

STATE OF NEW YORK

6542

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

March 19, 2021

Introduced by M. of A. PEOPLES-STOKES -- read once and referred to the Committee on Codes

AN ACT to amend the criminal procedure law, in relation to providing for the release of certain grand jury proceeding materials on the basis of enduring historical importance

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subdivision 4 of section 190.25 of the
2 criminal procedure law, as amended by chapter 677 of the laws of 1985,
3 is amended to read as follows:

4 (a) [~~Grand~~] (i) Except as otherwise provided by law, grand jury
5 proceedings are secret, and no grand juror, or other person specified in
6 subdivision three of this section or section 215.70 of the penal law,
7 may, except in the lawful discharge of his duties or upon written order
8 of the court, disclose the nature or substance of any grand jury testi-
9 mony, evidence, or any decision, result or other matter attending a
10 grand jury proceeding. For the purpose of assisting the grand jury in
11 conducting its investigation, evidence obtained by a grand jury may be
12 independently examined by the district attorney, members of his staff,
13 police officers specifically assigned to the investigation, and such
14 other persons as the court may specifically authorize. Such evidence may
15 not be disclosed to other persons without a court order. Nothing
16 contained herein shall prohibit a witness from disclosing his own testi-
17 mony.

18 (ii) In proceedings where a grand jury is impaneled to hear and exam-
19 ine evidence concerning offenses, misconduct, nonfeasance and neglect
20 by a public officer or employee, whether criminal or otherwise, in
21 which a charge that a designated person committed a crime is dismissed
22 pursuant to subdivision one of section 190.75 of this article or
23 concluded without an indictment, any person may file a written petition
24 seeking the release of material concerning or related to the grand jury

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[~~-~~] is old law to be omitted.

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proceeding, including but not limited to transcripts, reports, exhibits, or material of any nature or substance of any grand jury testimony, evidence or any decision, result or any other matter which occurred during a grand jury proceeding upon the basis of enduring historical importance. Enduring historical importance shall be a rebuttable presumption in cases where a petitioner is seeking release of grand jury records fifty years or older on the basis of a proceeding's enduring historical importance. For the purposes of this paragraph the term "enduring historical importance" shall mean a matter where the release of a grand jury proceeding would enhance the existing historical record, foster further scholarly discussion, and improve the public's understanding of a significant historical event. In all such cases, upon a finding of enduring historical importance a court shall release such grand jury records in a manner and form as determined by the court.

§ 2. This act shall take effect immediately.