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I N   A S S E M B L Y

February 28, 2014

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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 authorizing  
the use of closed-circuit television for vulnerable domestic violence  
victim witnesses

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

1     Section 1. Article 65 of the criminal procedure law, as added by chap-  
2     ter 505 of the laws of 1985, subdivision 1 of section 65.00, and subdi-  
3     vision 7 and paragraph (k) of subdivision 10 of section 65.20 as amended  
4     by chapter 320 of the laws of 2006, subdivisions 11 and 12 of section  
5     65.20 as amended by chapter 455 of the laws of 1991, subdivision 1 of  
6     section 65.10 as amended, subdivision 2 of section 65.20 as added, the  
7     opening paragraph of subdivision 10 of section 65.20 as amended, and  
8     subdivisions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 of section 65.20 as  
9     renumbered by chapter 548 of the laws of 2007, is amended to read as  
10    follows:

11                                    ARTICLE 65

12                                    USE OF CLOSED-CIRCUIT TELEVISION FOR  
13                                    CERTAIN [CHILD] WITNESSES

14    Section 65.00    Definitions.  
15                    65.10    Closed-circuit television; general rule; declaration of  
16                                    vulnerability.  
17                    65.20    Closed-circuit television; procedure for application and  
18                                    grounds for determination.  
19                    65.30    Closed-circuit television; special testimonial [proce-  
20                                    dure] PROCEDURES.

21    S 65.00 Definitions.

22        As used in this article:

23        1. "Child witness" means a person fourteen years old or less who is or  
24        will be called to testify in a criminal proceeding, other than a grand  
25        jury proceeding, concerning an offense defined in article one hundred

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

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thirty of the penal law or section 255.25, 255.26 or 255.27 of such law which is the subject of such criminal proceeding.

2. "DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS" MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS A VICTIM OF A FAMILY OFFENSE, AS DEFINED IN SUBDIVISION ONE OF SECTION 530.11 OF THIS CHAPTER, OR AN OFFENSE COMMITTED BY A MEMBER OF SUCH INDIVIDUAL'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY AS DEFINED IN SUBDIVISION FOUR OF SECTION 120.40 OF THE PENAL LAW.

3. "Vulnerable [child] witness" means a child witness OR A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS whom a court has declared to be vulnerable.

[3.] 4. "Testimonial room" means any room, separate and apart from the courtroom, which is furnished comfortably and less formally than a courtroom and from which the testimony of a vulnerable child witness can be transmitted to the courtroom by means of live, two-way closed-circuit television.

[4.] 5. "Live, two-way closed-circuit television" means a simultaneous transmission, by closed-circuit television, or other electronic means, between the courtroom and the testimonial room in accordance with the provisions of section 65.30 OF THIS ARTICLE.

[5.] 6. "Operator" means the individual authorized by the court to operate the closed-circuit television equipment used in accordance with the provisions of this article.

[6.] 7. A person occupies "a position of authority with respect to a child" when he or she is a parent, guardian or other person responsible for the custody or care of [the] A child at the relevant time or is any other person who maintains an ongoing personal relationship with such parent, guardian or other person responsible for custody or care, which relationship involves his or her living, or his or her frequent and repeated presence, in the same household or premises as the child.

S 65.10 Closed-circuit television; general rule; declaration of vulnerability.

1. A child witness OR A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS shall be declared vulnerable when the court, in accordance with the provisions of section 65.20 OF THIS ARTICLE, determines by clear and convincing evidence that it is likely that such child witness OR SUCH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS will suffer serious mental or emotional harm if required to testify at a criminal proceeding without the use of live, two-way closed-circuit television and that the use of such live, two-way closed-circuit television will diminish the likelihood or extent of, such harm.

2. When the court declares a child witness OR A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS to be vulnerable, it shall, except as provided in subdivision four of section 65.30 OF THIS ARTICLE, authorize the taking of the testimony of the vulnerable [child] witness from the testimonial room by means of live, two-way closed-circuit television. Under no circumstances shall the provisions of this article be construed to authorize a closed-circuit television system by which events in the courtroom are not transmitted to the testimonial room during the testimony of the vulnerable [child] witness.

3. Nothing [herein] IN THIS ARTICLE shall be [contrued] CONSTRUED to preclude the court from exercising its power to close the courtroom or from exercising any authority it otherwise may have to protect the well-being of a witness and the rights of the defendant.

S 65.20 Closed-circuit television; procedure for application and grounds for determination.

1. Prior to the commencement of a criminal proceeding[;], other than a grand jury proceeding, either party may apply to the court for an order

1 declaring that a child witness OR A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS is  
2 vulnerable.

