

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Judiciary to which was referred House Bill No. 655  
3 entitled “An act relating to qualifying offenses for sealing criminal history  
4 records and access to sealed criminal history records” respectfully reports that  
5 it has considered the same and recommends that the bill be amended by  
6 striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the  
7 following:

8 Sec. 1. 13 V.S.A. chapter 230 is amended to read:

9 Chapter 230 : Expungement and Sealing of Criminal History Records

10 § 7601. DEFINITIONS

11 As used in this chapter:

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

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

17 (3) ~~“Predicate offense” means a criminal offense that can be used to~~  
18 ~~enhance a sentence levied for a later conviction and includes operating a~~  
19 ~~vehicle under the influence of alcohol or other substance in violation of~~  
20 ~~23 V.S.A. § 1201, domestic assault in violation of section 1042 of this title,~~  
21 ~~and stalking in violation of section 1062 of this title. “Predicate offense” shall~~

1 ~~not include misdemeanor possession of cannabis, a disorderly conduct offense~~  
2 ~~under section 1026 of this title, or possession of a controlled substance in~~  
3 ~~violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4230(a), 4231(a), 4232(a), 4233(a), 4234(a), 4234a(a),~~  
4 ~~4234b(a), 4235(b), or 4235a(a). [Repealed.]~~

5 (4) “Qualifying crime” means:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

18 ~~(D) a violation of section 1201 of this title related to burglary,~~  
19 ~~excluding any burglary into an occupied dwelling, as defined in subdivision~~  
20 ~~1201(b)(2) of this title;~~

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

21          (A) all misdemeanor offenses except:

- 1                    (i) a listed crime as defined in subdivision 5301(7) of this title;
- 2                    (ii) a violation of chapter 64 of this title relating to sexual
- 3 exploitation of children;
- 4                    (iii) a violation of section 1030 of this title relating to a violation
- 5 of an abuse prevention order, an order against stalking or sexual assault, or a
- 6 protective order concerning contact with a child;
- 7                    (iv) a violation of chapter 28 of this title related to abuse, neglect,
- 8 and exploitation of a vulnerable adult;
- 9                    (v) a violation of subsection 2605(b) or (c) of this title related to
- 10 voyeurism;
- 11                    (vi) a violation of subdivisions 352(1)–(10) of this title related to
- 12 cruelty to animals;
- 13                    (vii) a violation of section 1026a of this title related to aggravated
- 14 disorderly conduct;
- 15                    (viii) a violation of section 3006 of this title related to neglect of
- 16 duty by a public officer;
- 17                    (ix) a violation of section 5409 of this title related to failure to
- 18 comply with sex offender registry requirements;
- 19                    (x) a violation of section 2802, 2802a, 2803, 2804, or 2804b of
- 20 this title related to obscenity;

1                    (xi) a violation of section 1455 of this title related to hate  
2 motivated crimes;

3                    (xii) a violation of section 1456 of this title related to burning of a  
4 religious symbol;

5                    (xiii) a violation of subsection 1304(a) related to cruelty to a child;

6                    (xiv) a violation of section 1305 related to cruelty by person  
7 having custody of another;

8                    (xv) a violation of section 1306 related to mistreatment of persons  
9 with impaired cognitive function;

10                   (xvi) a violation of section 3151 of this title related to female  
11 genital mutilation;

12                   (xvii) a violation of subsection 3252(b) related to sexual  
13 exploitation of a minor;

14                   (xviii) a violation of subdivision 4058(b)(1) of this title related to  
15 violation of an extreme risk protection order.

