surcharges shall not be required if the  
11 surcharges have been waived by the court pursuant to section 7282 of this title.

12 (2) For petitions filed pursuant to subdivision (a)(1)(A) of this section  
13 for a conviction for possession of a regulated drug under 18 V.S.A. chapter 84,  
14 subchapter 1 in an amount that is no longer prohibited by law or for which  
15 criminal sanctions have been removed:

16 (A) The petitioner shall bear the burden of establishing that the  
17 petitioner's conviction was based on possessing an amount of regulated drug  
18 that is no longer prohibited by law or for which criminal sanctions have been  
19 removed.

1           (B) There shall be a rebuttable presumption that the amount of the  
2           regulated drug specified in the affidavit of probable cause associated with the  
3           petitioner’s conviction was the amount possessed by the petitioner.

4           (c) Qualifying misdemeanors. For petitions filed to seal a qualifying  
5           misdemeanor pursuant to subdivision (a)(1)(B) of this section, the court shall  
6           grant the petition and order that the criminal history record be sealed if the  
7           following conditions are met:

8           (1) At least three years have elapsed since the date on which the person  
9           satisfied the judgement.

10           (2) Any restitution and surcharges ordered by the court for any crime of  
11           which the person has been convicted has been paid in full, provided that  
12           payment of surcharges shall not be required if the surcharges have been waived  
13           by the court pursuant to section 7282 of this title.

14           (3) The court finds that sealing of the criminal history record serves the  
15           interests of justice.

16           (d) Qualifying felony offenses. For petitions filed to seal a qualifying  
17           felony pursuant to subdivision (a)(1)(B) of this section, the court shall grant the  
18           petition and order that the criminal history record be sealed if the following  
19           conditions are met:

20           (1) At least seven years have elapsed since the date on which the person  
21           satisfied the judgement.

1           (2) Any restitution and surcharges ordered by the court for any crime of  
2           which the person has been convicted has been paid in full, provided that  
3           payment of surcharges shall not be required if the surcharges have been waived  
4           by the court pursuant to section 7282 of this title.

5           (3) The court finds that sealing of the criminal history record serves the  
6           interests of justice.

7           (e) Qualifying DUI misdemeanor. For petitions filed to seal a qualifying  
8           DUI misdemeanor pursuant to subdivision (a)(1)(C) of this section, the court  
9           shall grant the petition and order that the criminal history record be sealed if  
10           the following conditions are met:

11           (1) At least ten years have elapsed since the date on which the person  
12           satisfied the judgment for the conviction.

13           (2) At the time of the filing of the petition:

14           (A) the person has only one conviction of a violation of 23 V.S.A.  
15           § 1201, which shall be construed in accordance with 23 V.S.A. § 1211; and

16           (B) the person has not been convicted of a subsequent offense since  
17           the person was convicted of a violation of 23 V.S.A. § 1201(a).

18           (3) Any restitution and surcharges ordered by the court for any crime of  
19           which the person has been convicted has been paid in full, provided that  
20           payment of surcharges shall not be required if the surcharges have been waived  
21           by the court pursuant to section 7282 of this title.

1           (4) The court finds that sealing of the criminal history record serves the  
2           interests of justice.

3           Sec. 3. 13 V.S.A. § 7604 is amended to read:

4           § 7604. NEW CHARGE

5           If a person is charged with a criminal offense after he or she has filed a  
6           petition for ~~expungement~~ sealing pursuant to this chapter, the court shall not  
7           act on the petition until disposition of the new charge.

8           Sec. 4. 13 V.S.A. § 7605 is amended to read:

9           § 7605. DENIAL OF PETITION

10          If a petition for ~~expungement~~ sealing is denied by the court pursuant to this  
11          chapter, no further petition shall be brought for at least two years, unless a  
12          shorter duration is authorized by the court.

13          Sec. 5. 13 V.S.A. § 7607 is amended to read:

14          § 7607. EFFECT OF SEALING

15          (a) Order and notice. Upon entry of an order to seal, the order shall be  
16          legally effective immediately and the person whose record is sealed shall be  
17          treated in all respects as if ~~he or she~~ the person had never been arrested,  
18          convicted, or sentenced for the offense and that its effect is to annul the record  
19          of arrest, conviction, and sentence. The court shall provide notice of the  
20          sealing to the respondent, Vermont Crime Information Center (VCIC), the  
21          arresting agency, the Restitution Unit of the Vermont Center for Crime Victim

1 Services, and any other entity that may have a record related to the order to  
2 seal. The VCIC shall provide notice of the sealing to the Federal Bureau of  
3 Investigation’s National Crime Information Center.