3 2. A child witness OR A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS should be  
4 declared vulnerable when the court, in accordance with the provisions of  
5 this section, determines by clear and convincing evidence that the child  
6 witness OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS would suffer serious  
7 mental or emotional harm that would substantially impair the child  
8 witness' OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS' ability to communicate  
9 with the finder of fact without the use of live, two-way closed-circuit  
10 television.

11 3. A motion pursuant to subdivision one of this section must be made  
12 in writing at least eight days before the commencement of trial or other  
13 criminal proceeding upon reasonable notice to the other party and with  
14 an opportunity to be heard.

15 4. The motion papers must state the basis for the motion and must  
16 contain sworn allegations of fact which, if true, would support a deter-  
17 mination by the court that the child witness OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
18 VICTIM WITNESS is vulnerable. Such allegations may be based upon the  
19 personal knowledge of the deponent or upon information and belief,  
20 provided that, in the latter event, the sources of such information and  
21 the grounds for such belief are stated.

22 5. The answering papers may admit or deny any of the alleged facts and  
23 may, in addition, contain sworn allegations of fact relevant to the  
24 motion, including the rights of the defendant, the need to protect the  
25 child witness OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS and the integrity  
26 of the truth-finding function of the trier of fact.

27 6. Unless all material facts alleged in support of the motion made  
28 pursuant to subdivision one of this section are conceded, the court  
29 shall, in addition to examining the papers and hearing oral argument,  
30 conduct an appropriate hearing for the purpose of making findings of  
31 fact essential to the determination of the motion. Except as provided in  
32 subdivision [six] SEVEN of this section, it may subpoena or call and  
33 examine witnesses, who must either testify under oath or be permitted to  
34 give unsworn testimony pursuant to subdivision two of section 60.20 OF  
35 THIS ARTICLE and must authorize the attorneys for the parties to do the  
36 same.

37 7. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the child witness OR  
38 THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS who is alleged to be vulnerable may  
39 not be compelled to testify at such hearing or to submit to any psycho-  
40 logical or psychiatric examination. The failure of the child witness OR  
41 THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS to testify at such hearing shall  
42 not be a ground for denying a motion made pursuant to subdivision one of  
43 this section. Prior statements made by the child witness relating to any  
44 allegations of conduct constituting an offense defined in article one  
45 hundred thirty of the penal law or incest as defined in section 255.25,  
46 255.26 or 255.27 of such law, or PRIOR STATEMENTS MADE BY THE CHILD  
47 WITNESS OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS RELATING to any allega-  
48 tion of words or conduct constituting an attempt to prevent, impede or  
49 deter [the child] SUCH witness from cooperating in the investigation or  
50 prosecution of the offense shall be admissible at such hearing,  
51 provided, however, that a declaration that a child witness OR A DOMESTIC  
52 VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS is vulnerable may not be based solely upon such  
53 prior statements.

54 8. (a) Notwithstanding any of the provisions of article forty-five of  
55 the civil practice law and rules, any physician, psychologist, nurse or  
56 social worker who has treated a child witness OR A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

1 VICTIM WITNESS may testify at a hearing conducted pursuant to subdivi-  
2 sion [five] SIX of this section concerning the treatment of such child  
3 witness OR SUCH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS as such treatment  
4 relates to the issue presented at the hearing, provided that any other-  
5 wise applicable statutory privileges concerning communications between  
6 the child witness OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS and such  
7 physician, psychologist, nurse or social worker in connection with such  
8 treatment shall not be deemed waived by such testimony alone, except to  
9 the limited extent of permitting the court alone to examine in camera  
10 reports, records or documents, if any, prepared by such physician,  
11 psychologist, nurse or social worker. If upon such examination the court  
12 determines that such reports, records or documents, or any one or  
13 portion thereof, contain information material and relevant to the issue  
14 of whether the child witness OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS is  
15 a vulnerable [child] witness, the court shall disclose such information  
16 to both the attorney for the defendant and the district attorney.

17 (b) At any time after a motion has been made pursuant to subdivision  
18 one of this section, upon the demand of the other party the moving party  
19 must furnish the demanding party with a copy of any and all of such  
20 records, reports or other documents in the possession of such other  
21 party and must, in addition, supply the court with a copy of all such  
22 reports, records or other documents which are the subject of the demand.  
23 At any time after a demand has been made pursuant to this paragraph, the  
24 moving party may demand that property of the same kind or character in  
25 possession of the party that originally made such demand be furnished to  
26 the moving party and, if so furnished, be supplied, in addition, to the  
27 court.

