

# STATE OF NEW YORK

1553--D

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

## IN SENATE

January 13, 2021

Introduced by Sens. MYRIE, BAILEY, BIAGGI, BRESLIN, BRISPORT, BROUK, CLEARE, COMRIE, COONEY, GIANARIS, GOUNARDES, HINCHEY, HOYLMAN, JACKSON, KAVANAGH, KENNEDY, LIU, MAY, MAYER, RAMOS, RIVERA, SALAZAR, SANDERS, SEPULVEDA, SERRANO -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Codes -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee -- reported favorably from said committee and committed to the Committee on Finance -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee -- recommitted to the Committee on Codes in accordance with Senate Rule 6, sec. 8 -- reported favorably from said committee and committed to the Committee on Finance -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the criminal procedure law, the executive law and the correction law, in relation to automatic sealing of certain convictions

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

1 Section 1. The criminal procedure law is amended by adding a new  
2 section 160.57 to read as follows:  
3 § 160.57 Automatic sealing of convictions.  
4 1. Convictions for certain traffic infractions and violations or any  
5 crime defined in the laws of this state shall be sealed in accordance  
6 with paragraph (c) of this subdivision as follows:  
7 (a) Convictions for subdivision one of section eleven hundred ninety-  
8 two of the vehicle and traffic law shall be sealed after three years.  
9 (b) Criminal convictions for misdemeanors and felonies shall be sealed  
10 upon satisfaction of the following conditions:

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

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1 (i) at least three years have passed from the imposition of sentence  
2 on the defendant's most recent misdemeanor conviction in this state and  
3 at least seven years have passed since the imposition of sentence on the  
4 defendant's most recent felony conviction in this state;

5 (ii) the defendant does not have a subsequent criminal charge pending  
6 in this state;

7 (iii) the defendant is not currently under the supervision of any  
8 probation or parole department for the eligible conviction; and

9 (iv) the conviction is not defined as a sex offense under section one  
10 hundred sixty-eight-a of the correction law.

11 (c) Where a conviction is eligible for sealing pursuant to this  
12 section before, on, or after the effective date of this section, the  
13 division of criminal justice services shall immediately notify the  
14 office of court administration, the court of conviction, and the heads  
15 of all appropriate police and sheriff departments that the conviction is  
16 sealed.

17 (d) Records of convictions sealed pursuant to this section including  
18 photographs, photographic plates or proofs, palmprints, fingerprints or  
19 retina scans shall not be accessed by or made available to any person or  
20 public or private agency, or used by any entity covered by subdivision  
21 three of this section except for:

22 (i) the defendant and such defendant's counsel;

23 (ii) any court, defense counsel or prosecutor for the purposes of a  
24 pending criminal proceeding or proceedings brought in a criminal court  
25 pursuant to article six-C of the correction law;

26 (iii) qualified agencies, as defined in subdivision nine of section  
27 eight hundred thirty-five of the executive law, federal and state law  
28 enforcement agencies, and interstate and international authorities as  
29 defined in subdivision three of section two of the public authorities  
30 law, when acting within the scope of their law enforcement duties;

31 (iv) the court, prosecutor, and defense counsel if the defendant  
32 becomes a witness in a criminal proceeding, or the claimant and respond-  
33 ent if the defendant becomes a witness in a civil proceeding;

34 (v) when an individual is a defendant in a criminal proceeding or  
35 proceedings brought in a criminal court pursuant to article six-C of the  
36 corrections law and the sealed records of conviction of a third party  
37 are integral to their defense. In such instances, use of sealed records  
38 of conviction shall be requested upon ex parte motion in any superior  
39 court, or in any district court, city court or the criminal court of the  
40 city of New York provided that such court is where the action is pend-  
41 ing. The applicant must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the court  
42 that the records will be used for the purpose of this subparagraph;

