STATE OF NEW YORK

6544

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

April 14, 2023

Introduced by M. of A. HEVESI -- (at request of the Office of Court Administration) -- read once and referred to the Committee on Children and Families

AN ACT to amend the family court act, in relation to expungement of records in persons in need of supervision cases in the family court

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

Section 1. Section 783 of the family court act is amended to read as follows:

§ 783. Use of [~~record~~] **records** in other court**; expungement of records**. **(a)** Neither the fact that a person was before the family court under this article for a hearing nor any confession, admission or statement made by him **or her** to the court or to any officer thereof in any stage of the proceeding is admissible as evidence against him or **her or** his **or her** interests in any other court. [~~Another court, in imposing sentence upon an adult after conviction, may receive and consider the records and information on file with the family court concerning such person when he was a child.~~]

(b) For purposes of this section, "expungement" shall mean that all official records and papers, including judgments and orders of the court, but not including public court decisions or opinions or records and briefs on appeal, relating to the arrest, prosecution and court proceedings and records of the probation service and designated lead agency, including all duplicates or copies thereof, on file with the court, police department and law enforcement agency, probation service, designated lead agency and presentment agency, if any, shall be destroyed and, except for records sealed as provided in paragraphs (v) and (vi) of subdivision (c) of this section, shall not be made available to any person or public or private agency.

(c) Automatic expungement of records of a proceeding under this article that is terminated in favor of the respondent. (i) Upon termination

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

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of a proceeding under this article in favor of the respondent, the clerk of the court shall immediately notify and direct the directors of the appropriate probation department, designated lead agency pursuant to section seven hundred thirty-five of this article and, if a presentment agency represented the petitioner in the proceeding, such agency, that the proceeding has terminated in favor of the respondent and that the records, if any, of such action or proceeding on file with such offices shall be expunged. If the respondent had been the subject of a warrant or an arrest in connection with the proceeding, or law enforcement was the referring agency or petitioner pursuant to section seven hundred thirty-three of this article, the notice shall also be sent to the appropriate police department or law enforcement agency. Upon receipt of such notification, the records shall be expunged in accordance with subdivision (b) of this section. The attorney for the respondent shall be notified by the clerk of the court in writing of the date and agencies and departments to which such notifications were sent.

(ii) For the purposes of this section, a proceeding under this article shall be considered terminated in favor of a respondent where the proceeding has been:

(A) diverted prior to the filing of a petition pursuant to subdivision (g) of section seven hundred thirty-five of this article or subsequent to the filing of a petition pursuant to subdivision (b) of section seven hundred forty-two of this article; or

(B) withdrawn or dismissed for failure to prosecute, or for any other reason at any stage; or

(C) dismissed following an adjournment in contemplation of dismissal pursuant to subdivision (a) of section seven hundred forty-nine of this article; or

(D) resulted in an adjudication where the only finding was for a violation of former section 221.05 or section 230.00 of the penal law; provided, however, that with respect to findings under this paragraph, the expungement required by this section shall not take place until the conclusion of the period of any disposition or extension under this article.

(iii) If, with respect to a respondent who had been the subject of a warrant or an arrest in connection with the proceeding, or law enforcement was the referring agency, the designated lead agency diverts a case either prior to or subsequent to the filing of a petition under this article, the designated lead agency shall notify the appropriate probation service and police department or law enforcement agency in writing of such diversion. Such notification may be on a form prescribed by the chief administrator of the courts. Upon receipt of such notification, the probation service and police department or law enforcement agency shall expunge any records in accordance with subdivision (b) of this section in the same manner as is required thereunder with respect to an order of a court.

(iv) If, following the referral of a proceeding under this article for the filing of a petition, the petitioner or, if represented by a presentment agency, such agency, elects not to file a petition under this article, the petitioner or, if applicable, the presentment agency, shall notify the appropriate probation service and designated lead agency of such determination. Such notification may be on a form prescribed by the chief administrator of the courts and may be transmitted by electronic means. If the respondent had been the subject of a warrant or an arrest in connection with the proceeding, or law enforcement was the referring agency, the notification shall also be sent to the appropriate

police department or law enforcement agency. Upon receipt of such notification, the records shall be expunged in accordance with subdivision (b) of this section in the same manner as is required thereunder with respect to an order of a court, provided, however, that the designated lead agency may have access to its own records in accordance with paragraph (v) of this subdivision.