16                   (B) the following felonies:

17                   (i) a violation of section 1201 of this title related to burglary,  
18 excluding any burglary into an occupied dwelling, unless the person was  
19 25 years of age or younger at the time of the offense and did not carry a  
20 dangerous or deadly weapon during the commission of the offense;

1                   (ii) designated felony property offenses as defined in subdivision  
2 (5) of this section;

3                   (iii) offenses relating to possessing, cultivating, selling,  
4 dispensing, or transporting regulated drugs, including violations of 18 V.S.A.  
5 § 4230(a) and (b), 4231(a) and (b), 4232(a) and (b), 4233(a) and (b), 4233a(a),  
6 4234(a) and (b), 4234a(a) and (b), 4234b(a) and (b), 4235(b) and (c), or  
7 4235a(a) and (b); and

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

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

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

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

14               (C) section 1802 of this title related to uttering a forged or  
15 counterfeited instrument;

16               (D) section 1804 of this title related to counterfeiting paper money;

17               (E) section 1816 of this title related to possession or use of credit  
18 card skimming devices;

19               (F) section 2001 of this title related to false personation;

20               (G) section 2002 of this title related to false pretenses or tokens;

21               (H) section 2029 of this title related to home improvement fraud;

- 1           (I) section 2030 of this title related to identity theft;
- 2           (J) section 2501 of this title related to grand larceny;
- 3           (K) section 2531 of this title related to embezzlement;
- 4           (L) section 2532 of this title related to embezzlement by officers or  
5 servants of an incorporated bank;
- 6           (M) section 2533 of this title related to embezzlement by a receiver  
7 or trustee;
- 8           (N) section 2561 of this title related to receiving stolen property;
- 9           (O) section 2575 of this title related to retail theft;
- 10          (P) section 2582 of this title related to theft of services;
- 11          (Q) section 2591 of this title related to theft of rented property;
- 12          (R) section 2592 of this title related to failure to return a rented or  
13 leased motor vehicle;
- 14          (S) section 3016 of this title related to false claims;
- 15          (T) section 3701 of this title related to unlawful mischief;
- 16          (U) section 3705 of this title related to unlawful trespass;
- 17          (V) section 3733 of this title related to mills, dams, or bridges;
- 18          (W) section 3761 of this title related to unauthorized removal of  
19 human remains;
- 20          (X) section 3766 of this title related to grave markers and ornaments;
- 21          (Y) chapter 87 of this title related to computer crimes; and





1           ~~(D) pursuant to the conditions set forth in subsection (h) of this~~  
2           ~~section, the person was convicted under 1201(c)(3)(A) of a violation of~~  
3           ~~subdivision 1201(a) of this title related to burglary when the person was~~  
4           ~~25 years of age or younger, and the person did not carry a dangerous or deadly~~  
5           ~~weapon during commission of the offense.~~

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

8           ~~(3) The court shall grant the petition without hearing if the petitioner~~  
9           ~~and the respondent stipulate to the granting of the petition. The respondent~~  
10          ~~shall file the stipulation with the court, and the court shall issue the petitioner~~  
11          ~~an order of expungement and provide notice of the order in accordance with~~  
12          ~~this section.~~

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

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

20                 ~~(A) At least five years have elapsed since the date on which the~~  
21                 ~~person successfully completed the terms and conditions of the sentence for the~~

1 ~~conviction, or if the person has successfully completed the terms and~~  
2 ~~conditions of an indeterminate term of probation that commenced at least five~~  
3 ~~years previously.~~

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

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

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

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

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

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

19 ~~(c)(1) The court shall grant the petition and order that the criminal history~~  
20 ~~record be expunged pursuant to section 7606 of this title if the following~~  
21 ~~conditions are met:~~

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

10          ~~(g) For petitions filed pursuant to subdivision (a)(1)(C) of this section, only~~  
11          ~~petitions to seal may be considered or granted by the court. This subsection~~  
12          ~~shall not apply to an individual licensed as a commercial driver pursuant to~~  
13          ~~23 V.S.A. chapter 39. Unless the court finds that sealing would not be in the~~  
14          ~~interests of justice, the court shall grant the petition and order that the criminal~~  
15          ~~history record be sealed in accordance with section 7607 of this title if the~~  
16          ~~following conditions are met:~~

