

10559

I N A S S E M B L Y

April 7, 2010

Introduced by M. of A. CASTRO -- read once and referred to the Committee
on Governmental Operations

AN ACT to amend the civil rights law, in relation to regulating the
collection, recording and disclosing of confidential information
obtained by state employees in the course of official duties

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEM-
BLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section 1. The civil rights law is amended by adding a new section
2 50-f to read as follows:
3 S 50-F. DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION BY STATE EMPLOYEES. 1.
4 DEFINITIONS. AS USED IN THIS SECTION:
5 A. "CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION" MEANS ANY INFORMATION MAINTAINED OR
6 OBTAINED BY A STATE AGENCY, OFFICER, OR EMPLOYEE CONCERNING AN INDIVID-
7 UAL'S HEALTH OR DISABILITY STATUS, INCOME TAX RECORDS, SEXUAL ORIEN-
8 TATION, STATUS AS A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, STATUS AS A CRIME
9 VICTIM OR WITNESS, PUBLIC ASSISTANCE STATUS, IMMIGRATION STATUS, OR ANY
10 INFORMATION THAT IS OTHERWISE PROTECTED FROM DISCLOSURE BY ANY PROVISION
11 OF FEDERAL, STATE, OR LOCAL LAW; AND
12 B. "LINE WORKER" MEANS ANY PERSON EMPLOYED BY ANY STATE AGENCY WHOSE
13 DUTIES INVOLVE CONTACT WITH THE PUBLIC.
14 2. PROCEDURE FOR THE DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.
15 A. EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH B OF THIS SUBDIVISION, NO STATE
16 OFFICER OR EMPLOYEE SHALL DISCLOSE CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION TO ANYONE
17 EXCEPT ANOTHER STATE OFFICER OR EMPLOYEE ACTING IN THE SCOPE OF HIS OR
18 HER OFFICIAL DUTIES.
19 B. OTHER THAN AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH A OF THIS SUBDIVISION, CONFI-
20 DENTIAL INFORMATION MAY BE DISCLOSED ONLY IF:
21 (I) THE OFFICER'S OR EMPLOYEE'S AGENCY IS REQUIRED BY LAW TO DISCLOSE
22 SUCH CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION AND PROVIDED THAT SUCH DISCLOSURE SHALL BE
23 LIMITED TO THAT REQUIRED BY LAW; OR
24 (II) THE OFFICER'S OR EMPLOYEE'S AGENCY HAS BEEN AUTHORIZED, IN WRIT-
25 ING SIGNED BY THE INDIVIDUAL OR, IF THE INDIVIDUAL IS A MINOR OR OTHER-
26 WISE INCOMPETENT, SUCH AUTHORIZATION HAS BEEN SIGNED BY THE INDIVIDUAL'S
27 PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN, TO DISCLOSE SUCH CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION, AND

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

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1 PROVIDED THAT THE DISCLOSURE SHALL BE LIMITED TO THAT AUTHORIZED IN
2 WRITING BY THE INDIVIDUAL; OR

3 (III) THERE IS REASONABLE SUSPICION OR PROBABLE CAUSE TO BELIEVE THAT
4 A PERSON IS ENGAGING IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITY AND THE DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL
5 INFORMATION IS NECESSARY TO COOPERATE WITH A LAW ENFORCEMENT
6 AGENCY OR AGENCIES INVESTIGATING THAT CRIMINAL ACTIVITY; OR

7 (IV) SUCH CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION IS TO BE USED BY A FEDERAL, STATE,
8 OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY, AND SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMPILING
9 STATISTICAL INFORMATION, PROVIDED THAT THE DISCLOSURE SHALL BE LIMITED
10 TO THAT NECESSARY TO COMPILE SUCH STATISTICAL INFORMATION, AND PROVIDED
11 FURTHER THAT THE RECIPIENT OF THE INFORMATION ENSURES, IN WRITING IN
12 ADVANCE OF ANY DISCLOSURE, THAT THE CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION DISCLOSED
13 WILL NOT BE FURTHER DISCLOSED TO ANY OTHER AGENCY OR OTHER INDIVIDUAL.

14 3. PROCEDURE FOR THE COLLECTING AND/OR RECORDING OF CONFIDENTIAL
15 INFORMATION. THIS SUBDIVISION SHALL APPLY TO ANY DOCUMENTATION, QUESTIONNAIRE,
16 INTERVIEW SHEET, OR OTHER FORM USED IN RELATION TO BENEFITS
17 OR SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE STATE.

18 A. NO STATE OFFICER OR EMPLOYEE SHALL MAKE INQUIRIES REGARDING CONFIDENTIAL
19 INFORMATION OF ANY INDIVIDUAL, WHEN SUCH INDIVIDUAL, ON HIS OR
20 HER BEHALF OR ON BEHALF OF ANOTHER, IS APPLYING FOR, OR IS RECEIVING,
21 ANY SERVICE OR BENEFIT PROVIDED BY THE STATE, UNLESS SUCH CONFIDENTIAL
22 INFORMATION IS SPECIFICALLY REQUIRED BY FEDERAL OR STATE LAW AS A CONDITION
23 OF RECEIPT OF SUCH SERVICE OR BENEFIT.

24 B. IF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION IS REQUIRED BY FEDERAL OR STATE LAW AS
25 A CONDITION OF RECEIPT OF A SERVICE OR BENEFIT PROVIDED BY THE STATE,
26 THE STATE OFFICER OR EMPLOYEE SHALL MAKE ONLY THOSE INQUIRIES NECESSARY
27 TO DETERMINE IF AN APPLICANT OR RECIPIENT IS QUALIFIED FOR AND OTHERWISE
28 MEETS THE CONDITIONS FOR RECEIPT OF SUCH SERVICE OR BENEFIT.