43 (vi) entities that are required by state or federal law to request and  
44 receive a fingerprint-based check of criminal history information,  
45 provided, however, that a person whose criminal history information is  
46 retrieved pursuant to this paragraph shall be furnished with a copy of  
47 such information, together with a copy of article twenty-three-A of the  
48 correction law, and informed of his or her right to seek correction of  
49 any incorrect information contained in such criminal history information  
50 pursuant to regulations and procedures established by the division of  
51 criminal justice services;

52 (vii) pursuant to applicable regulations promulgated by the commis-  
53 sioner of the division of criminal justice services, specified entities  
54 that are authorized by state or federal law to request and receive a  
55 fingerprint-based check of criminal history information in relation to  
56 the provision of care or services to children, as defined in subdivision

1 one of section three hundred seventy-one of the social services law, and  
2 vulnerable persons, as defined in subdivision fifteen of section four  
3 hundred eighty-eight of the social services law, provided, however, that  
4 a person whose criminal history information is retrieved pursuant to  
5 this paragraph shall be provided with a copy of such criminal history  
6 information, together with a copy of article twenty-three-A of the  
7 correction law, and informed of his or her right to seek correction of  
8 any incorrect information contained in such criminal history information  
9 pursuant to regulations and procedures established by the division of  
10 criminal justice services;

11 (viii) any prospective employer of a police officer or peace officer  
12 as those terms are defined in subdivisions thirty-three and thirty-four  
13 of section 1.20 of this chapter, in relation to an application for  
14 employment as a police officer, provided, however, that every person who  
15 is an applicant shall be furnished with a copy of all records obtained  
16 under this paragraph and afforded an opportunity to make an explanation  
17 thereto;

18 (ix) any federal, state or local officer or agency with responsibility  
19 for the issuance of licenses to possess a firearm, rifle or shotgun or  
20 with responsibility for conducting background checks before transfer or  
21 sale of a firearm or explosive, when the officer or agency is acting  
22 pursuant to such responsibility. This includes the criminal justice  
23 information services division of the federal bureau of investigation,  
24 for the purposes of responding to queries to the national instant back-  
25 ground check system regarding attempts to purchase or otherwise take  
26 possession of firearms, rifles or shotguns, as defined in 18 U.S.C. §  
27 921 (A)(3);

28 (x) for the purposes of civilian investigation or evaluation of a  
29 civilian complaint or civil action concerning law enforcement or prose-  
30 cution actions, upon ex parte motion in any superior court, or in any  
31 district court, city court or the criminal court of the city of New York  
32 provided that such court sealed the record; the applicant must demon-  
33 strate to the satisfaction of the court that the records will be used  
34 for the purposes of this subparagraph;

35 (xi) for information provided to an individual or entity pursuant to  
36 paragraph (e) of subdivision four of section eight hundred thirty-seven  
37 of the executive law or for bona fide research purposes provided all  
38 identifying information is removed;

39 (xii) when an individual seeks to avail themselves of a public program  
40 or benefit, including but not limited to an immigration benefit, for  
41 which the sealed records of conviction of a third party are integral to  
42 their application for such program or benefit. In such instances, the  
43 individual or their attorney shall request the use of sealed records  
44 pursuant to a form as prescribed in subdivision twenty-three of section  
45 eight hundred thirty-seven of the executive law;

46 (xiii) for the purpose of collection of restitution ordered pursuant  
47 to section 60.27 of the penal law. In such instances, use of sealed  
48 records shall be requested upon ex parte motion in any superior court,  
49 or in any district court, city court or criminal court of the city of  
50 New York provided that such court is where the action is pending. The  
51 applicant must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the court that the  
52 records will be used for the purpose of this subparagraph; and

53 (xiv) transportation network companies that are required or authorized  
54 by state law to request criminal history information pursuant to section  
55 sixteen hundred ninety-nine of the vehicle and traffic law.

1 (e) Where the sealing required by this paragraph has not taken place,  
2 or where supporting court records cannot be located or have been  
3 destroyed, and a defendant or their attorney submits notification of  
4 such fact to the division of criminal justice services, as prescribed in  
5 subdivision twenty-three of section eight hundred thirty-seven of the  
6 executive law, within thirty days of such notice to the division, the  
7 conviction shall be sealed as set forth in this subdivision.