17                 ~~(1) At least 10 years have elapsed since the date on which the person~~  
18                 ~~successfully completed the terms and conditions of the sentence for the~~  
19                 ~~conviction, or if the person has successfully completed the terms and~~  
20                 ~~conditions of an indeterminate term of probation that commenced at least~~  
21                 ~~10 years previously.~~

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

2                   ~~(A) the person has only one conviction of a violation of 23 V.S.A.~~  
3           ~~§ 1201, which shall be construed in accordance with 23 V.S.A. § 1211; and~~

4                   ~~(B) the person has not been convicted of a crime arising out of a new~~  
5           ~~incident or occurrence since the person was convicted of a violation of~~  
6           ~~23 V.S.A. § 1201(a).~~

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7           (a) Petition.

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

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

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

15           (2) Whichever office prosecuted the offense resulting in the conviction,  
16           the State’s Attorney or Attorney General, shall be the respondent in the matter  
17           unless the prosecuting office authorizes the other to act as the respondent.

18           (3) The court shall grant the petition without hearing if the petitioner  
19           and the respondent stipulate to the granting of the petition. The respondent  
20           shall file the stipulation with the court, and the court shall issue the petitioner

1 an order of sealing and provide notice of the order in accordance with this  
2 section.

3 (4) This section shall not apply to an individual licensed as a  
4 commercial driver pursuant to 23 V.S.A. chapter 39 seeking to seal a record of  
5 a conviction for a felony offense committed in a motor vehicle as defined in  
6 23 V.S.A. § 4.

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

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

11 (1) The petitioner has completed any sentence or supervision for the  
12 offense.

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

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

20 (1) At least three years have elapsed since the date on which the person  
21 completed the terms and conditions of the sentence.



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 respondent has failed to show that sealing would not be in the  
6           interest of justice.

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

11           (1) At least seven years have elapsed since the date on which the person  
12           completed the terms and conditions of the sentence.

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

17           (3) The respondent has failed to show that sealing would not be in the  
18           interest of justice.

19           (e) Qualifying DUI misdemeanor. For petitions filed to seal a qualifying  
20           DUI misdemeanor pursuant to subdivision (a)(1)(B) of this section, the court

1 shall grant the petition and order that the criminal history record be sealed if  
2 the following conditions are met:

3 (1) At least 10 years have elapsed since the date on which the person  
4 completed the terms and conditions of the sentence.

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

9 (3) The respondent has failed to show that sealing would not be in the  
10 interest of justice.

11 § 7603. EXPUNGEMENT AND SEALING OF RECORD, NO  
12 CONVICTION; PROCEDURE

13 (a) Unless either party objects in the interests of justice, the court shall  
14 issue an order sealing the criminal history record related to the citation or arrest  
15 of a person:

16 (1) within 60 days after the final disposition of the case if:

17 (A) the court does not make a determination of probable cause at the  
18 time of arraignment; ~~or~~

19 (B) the charge is dismissed before trial with or without prejudice; or

20 (C) the defendant is acquitted of the charges; or

1           (2) at any time if the prosecuting attorney and the defendant stipulate  
2 that the court may grant the petition to seal the record.

3           (b) If a party objects to sealing ~~or expunging~~ a record pursuant to this  
4 section, the court shall schedule a hearing to determine if sealing ~~or expunging~~  
5 the record serves the interests of justice. The defendant and the prosecuting  
6 attorney shall be the only parties in the matter.

7           (c), (d) [Repealed.]

8           ~~(e) Unless either party objects in the interests of justice, the court shall~~  
9 ~~issue an order expunging a criminal history record related to the citation or~~  
10 ~~arrest of a person:~~

11           ~~(1) within 60 days after the final disposition of the case if:~~

12           ~~(A) the defendant is acquitted of the charges; or~~

13           ~~(B) the charge is dismissed with prejudice;~~

14           ~~(2) at any time if the prosecuting attorney and the defendant stipulate~~  
15 ~~that the court may grant the petition to expunge the record [Repealed].~~

16           ~~(f) Unless either party objects in the interests of justice, the court shall issue~~  
17 ~~an order to expunge a record sealed pursuant to subsection (a) or (g) of this~~  
18 ~~section eight years after the date on which the record was sealed [Repealed].~~

19           (g) A person may file a petition with the court requesting sealing ~~or~~  
20 ~~expungement~~ of a criminal history record related to the citation or arrest of the  
21 person at any time. The court shall grant the petition and issue an order sealing

1 ~~or expunging~~ the record if it finds that sealing ~~or expunging~~ the record serves  
2 the interests of justice, or if the parties stipulate to sealing ~~or expungement~~ of  
3 the record.