(v) Where a proceeding has been diverted pursuant to subparagraph (A) of paragraph (ii) of this subdivision or where a proceeding has been referred for the filing of a petition but the potential petitioner or, if represented by a presentment agency, such agency, elects not to file a petition in accordance with paragraph (iv) of this subdivision, the designated lead agency shall seal its records under this section, but shall have access to its own records solely for the following purposes:

(A) where there is continuing or subsequent contact with the child under this article; or

(B) where the information is necessary for such department to determine what services had been arranged or provided to the family or where the commissioner determines that the information is necessary in order for the commissioner of such department to comply with section four hundred twenty-two-a of the social services law.

(vi) Records expunged or sealed under this section shall be made available to the juvenile or his or her agent and, where the petitioner or potential petitioner is a parent or other person legally responsible for the juvenile's care, such parent or other person. No statement made to a designated lead agency by the juvenile or his or her parent or other person legally responsible that is contained in a record expunged or sealed under this section shall be admissible in any court proceeding, except upon the consent or at the request, respectively, of the juvenile or his or her parent or other person legally responsible for the juvenile's care.

(vii) A respondent in whose favor a proceeding was terminated prior to the effective date of this paragraph may, upon motion, apply to the court, upon not less than twenty days notice to the petitioner or (where the petitioner is represented by a presentment agency) such agency, for an order granting the relief set forth in paragraph (i) of this subdivision. Where a proceeding under this article was terminated in favor of the respondent in accordance with paragraph (iii) or (iv) of this subdivision prior to the effective date of this paragraph, the respondent may apply to the designated lead agency, petitioner or presentment agency, as applicable, for a notification as described in such paragraphs granting the relief set forth therein and such notification shall be granted.

(d) Motion to expunge after an adjudication and disposition. (i) If an action has resulted in an adjudication and disposition under this article, the court may, in the interest of justice and upon motion of the respondent, order the expungement of the records and proceedings.

(ii) Such motion must be in writing and may be filed at any time subsequent to the conclusion of the disposition, including, but not limited to, the expiration of the period of placement, suspended judgment, order of protection or probation or any extension thereof. Notice of such motion shall be served not less than eight days prior to the return date of the motion upon the petitioner or, if the petitioner was represented by a presentment agency, such agency. Answering affidavits shall be served at least two days before the return date.

(iii) The court shall set forth in a written order its reasons for granting or denying the motion. If the court grants the motion, all court records, as well as all records in the possession of the desig-

nated lead agency, the probation service, the presentment agency, if any, and, if the respondent had been the subject of a warrant or an arrest in connection with the proceeding, or if the police or law enforcement agency was the referring agency or petitioner pursuant to section seven hundred thirty-three of this article, the appropriate police or law enforcement agency, shall be expunged in accordance with subdivision (b) of this section.

(e) Automatic expungement of court records. All records under this article shall be automatically expunged upon the respondent's twenty-first birthday unless earlier expunged under this section, provided that expungement under this paragraph shall not take place until the conclusion of the period of any disposition or extension under this article.

(f) Expungement of court records; inherent power. Nothing contained in this article shall preclude the court's use of its inherent power to order the expungement of court records.

§ 2. Section 784 of the family court act is amended to read as follows:

§ 784. Use of police records. All police records relating to the arrest and disposition of any person under this article shall be kept in files separate and apart from the arrests of adults and shall be withheld from public inspection, but such records shall be open to inspection upon good cause shown by the parent, guardian, next friend or attorney of that person upon the written order of a judge of the family court in the county in which the order was made [~~or, if the person is subsequently convicted of a crime, of a judge of the court in which he was convicted~~].

§ 3. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law.