8 2. In calculating the time periods under this section, any period of  
9 time during which the defendant was incarcerated on a determinate or  
10 indeterminate sentence for a period of at least one year shall be  
11 excluded and such time period shall be extended by a period equal to the  
12 time served under such incarceration. This period shall be calculated  
13 from the original sentencing date, notwithstanding any modification or  
14 vacatur of the original judgment or sentence.

15 3. Where a conviction is eligible for sealing pursuant to this section  
16 before, on, or after the effective date of this section, the commis-  
17 ioner of the division of criminal justice services shall immediately notify  
18 the office of court administration, the court of conviction and the  
19 heads of all appropriate police departments, prosecutors' offices and  
20 law enforcement agencies that the conviction is sealed. Upon receipt of  
21 such notification, records of or relating to such conviction shall be  
22 immediately sealed pursuant to this section. Where conviction records  
23 are sealed pursuant to section 160.50 or 160.59 of this article, the  
24 requirements of such sections shall apply.

25 (a) Any such entity that possesses information, records, documents or  
26 papers related to the eligible conviction shall seal them as follows:

27 (i) Every photograph of such defendant and photographic plates or  
28 proof, and all palmprints, fingerprints and retina scans taken or made  
29 of such individual pursuant to the provisions of this article in regard  
30 to the eligible conviction, and all duplicates, reproductions, and  
31 copies thereof, except a digital fingerprint that is on file with the  
32 division of criminal justice services for a conviction that has not been  
33 sealed pursuant to this section shall be marked as sealed by the divi-  
34 sion of criminal justice services and by any police department,  
35 prosecutor's office or law enforcement agency having any such photo-  
36 graph, photographic plate or proof, palmprint, fingerprints or retina  
37 scan in its possession or under its control by conspicuously indicating  
38 on the face of the record or at the beginning of the digitized file of  
39 the record that the record has been designated as sealed. Where finger-  
40 prints subject to the provisions of this section have been received by  
41 the division of criminal justice services and have been filed by the  
42 division as digital images, such images may remain unsealed, provided  
43 that a fingerprint card of the individual is on file with the division  
44 which was not sealed pursuant to this section.

45 (ii) Every official record and paper and duplicates and copies there-  
46 of, including, but not limited to, judgments and orders of a court but  
47 not including published court decisions or opinions or records and  
48 briefs on appeal, relating to the conviction, on file with the agency  
49 shall be marked as sealed by conspicuously indicating on the face of the  
50 record or at the beginning of the digitized file of the record that the  
51 record has been designated as sealed.

52 (b) Third-party agencies shall seal information and all records, docu-  
53 ments and papers relating to the eligible conviction as follows:

54 (i) Every police department, prosecutor's office or law enforcement  
55 agency, including the division of criminal justice services, which tran-  
56 smitted or otherwise forwarded to any agency of the United States or of

1 any other state or jurisdiction outside of this state copies of any such  
2 photographs, photographic plates or proofs, palmprints, fingerprints or  
3 retina scans, shall forthwith formally inform such agency in writing  
4 that the matter has been sealed and request in writing that all such  
5 copies be marked as sealed by conspicuously indicating on the face of  
6 the record or at the beginning of the digitized file of the record that  
7 the record has been designated as sealed.

8 (ii) Every official record and paper and duplicates and copies there-  
9 of, including, but not limited to, judgments and orders of a court but  
10 not including published court decisions or opinions or records and  
11 briefs on appeal, relating to the conviction, on file with the agency  
12 shall be marked as sealed by conspicuously indicating on the face of the  
13 record or at the beginning of the digitized file of the record that the  
14 record has been designated as sealed.

15 4. (a) Nothing in this section requires the sealing or destruction of  
16 DNA information maintained in the New York state DNA database of such  
17 individual pursuant to the provisions of the executive law in regard to  
18 the eligible conviction.