4 (h) ~~The court may expunge any records that were sealed pursuant to this~~  
5 ~~section prior to July 1, 2018 unless the State's Attorney's office that~~  
6 ~~prosecuted the case objects. Thirty days prior to expunging a record pursuant~~  
7 ~~to this subsection, the court shall provide to the State's Attorney's office that~~  
8 ~~prosecuted the case written notice of its intent to expunge the record~~  
9 ~~[Repealed].~~

10 § 7604. NEW CHARGE

11 If a person is ~~charged with a criminal offense after he or she has filed a~~  
12 ~~petition for expungement pursuant to this chapter~~ has a criminal charge  
13 pending at the time the petition for ~~expungement~~ is before the court, the court  
14 shall not act on the petition until disposition of the new charge.

15 § 7605. DENIAL OF PETITION

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

19 § 7606. EFFECT OF EXPUNGEMENT

20 (a) Order and notice. Upon finding that the requirements for expungement  
21 have been met, the court shall issue an order that shall include provisions that

1 its effect is to annul the record of the arrest, conviction, and sentence and that  
2 such person shall be treated in all respects as if the person had never been  
3 arrested, convicted, or sentenced for the offense. The court shall provide notice  
4 of the expungement to the respondent, Vermont Crime Information Center  
5 (VCIC), the arresting agency, the Restitution Unit of the Vermont Center for  
6 Crime Victim Services, and any other entity that may have a record related to  
7 the order to expunge. The VCIC shall provide notice of the expungement to the  
8 Federal Bureau of Investigation’s National Crime Information Center.

9 (b) Effect.

10 (1) Upon entry of an expungement order, the order shall be legally  
11 effective immediately and the person whose record is expunged shall be treated  
12 in all respects as if he or she had never been arrested, convicted, or sentenced  
13 for the offense.

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

18 (3) The response to an inquiry from any person regarding an expunged  
19 record shall be that “NO CRIMINAL RECORD EXISTS.”

1           (4) Nothing in this section shall affect any right of the person whose  
2 record has been expunged to rely on it as a bar to any subsequent proceedings  
3 for the same offense.

4           (c) Process.

5           (1) The court shall remove the expunged offense from any accessible  
6 database that it maintains.

7           (2) Until all charges on a docket are expunged, the case file shall remain  
8 publicly accessible.

9           (3) When all charges on a docket have been expunged, the case file shall  
10 be destroyed pursuant to policies established by the Court Administrator.

11          (d) Special index.

12          (1) The court shall keep a special index of cases that have been expunged  
13 together with the expungement order. The index shall list only the name of the  
14 person convicted of the offense, his or her date of birth, the docket number,  
15 and the criminal offense that was the subject of the expungement.

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

20          (3) Inspection of the expungement order may be permitted only upon  
21 petition by the person who is the subject of the case. The Chief Superior Judge

1 may permit special access to the index and the documents for research  
2 purposes pursuant to the rules for public access to court records.

3 (4) [Repealed].