28 9. (a) Prior to the commencement of the hearing conducted pursuant to  
29 subdivision five of this section, the district attorney shall, subject  
30 to a protective order, comply with the provisions of subdivision one of  
31 section 240.45 of this chapter as they concern any witness whom the  
32 district attorney intends to call at the hearing and the child witness  
33 OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS.

34 (b) Before a defendant calls a witness at such hearing, he or she  
35 must, subject to a protective order, comply with the provisions of  
36 subdivision two of section 240.45 of this chapter as they concern all  
37 the witnesses the defendant intends to call at such hearing.

38 10. The court may consider, in determining whether there are factors  
39 which would cause the child witness OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM  
40 WITNESS to suffer serious mental or emotional harm, a finding that any  
41 one or more of the following circumstances have been established by  
42 clear and convincing evidence:

43 (a) The manner of the commission of the offense of which the defendant  
44 is accused was particularly heinous or was characterized by aggravating  
45 circumstances.

46 (b) The child witness OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS is  
47 particularly young or otherwise particularly subject to psychological  
48 harm on account of a physical or mental condition which existed before  
49 the alleged commission of the offense.

50 (c) At the time of the alleged offense, the defendant occupied a posi-  
51 tion of authority with respect to the child witness.

52 (d) The offense or offenses charged were part of an ongoing course of  
53 conduct committed by the defendant against the child witness OR THE  
54 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS over an extended period of time.

55 (e) A deadly weapon or dangerous instrument was allegedly used during  
56 the commission of the crime.

1 (f) The defendant has inflicted serious physical injury upon the child  
2 witness OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS.

3 (g) A threat, express or implied, of physical violence to the child  
4 witness OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS, or a third person if  
5 [the child] SUCH witness were to report the incident to any person or  
6 communicate information to or cooperate with a court, grand jury, prose-  
7 cutor, police officer or peace officer concerning the incident has been  
8 made by or on behalf of the defendant.

9 (h) A threat, express or implied, of the incarceration of a parent or  
10 guardian of the child witness OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS,  
11 the removal of the child witness OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS  
12 from the family or the dissolution of the family of the child witness OR  
13 THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS if [the child] SUCH witness were to  
14 report the incident to any person or communicate information to or coop-  
15 erate with a court, grand jury, prosecutor, police officer or peace  
16 officer concerning the incident has been made by or on behalf of the  
17 defendant.

18 (i) A witness other than the child witness OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
19 VICTIM WITNESS has received a threat of physical violence directed at  
20 such witness or to a third person by or on behalf of the defendant.

21 (j) The defendant, at the time of the inquiry, (i) is living in the  
22 same household with the child witness OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM  
23 WITNESS, (ii) has ready access to the child witness OR THE DOMESTIC  
24 VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS or (iii) is providing substantial financial  
25 support for the child witness OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS.

26 (k) The child witness OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS has  
27 previously been the victim of an offense defined in article one hundred  
28 thirty of the penal law or incest as defined in section 255.25, 255.26  
29 or 255.27 of such law.

30 (l) According to expert testimony, the child witness OR THE DOMESTIC  
31 VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS would be particularly [suceptible] SUSCEPTIBLE  
32 to psychological harm if required to testify in open court or in the  
33 physical presence of the defendant.

34 11. Irrespective of whether a motion was made pursuant to subdivision  
35 one of this section, the court, at the request of either party or on its  
36 own motion, may decide that a child witness OR A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
37 VICTIM WITNESS may be vulnerable based on its own observations that a  
38 child witness OR A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS who has been called  
39 to testify at a criminal proceeding is suffering severe mental or  
40 emotional harm and therefore is physically or mentally unable to testify  
41 or to continue to testify in open court or in the physical presence of  
42 the defendant and that the use of live, two-way closed-circuit tele-  
43 vision is necessary to enable [the child] SUCH witness to testify. If  
44 the court so decides, it must conduct the same hearing that subdivision  
45 [five] SIX of this section requires when a motion is made pursuant to  
46 subdivision one of this section, and it must make findings of fact  
47 pursuant to subdivisions [nine and eleven] TEN AND TWELVE of this  
48 section, before determining that the child witness OR THE DOMESTIC  
49 VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS is vulnerable.

50 12. In deciding whether a child witness OR A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM  
51 WITNESS is vulnerable, the court shall make findings of fact which  
52 reflect the causal relationship between the existence of any one or more  
53 of the factors set forth in subdivision [nine] TEN of this section or  
54 other relevant factors which the court finds are established and the  
55 determination that the child witness OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM  
56 WITNESS is vulnerable. If the court is satisfied that the child witness

1 OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS is vulnerable and that, under  
2 the facts and circumstances of the particular case, the defendant's  
3 constitutional rights to an impartial jury or of confrontation will not  
4 be impaired, it may enter an order granting the application for the use  
5 of live, two-way closed-circuit television.