19 (b) Nothing in this section requires the sealing or destruction of  
20 records maintained by the department of motor vehicles, and nothing in  
21 this section shall be construed to contravene the vehicle and traffic  
22 law, the federal driver's privacy protection act (18 U.S.C 2721 et.  
23 seq.), the REAL ID Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-13; 49 U.S.C. 30301  
24 note), section 7209 of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention  
25 Act of 1986 (49 U.S.C. 31311), or regulations promulgated pursuant to  
26 any such chapter or act.

27 (c) The division of criminal justice services is authorized to  
28 disclose a conviction that is sealed pursuant to this section to enti-  
29 ties that are required by federal law, or by rules and regulations  
30 promulgated by a self-regulatory organization created under federal law,  
31 to consider sealed convictions. Such entities must certify to the divi-  
32 sion that they are required by federal law, or by rules and regulations  
33 promulgated by a self-regulatory organization that has been created  
34 under federal law, to make an inquiry about or consider records sealed  
35 pursuant to this section for purposes of employment, licensing, or  
36 clearance. To the extent permitted by federal law, a record sealed  
37 pursuant to this section may not be considered a conviction that would  
38 prohibit the employment, licensing or clearance of the defendant.

39 (d) Nothing in this section shall prohibit entities required by feder-  
40 al law, or by rules and regulations promulgated by a self-regulatory  
41 organization that has been created under federal law, from making an  
42 inquiry about or considering an applicant's criminal history for  
43 purposes of employment, licensing, or clearance from inquiring into  
44 convictions sealed pursuant to this section.

45 (e) In any civil action, an official record of a conviction that has  
46 been sealed pursuant to this section may not be introduced as evidence  
47 of negligence against a person or entity that provided employment,  
48 contract labor or services, volunteer work, licensing, tenancy, a home  
49 purchase, a mortgage, an education, a loan, or insurance if such record  
50 was sealed and was not provided to the person or entity by or on behalf  
51 of a governmental entity in accordance with this section in response to  
52 such person's or entity's authorized and timely request for conviction  
53 history information.

54 (f) A person or entity described in this subdivision, acting reason-  
55 ably and in good faith, may not have a duty to investigate the fact of a  
56 prior conviction that has been sealed pursuant to this section.

1 (g) The division of criminal justice services is authorized to  
2 disclose a conviction that is sealed pursuant to this section to the  
3 state department of education office of professional discipline for  
4 purposes of investigating professional misconduct as defined by subpara-  
5 graph (i) of paragraph (a) of subdivision five of section sixty-five  
6 hundred nine of the education law. The office of professional discipline  
7 must certify to the division that it is investigating an individual  
8 licensed to practice a profession pursuant to article one hundred thirty  
9 of the education law for professional misconduct as defined by subpara-  
10 graph (i) of paragraph (a) of subdivison five of section sixty-five  
11 hundred nine of the education law. Nothing in this section shall prohib-  
12 it the office of professional discipline from inquiring about or consid-  
13 ering convictions sealed pursuant to this section in such proceedings.

14 5. No defendant shall be required or permitted to waive eligibility  
15 for sealing pursuant to this section as part of a plea of guilty,  
16 sentence or any agreement related to a conviction for a violation of the  
17 laws of this state. Any such waiver is void and unenforceable.

18 6. Sealing as set forth in subdivision three of this section is with-  
19 out prejudice to a defendant or their attorney seeking further relief  
20 pursuant to section 440.10 of this chapter. Nothing in this section  
21 shall diminish or abrogate any rights or remedies otherwise available to  
22 the defendant.

23 7. All records for a conviction subject to sealing under this section  
24 where the conviction was entered on or before the effective date of this  
25 section shall receive the appropriate relief promptly and, in any event,  
26 no later than two years after such effective date.