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

6 § 7607. EFFECT OF SEALING

7 (a) Order and notice. Upon entry of an order to seal, the ~~order shall be~~  
8 ~~legally effective immediately and the person whose record is sealed shall be~~  
9 ~~treated in all respects as if the person had never been arrested, convicted, or~~  
10 ~~sentenced for the offense and that its effect is to annul the record of arrest,~~  
11 ~~conviction, and sentence. The court shall provide notice of the sealing to the~~  
12 ~~respondent, Vermont Crime Information Center (VCIC), the arresting agency,~~  
13 ~~the Restitution Unit of the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services, and any~~  
14 ~~other entity that may have a record related to the order to seal~~ send a copy of  
15 any order sealing a criminal history record to all of the parties and attorneys  
16 representing the parties, including to the prosecuting agency that prosecuted  
17 the offense, the Vermont Crime Information Center (VCIC), the arresting  
18 agency, and any other entity that may have a record subject to the sealing  
19 order. VCIC shall provide notice of the sealing order to the Federal Bureau of  
20 Investigation's National Crime Information Center. ~~The VCIC shall provide~~

1 ~~notice of the sealing to the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s National Crime~~  
2 ~~Information Center.~~

3 (b) Effect.

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

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

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

14 (4) Nothing in this section shall affect any right of the person whose  
15 record has been sealed to rely on it as a bar to any subsequent proceeding for  
16 the same offense.

17 (c) Exceptions. A party seeking to use a sealed criminal history record in a  
18 court proceeding shall, prior to any use of the record in open court or in a  
19 public filing, notify the court of their intent to do so. The court shall thereafter  
20 determine the admissibility of the record prior its disclosure in the proceeding.  
21 This shall not apply to the use of a sealed record pursuant to subdivisions (2).



1 (3), (4) or (8) of this section. Use of a sealed document pursuant to an  
2 exception shall not change the effect of sealing under subsection (a) of this  
3 section. Notwithstanding any other provision of law or a sealing order, entities  
4 may access and use sealed records only in the following circumstances, and the  
5 sealed record shall remain otherwise confidential:

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

9 (2) A criminal justice agency as defined in 20 V.S.A. § 2056a and the  
10 Attorney General may use the criminal history record sealed in accordance  
11 with section 7602 or 7603 of this title ~~without limitation~~ for criminal justice  
12 purposes as defined in 20 V.S.A. § 2056a.

13 (3) A sealed record of a prior violation of 23 V.S.A. § 1201(a) shall be  
14 admissible as a predicate offense for the purpose of imposing an enhanced  
15 penalty for a subsequent violation of that section, in accordance with the  
16 provisions of 23 V.S.A. § 1210.

17 (4) A person or a court in possession of an order issued by a court  
18 regarding a matter that was subsequently sealed may file or cite to that decision  
19 in any subsequent proceeding. The party or court filing or citing to that  
20 decision shall ensure that information regarding the identity of the defendant in  
21 the sealed record is redacted.

1           (5) The Vermont Crime Information Center and Criminal Justice  
2           Information Services Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigations shall  
3           have access to sealed criminal history records without limitation for the  
4           purpose of responding to queries to the National Instant Criminal Background  
5           Check System regarding firearms transfers and attempted transfers.

6           (6) For sentencing in subsequent offenses, the court and parties in a  
7           criminal case shall have access to sealed records without limitation.

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

11          (8) The person whose criminal history records have been sealed  
12          pursuant to this chapter and the person’s attorney may access and use the  
13          sealed records.

14          (9) A law enforcement agency may inspect and receive copies of the  
15          sealed criminal history records of any applicant who applies to the agency to  
16          be a law enforcement officer or a current employee for the purpose of internal  
17          investigation.

18          (10) Inspection and copies of sealed criminal history records shall be  
19          available to the Vermont Criminal Justice Council or the Vermont Human  
20          Rights Commission concerning conduct by a law enforcement officer or a  
21          prosecutor.

1           (11) Inspection and copies of sealed criminal history records shall be  
2           available to a person and their attorney if the person is a plaintiff in a civil  
3           action concerning conduct by a law enforcement officer or a prosecutor.

4           (12) Persons or entities conducting research shall have access to a sealed  
5           criminal history record to carry out research pursuant to 20 V.S.A. § 2056b.