29 C. NO STATE OFFICER OR EMPLOYEE SHALL COLLECT AND/OR RECORD INFORMATION
30 REGARDING THE IMMIGRATION STATUS OF AN APPLICANT FOR, OR RECIPIENT
31 OF, ANY SERVICE OR BENEFIT UNLESS SUCH IMMIGRATION STATUS IS REQUIRED BY
32 FEDERAL OR STATE LAW. WHERE FEDERAL OR STATE LAW REQUIRES THE RECORDING
33 OF SUCH CONFIDENTIAL IMMIGRATION STATUS INFORMATION, ONLY THAT INFORMATION
34 SPECIFICALLY REQUIRED SHALL BE RECORDED.

35 4. DESIGNATION OF ACCESS OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR AUTHORIZING THE
36 RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION. THE HEAD OR GOVERNING BODY OF EACH
37 AGENCY SHALL DESIGNATE ONE OR MORE PERSONS WITH SUPERVISORY AUTHORITY,
38 AND ASSIGN TO SUCH PERSONS THE FURTHER AUTHORITY TO APPROVE AND AUTHORIZE
39 THE RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION. THE DESIGNATION SHALL
40 INCLUDE THE NAME, SPECIFIC JOB TITLE, TELEPHONE NUMBER, AND BUSINESS
41 ADDRESS OF EACH SUCH DESIGNATED ACCESS OFFICER. WHEN APPROVING AND
42 AUTHORIZING THE RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION, A DESIGNATED ACCESS
43 OFFICER SHALL SPECIFY, IN WRITING, THE SPECIFIC INFORMATION TO BE
44 DISCLOSED, AND THE PERSONS OR ENTITIES TO WHOM SUCH DISCLOSURE SHALL BE
45 MADE. THE DESIGNATED ACCESS OFFICER SHALL ENSURE THAT ANY DISCLOSURE IS
46 AUTHORIZED BY LAW AND WITHIN THE LIMITS AS PROVIDED BY LAW.

47 5. DISCLOSURE BY LINE WORKERS OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION. NO LINE
48 WORKER EMPLOYED BY A STATE AGENCY SHALL DISCLOSE CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION
49 WITHOUT OBTAINING PRIOR WRITTEN APPROVAL FROM A DESIGNATED ACCESS
50 OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL
51 INFORMATION FOR THAT AGENCY.

52 6. REVIEW OF A COMPLAINT. UPON RECEIPT OF A COMPLAINT, THE STATE AGENCY
53 SHALL DETERMINE IMMEDIATELY WHETHER THERE ARE REASONABLE GROUNDS FOR
54 AN INVESTIGATION. SUCH INVESTIGATION SHALL BE CONDUCTED IN A MANNER
55 PRESCRIBED IN THE REGULATIONS SET FORTH BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE STATE
56 AGENCY OR AN AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE. IF THE DIRECTOR OR AUTHORIZED

1 REPRESENTATIVE DETERMINES THAT THE INVESTIGATION AND RESOLUTION OF SUCH
2 COMPLAINT IS MORE SUITABLY HANDLED BY ANOTHER STATE AGENCY, THEN SUCH
3 DIRECTOR OR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE SHALL IMMEDIATELY FORWARD SUCH
4 COMPLAINT TO THE APPROPRIATE AGENCY. THE STATE AGENCY SHALL MAINTAIN A
5 FILE CONCERNING SUCH COMPLAINTS THROUGH SUCH AGENCY'S COMPLETION OR
6 ACTION THEREON. ANY STATE AGENCY RECEIVING A COMPLAINT PURSUANT TO THIS
7 SUBDIVISION SHALL PROVIDE UPON REQUEST, WRITTEN NOTICE OF THE FINAL
8 DETERMINATION OF OR ACTION UPON SUCH COMPLAINT.

9 7. VIOLATION. ANY STATE AGENCY WHICH EMPLOYS A PERSON WHO HAS BEEN
10 CHARGED WITH THE DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION IN VIOLATION OF
11 THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ARTICLE SHALL BE SUBJECT TO A CIVIL PENALTY OF AN
12 AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS.

13 8. OTHER LAWS RESPECTING CONFIDENTIALITY. NOTHING HEREIN REDUCES OR
14 ABRIDGES ANY OTHER PROTECTION IN FEDERAL, STATE, OR LOCAL LAW RESPECTING
15 THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION.

16 9. SEVERABILITY. IF ANY SECTION, SUBDIVISION, SENTENCE, CLAUSE, PHRASE
17 OR OTHER PORTION OF THIS SECTION IS, FOR ANY REASON, DECLARED UNCONSTITUTIONAL
18 OR INVALID, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, BY ANY COURT OF COMPETENT
19 JURISDICTION, SUCH PORTION SHALL BE DEEMED SEVERABLE, AND SUCH UNCONSTITUTIONALITY
20 OR INVALIDITY SHALL NOT AFFECT THE VALIDITY OF THE REMAINING
21 PORTIONS OF THIS SECTION, WHICH REMAINING PORTIONS SHALL CONTINUE IN
22 FULL FORCE AND EFFECT.

23 S 2. This act shall take effect immediately; provided, however, that
24 effective immediately, the addition, amendment and/or repeal of any rule
25 or regulation necessary for the implementation of this act on its effective
26 date are authorized and directed to be made and completed on or
27 before such effective date.