27 8. A conviction which is sealed pursuant to this section is included  
28 within the definition of a conviction for the purposes of any criminal  
29 proceeding in which the fact of a prior conviction would enhance a  
30 penalty or is an element of the offense charged.

31 9. Any defendant claiming to be aggrieved by a violation of this  
32 section shall have a cause of action in any court of appropriate juris-  
33 isdiction for damages, including punitive damages, and such other remedies  
34 as may be appropriate. The provisions of this article shall also be  
35 enforceable by the division of human rights pursuant to the powers and  
36 procedures set forth in article fifteen of the executive law.

37 § 2. Section 845-d of the executive law is amended by adding new  
38 subdivision 4 to read as follows:

39 4. Nothing in this section shall authorize the division to provide  
40 criminal history information that is sealed pursuant to section 160.57  
41 of the criminal procedure law to any entity other than those explicitly  
42 authorized by that section to receive or access such information.

43 § 3. Section 837 of the executive law is amended by adding three new  
44 subdivisions 23, 24 and 25 to read as follows:

45 23. Promulgate a standardized form for use by individuals to notify  
46 the division of criminal justice services of convictions subject to  
47 sealing under section 160.57 of the criminal procedure law, but for  
48 which the division has not taken the requisite action for related  
49 records.

50 24. Promulgate a certification process whereby individuals seeking use  
51 of sealed records pursuant to subparagraph (xii) of paragraph (d) of  
52 subdivision one of section 160.57 of the criminal procedure law may  
53 request and access records.

54 25. Adopt, amend and rescind such regulations as may be necessary to  
55 effectuate the provisions of subparagraph (vii) of paragraph (d) of  
56 subdivision one of section 160.57 of the criminal procedure law to

1 determine entities authorized to receive sealed records for purposes of  
2 occupations that involve regular and substantial unsupervised or unre-  
3 stricted physical contact with children as defined in subdivision one of  
4 section three hundred seventy-one of the social services law, and  
5 vulnerable persons, as defined in subdivision fifteen of section four  
6 hundred eighty-eight of the social services law.

7 § 4. Subdivision 16 of section 296 of the executive law, as amended by  
8 section 2 of subpart O of part II of chapter 55 of the laws of 2019, is  
9 amended to read as follows:

10 16. It shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice, unless specif-  
11 ically required or permitted by statute, for any person, agency, bureau,  
12 corporation or association, including the state and any political subdi-  
13 vision thereof, to make any inquiry about, whether in any form of appli-  
14 cation or otherwise, or to act upon adversely to the individual  
15 involved, any arrest or criminal accusation of such individual not then  
16 pending against that individual which was followed by a termination of  
17 that criminal action or proceeding in favor of such individual, as  
18 defined in subdivision two of section 160.50 of the criminal procedure  
19 law, or by an order adjourning the criminal action in contemplation of  
20 dismissal, pursuant to section 170.55, 170.56, 210.46, 210.47, or 215.10  
21 of the criminal procedure law, or by a youthful offender adjudication,  
22 as defined in subdivision one of section 720.35 of the criminal proce-  
23 dure law, or by a conviction for a violation sealed pursuant to section  
24 160.55 of the criminal procedure law or by a conviction which is sealed  
25 pursuant to section 160.59 or 160.58 of the criminal procedure law, or  
26 by a conviction which is sealed pursuant to section 160.57 of the crimi-  
27 nal procedure law, except where such conviction record is accessed  
28 pursuant to subparagraph (vi) or (vii) of paragraph (d) of subdivision  
29 one of section 160.57 of the criminal procedure law, in connection with  
30 the licensing, housing, employment, including volunteer positions, or  
31 providing of credit or insurance to such individual; provided, further,  
32 that no person shall be required to divulge information pertaining to  
33 any arrest or criminal accusation of such individual not then pending  
34 against that individual which was followed by a termination of that  
35 criminal action or proceeding in favor of such individual, as defined in  
36 subdivision two of section 160.50 of the criminal procedure law, or by  
37 an order adjourning the criminal action in contemplation of dismissal,  
38 pursuant to section 170.55 or 170.56, 210.46, 210.47 or 215.10 of the  
39 criminal procedure law, or by a youthful offender adjudication, as  
40 defined in subdivision one of section 720.35 of the criminal procedure  
41 law, or by a conviction for a violation sealed pursuant to section  
42 160.55 of the criminal procedure law, or by a conviction which is sealed  
43 pursuant to section 160.58 or 160.59 of the criminal procedure law, or  
44 by a conviction which is sealed pursuant to section 160.57 of the crimi-  
45 nal procedure law, except where such conviction record is accessed  
46 pursuant to subparagraph (vi) or (vii) of paragraph (d) of subdivision  
47 one of section 160.57 of the criminal procedure law. An individual  
48 required or requested to provide information in violation of this subdivi-  
49 sion may respond as if the arrest, criminal accusation, or disposition  
50 of such arrest or criminal accusation did not occur. The provisions of  
51 this subdivision shall not apply to the licensing activities of govern-  
52 mental bodies in relation to the regulation of guns, firearms and other  
53 deadly weapons or in relation to an application for employment as a  
54 police officer or peace officer as those terms are defined in subdivi-  
55 sions thirty-three and thirty-four of section 1.20 of the criminal  
56 procedure law; provided further that the provisions of this subdivision