6           (13) Inspection and copies of sealed criminal history records shall be  
7           available to State and Federal licensing entities in accordance with State and  
8           Federal law. Such records shall remain confidential and no subject to  
9           disclosure under the Vermont Public Records Act unless and until the licensing  
10          entity relies on such records in a licensing decision.

11          (d) Process. When a sealing order is issued by the court, any person or  
12          entity that possesses criminal history records shall:

13               (1) ~~The court shall bar viewing of the sealed offense in any accessible~~  
14               database that it maintains; or remove information pertaining to the sealed  
15               records from any publicly accessible database that the person or entity  
16               maintains; and

17               (2) ~~Until all charges on a docket have been sealed, the case file shall~~  
18               ~~remain publicly accessible~~ clearly label the criminal history record as  
19               “SEALED” to ensure compliance with this section.

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

1 (e) Special index.

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

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

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

16 (4) ~~The Court Administrator shall establish policies for implementing~~  
17 ~~this subsection.~~

18 ~~(f)(g)~~ Victims Compensation Program. Upon request, the ~~Victim's~~ Victims  
19 Compensation Program shall be provided with a copy, redacted of all  
20 information identifying the offender, of the affidavit for the sole purpose of

1 verifying the expenses in a victim’s compensation application submitted  
2 pursuant to section 5353 of this title.

3 ~~(g)~~(h) Restitution. The sealing of a criminal record shall not affect the  
4 authority of the Restitution Unit to enforce a restitution order in the same  
5 manner as a civil judgment pursuant to subdivision 5362(c)(2) of this title.

6 § 7608. VICTIMS

7 (a) At the time a petition is filed pursuant to this chapter, the respondent  
8 shall give notice of the petition to any victim of the offense who is known to  
9 the respondent. The victim shall have the right to offer the respondent a  
10 statement prior to any stipulation or to offer the court a statement. The  
11 disposition of the petition shall not be unnecessarily delayed pending receipt of  
12 a victim’s statement. The respondent’s inability to locate a victim after a  
13 reasonable effort has been made shall not be a bar to granting a petition.

14 (b) As used in this section, “reasonable effort” means attempting to contact  
15 the victim by first-class mail at the victim’s last known address, ~~and~~ by  
16 telephone at the victim’s last known phone number, and by electronic mail at  
17 the victim’s last known electronic mail address.

18 § 7609. EXPUNGEMENT OF CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS OF AN  
19 INDIVIDUAL 18-21 YEARS OF AGE

20 (a) Procedure. Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, the  
21 record of the criminal proceedings for an individual who was 18-21 years of

1 age at the time the individual committed a qualifying crime shall be expunged  
2 within 30 days after the date on which the individual successfully completed  
3 the terms and conditions of the sentence for the conviction of the qualifying  
4 crime, absent a finding of good cause by the court. The court shall issue an  
5 order to expunge all records and files related to the arrest, citation,  
6 investigation, charge, adjudication of guilt, criminal proceedings, and  
7 probation related to the sentence. A copy of the order shall be sent to each  
8 agency, department, or official named in the order. Thereafter, the court, law  
9 enforcement officers, agencies, and departments shall reply to any request for  
10 information that no record exists with respect to such individual.

11 Notwithstanding this subsection, the record shall not be expunged until  
12 restitution and surcharges have been paid in full, provided that payment of  
13 surcharges shall not be required if the surcharges have been waived by the  
14 court pursuant to section 7282 of this title.

15 (b) Exceptions.

16 (1) A criminal record that includes both qualifying and nonqualifying  
17 offenses shall not be eligible for expungement pursuant to this section.

18 (2) The Vermont Crime Information Center shall retain a special index  
19 of sentences for sex offenses that require registration pursuant to chapter 167,  
20 subchapter 3 of this title. This index shall only list the name and date of birth  
21 of the subject of the expunged files and records, the offense for which the

1 subject was convicted, and the docket number of the proceeding that was the  
2 subject of the expungement. The special index shall be confidential and shall  
3 be accessed only by the Director of the Vermont Crime Information Center and  
4 an individual designated for the purpose of providing information to the  
5 Department of Corrections in the preparation of a presentence investigation in  
6 accordance with 28 V.S.A. §§ 204 and 204a.