6 13. When the court has determined that a child witness OR A DOMESTIC  
7 VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS is a vulnerable [child] witness, it shall make a  
8 specific finding as to whether placing the defendant and the child  
9 witness OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS in the same room during  
10 the testimony of the child witness OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM  
11 WITNESS will contribute to the likelihood that [the child] SUCH witness  
12 will suffer severe mental or emotional harm. If the court finds that  
13 placing the defendant and the child witness OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
14 VICTIM WITNESS in the same room during the testimony of the child  
15 witness OR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM WITNESS will contribute to the  
16 likelihood that [the child] SUCH witness will suffer severe mental or  
17 emotional harm, the order entered pursuant to subdivision [eleven]  
18 TWELVE of this section shall direct that the defendant remain in the  
19 courtroom during the testimony of the vulnerable [child] witness.  
20 S 65.30 Closed-circuit television; special testimonial procedures.

21 1. When the court has entered an order pursuant to section 65.20 OF  
22 THIS ARTICLE, the testimony of the vulnerable [child] witness shall be  
23 taken in the testimonial room and the image and voice of the vulnerable  
24 [child] witness, as well as the image of all other persons other than  
25 the operator present in the testimonial room, shall be transmitted live  
26 by means of closed-circuit television to the courtroom. The courtroom  
27 shall be equipped with monitors sufficient to permit the judge, jury,  
28 defendant and attorneys to observe the demeanor of the vulnerable  
29 [child] witness during his or her testimony. Unless the courtroom has  
30 been closed pursuant to court order, the public shall also be permitted  
31 to hear the testimony and view the image of the vulnerable [child]  
32 witness.

33 2. In all instances, the image of the jury shall be simultaneously  
34 transmitted to the vulnerable [child] witness in the testimonial room.  
35 If the court order issued pursuant to section 65.20 OF THIS ARTICLE  
36 specifies that the vulnerable [child] witness shall testify outside the  
37 physical presence of the defendant, the image of the defendant and the  
38 image and voice of the person examining the vulnerable [child] witness  
39 shall also be simultaneously transmitted to the vulnerable [child]  
40 witness in the testimonial room.

41 3. The operator shall place herself or himself and the closed-circuit  
42 television equipment in a position that permits the entire testimony of  
43 the vulnerable [child] witness to be transmitted to the courtroom but  
44 limits the ability of the vulnerable [child] witness to see or hear the  
45 operator or the equipment.

46 4. Notwithstanding any provision of this article, if the court in a  
47 particular case involving a vulnerable [child] witness determines that  
48 there is no live, two-way closed-circuit television equipment available  
49 in the court or another court in the county or which can be transported  
50 to the court from another county or that such equipment, if available,  
51 is technologically inadequate to protect the constitutional rights of  
52 the defendant, it shall not permit the use of the closed-circuit tele-  
53 vision procedures authorized by this article.

54 5. If the order of the court entered pursuant to section 65.20 OF THIS  
55 ARTICLE requires that the defendant remain in the courtroom, the attor-  
56 ney for the defendant and the district attorney shall also remain in the

1 courtroom unless the court is satisfied that their presence in the  
2 testimonial room will not impede full and private communication between  
3 the defendant and his or her attorney and will not encourage the jury to  
4 draw an inference adverse to the interest of the defendant.

5 6. Upon request of the defendant, the court shall instruct the jury  
6 that they are to draw no inference from the use of live, two-way closed-  
7 circuit television in the examination of the vulnerable [child] witness.

8 7. The vulnerable [child] witness shall testify under oath except as  
9 specified in subdivision two of section 60.20 OF THIS ARTICLE. The exam-  
10 ination and cross-examination of the vulnerable [child] witness shall,  
11 in all other respects, be conducted in the same manner as if the vulner-  
12 able [child] witness had testified in the courtroom.

13 8. When the testimony of the vulnerable [child] witness is transmitted  
14 from the testimonial room into the courtroom, the court stenographer  
15 shall record the [textimony] TESTIMONY in the same manner as if the  
16 vulnerable [child] witness had testified in the courtroom.

17 S 2. This act shall take effect immediately and shall apply to all  
18 criminal actions and proceedings commenced prior to the effective date  
19 of this act but still pending on such date as well as all criminal  
20 actions and proceedings commenced on or after such effective date.  
21 Provided that the amendments to article 65 of the criminal procedure  
22 law, made by section one of this act, shall not affect the expiration  
23 and repeal of such article and shall be deemed repealed therewith.