1 shall not apply to an application for employment or membership in any  
2 law enforcement agency with respect to any arrest or criminal accusation  
3 which was followed by a youthful offender adjudication, as defined in  
4 subdivision one of section 720.35 of the criminal procedure law, or by a  
5 conviction for a violation sealed pursuant to section 160.55 of the  
6 criminal procedure law, or by a conviction which is sealed pursuant to  
7 section 160.58 or 160.59 of the criminal procedure law, or by a  
8 conviction which is sealed pursuant to section 160.57 of the criminal  
9 procedure law. For purposes of this subdivision, an action which has  
10 been adjourned in contemplation of dismissal, pursuant to section 170.55  
11 or 170.56, 210.46, 210.47 or 215.10 of the criminal procedure law, shall  
12 not be considered a pending action, unless the order to adjourn in  
13 contemplation of dismissal is revoked and the case is restored to the  
14 calendar for further prosecution.

15 § 5. Section 9 of the correction law, as added by section 2 of part 00  
16 of chapter 56 of the laws of 2010, the section heading as amended by  
17 chapter 322 of the laws of 2021, is amended to read as follows:

18 § 9. Access to information of incarcerated individuals via the inter-  
19 net. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, any informa-  
20 tion relating to the conviction of a person[~~, except for a person~~  
21 ~~convicted of an offense that would make such person ineligible for merit~~  
22 ~~time under section eight hundred three of this chapter or an offense for~~  
23 ~~which registration as a sex offender is required as set forth in subdi-~~  
24 ~~vision two or three of section one hundred sixty-eight a of this chap-~~  
25 ~~ter,~~] that is posted on a website maintained by or for the department,  
26 under article six of the public officers law, may be posted on such  
27 website for a period not to exceed [~~five~~] three years after the expira-  
28 tion of such person's sentence of imprisonment and at the conclusion of  
29 any period of parole or post-release supervision[~~, provided, however,~~  
30 ~~that in the case of a person who has been committed to the department on~~  
31 ~~more than one occasion, the department may post conviction information~~  
32 ~~relating to any prior commitment on such website for a period not to~~  
33 ~~exceed five years after the expiration of such person's sentence of~~  
34 ~~imprisonment and any period of parole or post-release supervision aris-~~  
35 ~~ing from the most recent commitment to the department].~~

36 § 6. Severability. If any provision of this act or the application  
37 thereof to any person, corporation or circumstances is held invalid,  
38 such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the  
39 act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or applica-  
40 tion, and to this end the provisions of this act are declared to be  
41 severable.

42 § 7. This act shall take effect on the one hundred twentieth day after  
43 it shall have become a law.