

1 Introduced by Committee on Government Operations

2 Date:

3 Subject: General Provisions; common law; general rights; Public Records Act;
4 records relating to juvenile proceedings

5 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to:

6 (1) exempt from the Public Records Act and make confidential any
7 identifying information contained in a record reflecting the initial arrest or
8 charge of a juvenile; and

9 (2) make the Family Division or Criminal Division of the Superior
10 Court the sole records custodian for purposes of responding to a request for
11 law enforcement and court records relating to a person under the jurisdiction of
12 either court pursuant to 33 V.S.A. chapters 52 and 52A.

13 An act relating to confidential information concerning the initial arrest and
14 charge of a juvenile

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

16 * * * Exemption; records of arrest or charge of a juvenile * * *

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

18 § 317. DEFINITIONS; PUBLIC AGENCY; PUBLIC RECORDS AND
19 DOCUMENTS; EXEMPTIONS

20 * * *

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

3 * * *

4 (5)(A) Records dealing with the detection and investigation of crime,
5 but only to the extent that the production of such records:

6 * * *

7 (B)(i) Notwithstanding subdivision (A) of this subdivision (5),
8 records relating to management and direction of a law enforcement agency;
9 records reflecting the initial arrest of a person, including any ticket, citation, or
10 complaint issued for a traffic violation, as that term is defined in 23 V.S.A.
11 § 2302; and records reflecting the charge of a person shall be public.

12 (ii) A public agency shall not release any information within a
13 record reflecting the initial arrest or charge of a person under 19 years of age
14 that would reveal the identity of the person. However, a public agency may
15 disclose identifying information relating to the initial arrest of a person under
16 19 years of age in order to protect the health and safety of any person.

17 * * *

18 * * * Effective July 1, 2022 * * *

19 Sec. 2. 1 V.S.A. § 317 is amended to read:

20 § 317. DEFINITIONS; PUBLIC AGENCY; PUBLIC RECORDS AND
21 DOCUMENTS; EXEMPTIONS

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

* * *

(5)(A) Records dealing with the detection and investigation of crime, but only to the extent that the production of such records:

* * *

(B)(i) 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.

(ii) A public agency shall not release any information within a record reflecting the initial arrest or charge of a person under ~~the age of 19~~ 20 years of age that would reveal the identity of the person. However, a public agency may disclose identifying information relating to the arrest of a person under ~~the age of 19~~ 20 years of age in order to protect the health and safety of any person.

* * *

[Optional]

1 Sec. 3. APPLICATION OF PUBLIC RECORDS ACT EXEMPTION

2 REVIEW

3 Notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 317(e), the Public Records Act exemption
4 amended in Sec. 1 shall continue in effect and shall not be reviewed for repeal.

5 * * * Custodian of records relating to a person under court jurisdiction * * *

6 Sec. 4. 33 V.S.A. § 5117 is amended to read:

7 § 5117. RECORDS OF JUVENILE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS

8 (a)(1) Except as otherwise provided, court and law enforcement reports and
9 files concerning a person subject to the jurisdiction of the court shall be
10 maintained separate from the records and files of other persons. Unless a
11 charge of delinquency is transferred for criminal prosecution under chapter 52
12 of this title or the court otherwise orders in the interests of the child, such
13 records and files shall not be open to public inspection nor their contents
14 disclosed to the public by any person. However, upon a finding that a child is
15 a delinquent child by reason of commission of a delinquent act ~~which~~ that
16 would have been a felony if committed by an adult, the court, upon request of
17 the victim, shall make the child's name available to the victim of the
18 delinquent act. If the victim is incompetent or deceased, the child's name shall
19 be released, upon request, to the victim's guardian or next of kin.

20 (2) When a person is subject to the jurisdiction of the court, the court
21 shall become the sole records custodian for purposes of responding to any

1 request for court or law enforcement records concerning the person. A public
2 agency shall direct any request for these records to the courts for response.

3 (3) When a person is subject to the jurisdiction of the Criminal Division
4 of the Superior Court pursuant to chapter 52 or 52A of this title, the Criminal
5 Division of the Superior Court shall become the sole records custodian for
6 purposes of responding to any request for court or law enforcement records
7 concerning the person. A public agency shall direct any request for these
8 records to the courts for response.

9 * * *

10 * * * Effective Dates * * *

11 Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATES

12 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2021, except that Sec. 2 (2022
13 amendment to 1 V.S.A. § 317(c)(5)(B)(ii) (public records; exemptions; records
14 relating to the initial arrest and charge of a person)) shall take effect on July 1,
15 2022.