STATE OF NEW YORK

10909

IN ASSEMBLY

April 8, 2026

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

AN ACT to amend the executive law, in relation to enacting the "Shirley Myers White Right To Reconciliation and Digital Identity Repair Act"

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

Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Shirley Myers White Right To Reconciliation and Digital Identity Repair Act".

§ 2. Legislative findings. The legislature finds and declares that:

1. In modern society, individuals are increasingly governed not only by formal legal outcomes, but by persistent narratives introduced and amplified through journalism, digital platforms, automated systems, and institutional records.

2. When allegations, arrests, or adverse events are reported or recorded, they often receive prominent and lasting visibility, while resolutions such as acquittals, dismissals, or exonerations receive little or no corresponding prominence.

3. The continued circulation of outdated, incomplete, or disproven narratives can cause ongoing and disproportionate harm, including but not limited to:

(a) barriers to employment, education, and housing;

(b) compromised personal safety and social standing;

(c) psychological distress and reputational damage; and

(d) structural exclusion through automated screening systems.

4. Advances in artificial intelligence, search algorithms, and automated decision-making tools have intensified this harm by scaling outdated information, often without transparency, context, or a mechanism for correction.

5. Modern indexing and artificial intelligence systems materially affect how narratives persist and influence decision-making.

6. Search engines, automated background checks, data aggregators, and screening tools rely on indexed digital information to assess credibility, eligibility, and risk. These systems do not independently verify

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

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accuracy, context, or legal resolution; they surface and prioritize information based on availability and perceived relevance.

7. When arrests, allegations, or adverse events are indexed without corresponding updates reflecting resolution or correction, automated systems may continue to treat incomplete narratives as current truth. In this environment, unresolved narratives can quietly govern access to employment, housing, education, safety, and social participation long after legal systems have corrected themselves.

8. In some instances, individuals or institutions vested with authority continue to assert or maintain narratives that contradict adjudicated legal outcomes, resulting in narrative abuse by authority and undermining trust in public systems.

9. Social workers, legal practitioners, educators, and community advocates routinely encounter individuals whose lives remain constrained by narratives that no longer reflect legal truth or present reality.

10. Accountability and public safety are essential; however, justice does not end at disposition, and ethical systems must distinguish between accountability and permanent narrative punishment. The absence of a clear, consistent right to reconciliation and digital identity repair across systems creates inequity, erodes trust, and perpetuates harm inconsistent with principles of dignity, proportionality, and integrity.

§ 3. Legislative purpose. 1. The purpose of this act is to:

(a) establish a right to reconciliation and digital identity repair for individuals whose legal matters have been resolved, or whose circumstances have materially changed;

(b) ensure that narratives introduced by institutions are accompanied by mechanisms for accuracy, context, update, and completion;

(c) prevent individuals from being permanently governed by biased, outdated, incomplete, or authority-enforced narratives;

(d) create system-appropriate obligations across distinct domains where narrative harm occurs, while preserving accountability, public safety, and freedom of the press; and

(e) affirm reconciliation as a matter of systems integrity, not preferential treatment.

2. This act further recognizes that reconciliation must extend beyond formal legal disposition into the indexed and automated systems that now shape real-world outcomes. When institutions correct themselves, those corrections must be capable of traveling with the narrative into the systems that rely on digital identity to make consequential decisions.

§ 4. The executive law is amended by adding a new section 296-e to read as follows:

§ 296-e. Right to reconciliation and digital identity repair. 1. For purposes of this section, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

(a) "Narrative" means any public or institutional representation, either written, visual, digital, or automated, that describes, characterizes, or implies an individual's conduct, risk, character, or status.

(b) "Narrative harm" means material harm resulting from the persistence, amplification, or enforcement of a narrative that is inaccurate, outdated, incomplete, or disproportionate to verified facts or adjudicated outcomes.

(c) "Reconciliation" means the process by which narratives are corrected, contextualized, or completed to reflect current legal truth and material reality.

(d) "Digital identity repair" means reasonable measures taken to ensure that an individual's digital presence does not materially misrepresent their legal status or factual circumstances.

(e) "Narrative abuse by authority" means the continued assertion or circulation of a disproven, exaggerated, or outdated narrative by an individual or institution vested with formal authority, despite evidence or adjudication to the contrary.

(f) "Disposition" means an acquittal, dismissal, exoneration, completion of sentence, or any final legal resolution.

2. The right to reconciliation shall apply across the following domains, each with system-appropriate obligations:

(a) Journalism and media; narrative introduction without completion. (i) Media entities that publish information regarding arrests, allegations, or criminal proceedings shall establish procedures to:

(1) update or contextualize coverage when legal outcomes materially change;

(2) ensure that resolutions receive reasonable visibility comparable to initial reporting; and

(3) mitigate ongoing harm when continued publication no longer serves a legitimate public interest.

(ii) This section shall not require removal of historical records, but shall affirm the responsibility to restore accuracy and context.

(b) Artificial intelligence and automated systems; narrative amplification without stewardship. Entities utilizing automated tools for screening, ranking, or decision-making shall:

(i) provide notice when adverse decisions rely on automated narrative sources;

(ii) allow for the correction of materially inaccurate or outdated information; and

(iii) ensure human review when narrative harm is alleged.

(c) Hiring, housing and opportunity systems; pre-adjudication exclusion. (i) Employers, housing providers, and institutions shall not rely solely on uncontextualized narratives where legal resolution or correction is available.

(ii) Individuals shall have the right to:

(1) understand adverse decisions based on narrative information;

(2) submit documentation of reconciliation or resolution; and

(3) request reconsideration where appropriate.

(d) Law enforcement and judicial adjacency; narrative abuse by authority. (i) Following legal disposition, no authority shall knowingly maintain or disseminate narratives that materially contradict adjudicated outcomes.

(ii) Agencies and entities shall implement safeguards to ensure records, statements, and communications reflect legal truth and proportionality.

(e) Digital life, relationships and social opportunity; narrative compression in everyday life. (i) Individuals shall have access to reasonable mechanisms to contest and correct materially harmful digital narratives that misrepresent resolved matters.

(ii) Digital platforms shall be encouraged to support contextualization and dispute resolution consistent with this section.

(iii) Social media platforms, as such term is defined pursuant to subdivision five of section eleven hundred of the general business law, shall remove any accusations about an individual that are not factual and may jeopardize such individual's reputation.

3. (a) Nothing in this section shall be construed to:

(i) erase accountability for harm;
(ii) interfere with lawful investigations;
(iii) suppress lawful speech;
(iv) require false statements or misrepresentation of facts;
(v) regulate or restrict freedom of speech, personal expression, or private communication; or
(vi) regulate social media platforms, search engines, or third-party technology providers, or to require such entities to remove, suppress, or alter content.
(b) Responsibilities under this section shall apply solely to the institution, agency, or entity that originated, authorized, or maintained the official narrative or record at issue, including content published on official websites, press releases, public records, or institutional social media accounts.
4. The division of human rights shall develop guidance consistent with this section and shall consult with stakeholders, including social work professionals, legal experts, and civil liberties organizations in the development of such guidance.

§ 5. This act shall take effect immediately.