4 (b) Effect.

5 (1) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, upon entry of a  
6 sealing order, the order shall be legally effective immediately and the person  
7 whose record is sealed shall be treated in all respects as if ~~he or she~~ the person  
8 had never been arrested, convicted, or sentenced for the offense.

9 (2) In any application for employment, license, or civil right or privilege  
10 or in an appearance as a witness in any proceeding or hearing, a person may be  
11 required to answer questions about a previous criminal history record only with  
12 respect to arrests or convictions that have not been sealed.

13 (3) The response to an inquiry from any member of the public regarding  
14 a sealed record shall be that “NO CRIMINAL RECORD EXISTS.”

15 (c) Exceptions; convictions. Notwithstanding any other provision of law or  
16 a sealing order, entities may access sealed records only in the following  
17 circumstances:

18 (1) An entity that possesses a sealed record may continue to use it for  
19 any litigation or claim arising out of the same incident or occurrence ~~or~~  
20 ~~involving the same defendant~~.

1           (2) ~~A criminal justice agency as defined in 20 V.S.A. § 2056a may use~~  
2 ~~the criminal history record sealed in accordance with section 7602 or 7603 of~~  
3 ~~this title without limitation for criminal justice purposes as defined in~~  
4 ~~20 V.S.A. § 2056a. A sealed record of a prior violation of 23 V.S.A. § 1201(a)~~  
5 ~~shall be admissible as a predicate offense for the purpose of imposing an~~  
6 ~~enhanced penalty for a subsequent violation of that section, in accordance with~~  
7 ~~the provisions of 23 V.S.A. § 1210. A person or a court in possession of an~~  
8 ~~order issued by a court regarding a matter that was subsequently sealed may~~  
9 ~~file or cite to that decision in any subsequent proceeding. The party or court~~  
10 ~~filing or citing to that decision shall ensure that information regarding the~~  
11 ~~identity of the defendant in the sealed record is redacted.~~

12           (3) For sentencing in subsequent offenses, the court and parties in a  
13 criminal case shall have access to sealed records as follows:

14                   (A) misdemeanors for three years;

15                   (B) qualifying DUI offenses for five years; and

16                   (C) qualifying felony property offenses and selling, dispensing, or  
17 transporting a regulated drug offenses for seven years.

18           (4) The Department of Corrections shall have access to sealed records  
19 for the purpose of conducting risk assessments and making supervision  
20 decisions as follows:

21                   (A) misdemeanors for three years;

1           (B) qualifying DUI offenses for five years; and

2           (C) qualifying felony property offenses and selling, dispensing, or  
3 transporting a regulated drug offenses for seven years.

4           (5) The State’s Attorney and Attorney General may disclose information  
5 contained in a sealed criminal history record when required to meet their  
6 otherwise legally required discovery obligations.

7           (6) Upon request, the Victim’s Compensation Program shall be provided  
8 with a copy, redacted of all information identifying the offender, of the  
9 affidavit for the sole purpose of verifying the expenses in a victim’s  
10 compensation application submitted pursuant to section 5353 of this title.

11           (7) The sealing of a criminal record shall not affect the authority of the  
12 Restitution Unit to enforce a restitution order in the same manner as a civil  
13 judgment, pursuant to subdivision 5362(c)(2) of this title.

14           (d) Exceptions; dismissed charges. The prosecution shall have access to  
15 cases dismissed without prejudice for three years. The prosecution may object  
16 to the loss of access at three years by proving that the loss of access would  
17 pose a “significant risk to public safety.”

18           (e) Process.

19           (1) The court shall bar viewing of the sealed offense in any accessible  
20 database that it maintains.

1           (2) Until all charges on a docket have been sealed, the case file shall  
2 remain publicly accessible.

3           (3) When all charges on a docket have been sealed, the case file shall  
4 become exempt from public access.

5       ~~(e)~~(f) Special index.

6           (1) The court shall keep a special index of cases that have been sealed  
7 together with the sealing order. The index shall list only the name of the  
8 person convicted of the offense, ~~his or her~~ the person's date of birth, the docket  
9 number, and the criminal offense that was the subject of the sealing.