7 (c) Petitions. An individual who was 18-21 years of age at the time the  
8 individual committed a qualifying crime may file a petition with the court  
9 requesting expungement of the criminal history record related to the qualifying  
10 crime after 30 days have elapsed since the individual completed the terms and  
11 conditions for the sentence for the qualifying crime. The court shall grant the  
12 petition and issue an order sealing or expunging the record if it finds that  
13 sealing or expunging the record serves the interests of justice.

#### 14 § 7610. CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD SEALING SPECIAL FUND

15 There is established the Criminal History Record Sealing Special Fund,  
16 which shall be managed in accordance with 32 V.S.A. chapter 7, subchapter 5.  
17 Fees collected pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1431(e) for the filing of a petition to  
18 seal a criminal history record of a violation of 23 V.S.A. § 1201(a) shall be  
19 deposited into and credited to this Fund. This Fund shall be available to the  
20 Office of the Court Administrator, the Department of State's Attorneys and  
21 Sheriffs, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and the Vermont Crime

1 Information Center to offset the administrative costs of sealing such records.  
2 Balances in the Fund at the end of the fiscal year shall be carried forward and  
3 remain in the Fund.

4 § 7611. UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURE

5 A State or municipal employee or contractor or any agent of the court,  
6 including an attorney and an employee or contractor of the attorney, who  
7 knowingly accesses or discloses sealed criminal history record information  
8 without authorization shall be assessed a civil penalty of not more than  
9 \$1,000.00. Each unauthorized disclosure shall constitute a separate civil  
10 violation.

11 Sec. 2. 13 V.S.A. § 7041 is amended to read:

12 § 7041. DEFERRED SENTENCE

13 (a) Upon an adjudication of guilt and after the filing of a presentence  
14 investigation report, the court may defer sentencing and place the respondent  
15 on probation upon such terms and conditions as it may require if a written  
16 agreement concerning the deferring of sentence is entered into between the  
17 State's Attorney and the respondent and filed with the clerk of the court.

18 (b) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, the court may defer  
19 sentencing and place the respondent on probation without a written agreement  
20 between the State's Attorney and the respondent if the following conditions are  
21 met:



1 (1) [Repealed.]

2 (2) the crime for which the respondent is being sentenced is not a listed  
3 crime as defined in subdivision 5301(7) of this title;

4 (3) the court orders a presentence investigation in accordance with the  
5 procedures set forth in V.R.C.P. Rule 32, unless the State’s Attorney agrees to  
6 waive the presentence investigation;

7 (4) the court permits the victim to submit a written or oral statement  
8 concerning the consideration of deferment of sentence;

9 (5) the court reviews the presentence investigation and the victim’s  
10 impact statement with the parties; and

11 (6) the court determines that deferring sentence is in the interests of  
12 justice.

13 (c) Notwithstanding subsections (a) and (b) of this section, the court may  
14 not defer a sentence for a violation of section 3253a (aggravated sexual assault  
15 of a child), section 2602 (lewd and lascivious conduct with a child unless the  
16 victim and the defendant were within five years of age and the act was  
17 consensual), 3252(c) (sexual assault of a child under 16 unless the victim and  
18 the defendant were within five years of age and the act was consensual),  
19 3252(d) or (e) (sexual assault of a child), 3253(a)(8) (aggravated sexual  
20 assault), or 3253a (aggravated sexual assault of a child) of this title.

1 (d) Entry of deferment of sentence shall constitute an appealable judgment  
2 for purposes of appeal in accordance with 12 V.S.A. § 2383 and V.R.A.P. Rule  
3 3. Except as otherwise provided, entry of deferment of sentence shall constitute  
4 imposition of sentence solely for the purpose of sentence review in accordance  
5 with section 7042 of this title. The court may impose sentence at any time if  
6 the respondent violates the conditions of the deferred sentence during the  
7 period of deferment.