10          (2) The special index and related documents specified in subdivision (1)  
11 of this subsection shall be confidential and shall be physically and  
12 electronically segregated in a manner that ensures confidentiality and that  
13 limits access to authorized persons.

14          (3) Except as provided in ~~subsection~~ subsections (c) and (d) of this  
15 section, inspection of the sealing order may be permitted only upon petition by  
16 the person who is the subject of the case. The Chief Superior Judge may  
17 permit special access to the index and the documents for research purposes  
18 pursuant to the rules for public access to court records.

19          (4) The Court Administrator shall establish policies for implementing  
20 this subsection.

21       Sec. 6. 13 V.S.A. § 7611 is added to read:

1        § 7611. UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURE

2            A state or municipal employee or contractor or any agent of the court,  
3        including an attorney and an employee or contractor of the attorney, who in the  
4        course of their official duties knowingly discloses sealed criminal history  
5        record information without authorization shall be assessed a civil penalty of  
6        not more than \$1,000.00. Each unauthorized disclosure shall constitute a  
7        separate civil violation.

8        Sec. 7. 24 V.S.A. § 2002 is added to read:

9        § 2002. EXPUNGEMENT OF MUNICIPAL VIOLATION RECORDS

10           (a) Expungement. Three years following the satisfaction of a judgment  
11        resulting from an adjudication of a municipal violation, the Judicial Bureau  
12        shall make an entry of “expunged” and notify the municipality of such action,  
13        provided the person has not been adjudicated for any subsequent municipal  
14        violations during that time. The data transfer to the municipality shall include  
15        the name, date of birth, ticket number, and offense. Violations of offenses  
16        adopted pursuant to 24 V.S.A. chapter 117 shall not be eligible for  
17        expungement under this section.

18           (b) Effect of expungement.

19                (1) Upon entry of an expungement order, the order shall be legally  
20        effective immediately and the individual whose record is expunged shall be

1 treated in all respects as if the individual had never been adjudicated of the  
2 violation.

3 (2) Upon an entry of expunged, the case will be accessible only by the  
4 Clerk of the Court for the Judicial Bureau or the Clerk’s designee.  
5 Adjudications that have been expunged shall not appear in the results of any  
6 Judicial Bureau database search by name, date of birth, or any other data  
7 identifying the defendant. Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section,  
8 any documents or other records related to an expunged adjudication that are  
9 maintained outside the Judicial Bureau’s case management system shall be  
10 destroyed.

11 (3) Upon receiving an inquiry from any person regarding an expunged  
12 record, the Judicial Bureau and the municipality shall respond that “NO  
13 RECORD EXISTS.”

14 (c) Exception for research entities. Research entities that maintain  
15 adjudication records for purposes of collecting, analyzing, and disseminating  
16 criminal justice data shall not be subject to the expungement requirements  
17 established in this section. Research entities shall abide by the policies  
18 established by the Court Administrator and shall not disclose any identifying  
19 information from the records they maintain.

20 (d) Policies for implementation. The Court Administrator shall establish  
21 policies for implementing this section.



1           (A) which criminal offenses are appropriate for automatic sealing, the  
2           time period in which those offenses become eligible for sealing, and any other  
3           appropriate criteria; and

4           (B) the mechanism for automatic sealing and any resources required  
5           for the proposal in subdivision (1)(A) of this subsection (c).

6           (2) On or before November 15, 2022, the Committee shall submit  
7           proposed legislation to the General Assembly.

8           (d) Assistance. For purposes of scheduling meetings and preparing  
9           recommended legislation, the Committee shall have the assistance of the  
10           Office of Legislative Operations, the Office of Legislative Counsel, and the  
11           Joint Fiscal Office.

12           (e) Meetings.

13           (1) The Office of Legislative Counsel shall call the first meeting of the  
14           Committee on or before August 1, 2022.

15           (2) The Committee shall select a chair from among its members at the  
16           first meeting.

17           (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

18           (4) The Committee shall cease to exist on December 31, 2022.

19           (f) Compensation and reimbursement. For attendance at meetings during  
20           adjournment of the General Assembly, a legislative member of the Committee  
21           shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses

1 pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 23 for not more than four meetings. These payments  
2 shall be made from monies appropriated to the General Assembly.

3 Sec. 10. EFFECTIVE DATE

4 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.

5

6

7

8

9

10 (Committee vote: \_\_\_\_\_)

11

\_\_\_\_\_

12

Representative \_\_\_\_\_

13

FOR THE COMMITTEE