8 (e) Upon violation of the terms of probation or of the deferred sentence  
9 agreement, the court shall impose sentence. Upon fulfillment of the terms of  
10 probation and of the deferred sentence agreement, the court shall strike the  
11 adjudication of guilt and discharge the respondent. Except as provided in  
12 subsection (h) of this section, the record of the criminal proceedings shall be  
13 ~~expunged~~ sealed upon the discharge of the respondent from probation, absent a  
14 finding of good cause by the court. The court shall issue an order to ~~expunge~~  
15 seal all records and files related to the arrest, citation, investigation, charge,  
16 adjudication of guilt, criminal proceedings, and probation related to the  
17 deferred sentence. Copies of the order shall be sent to each agency,  
18 department, or official named therein. Thereafter, the court, law enforcement  
19 officers, agencies, and departments shall reply to any request for information  
20 that no record exists with respect to such person upon inquiry in the matter.

1 Notwithstanding this subsection, the record shall not be ~~expunged~~ sealed until  
2 restitution has been paid in full.

3 (f) A deferred sentence imposed under subsection (a) or (b) of this section  
4 may include a restitution order issued pursuant to section 7043 of this title.

5 Nonpayment of restitution shall not constitute grounds for imposition of the  
6 underlying sentence.

7 (g) [Repealed.]

8 (h) The Vermont Crime Information Center shall retain a special index of  
9 deferred sentences for sex offenses that require registration pursuant to  
10 subchapter 3 of chapter 167 of this title. This index shall only list the name and  
11 date of birth of the subject of the ~~expunged~~ sealed files and records, the offense  
12 for which the subject was convicted, and the docket number of the proceeding  
13 that was the subject of the ~~expungement~~ sealing. The special index shall be  
14 confidential and may be accessed only by the director of the Vermont Crime  
15 Information Center and a designated clerical staffperson for the purpose of  
16 providing information to the Department of Corrections in the preparation of a  
17 presentence investigation in accordance with 28 V.S.A. §§ 204 and 204a.

18 Sec. 3. 24 V.S.A. § 2002 is added to read:

19 § 2002. EXPUNGEMENT OF MUNICIPAL VIOLATION RECORDS

20 (a) Expungement. Two years following the satisfaction of a judgment  
21 resulting from an adjudication of a municipal violation, the Judicial Bureau

1 shall make an entry of “expunged” and notify the municipality of such action,  
2 provided the person has not been adjudicated for any subsequent municipal  
3 violations during that time. The data transfer to the municipality shall include  
4 the name, date of birth, ticket number, and offense. Violations of offenses  
5 adopted pursuant to chapter 117 of this title shall not be eligible for  
6 expungement under this section.

7 (b) Effect of expungement.

8 (1) Upon entry of an expungement order, the order shall be legally  
9 effective immediately and the individual whose record is expunged shall be  
10 treated in all respects as if the individual had never been adjudicated of the  
11 violation.

12 (2) Upon an entry of expunged, the case will be accessible only by the  
13 Clerk of the Court for the Judicial Bureau or the Clerk’s designee.  
14 Adjudications that have been expunged shall not appear in the results of any  
15 Judicial Bureau database search by name, date of birth, or any other data  
16 identifying the defendant. Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section,  
17 any documents or other records related to an expunged adjudication that are  
18 maintained outside the Judicial Bureau’s case management system shall be  
19 destroyed.



1        No later than October 1, 2024, the Attorney General, the Department of  
2        State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs, the Office of the Defender General, the  
3        Department of Public Safety, and the Chief Superior Court Judge shall each  
4        submit to the Joint Committee on Justice Oversight recommendations for  
5        phasing in a policy of petitionless sealing criminal history records. The  
6        stakeholders may offer joint recommendations. The recommendations shall  
7        address:

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

11               (2) the mechanism for automatic sealing and any resources required for  
12               the proposal.

13        Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATES

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20

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Representative \_\_\_\_\_  
FOR THE COMMITTEE