

# STATE OF NEW YORK

4674

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

## IN ASSEMBLY

February 4, 2025

Introduced by M. of A. BURDICK -- read once and referred to the Committee on Judiciary

AN ACT to amend the judiciary law and the criminal procedure law, in relation to the publication of opinions rendered in criminal causes

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

1 Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as the  
2 "criminal court opinion transparency act".

3 § 2. Subdivision 1 of section 212 of the judiciary law is amended by  
4 adding a new paragraph (z) to read as follows:

5 (z) (i) Collect, compile, and publish online the following statistics  
6 and related data:

7 (A) For each criminal case resulting in an opinion subject to publica-  
8 tion or reporting under article fourteen of this chapter:

9 (1) information about the age, gender, racial and ethnic background of  
10 the defendant;

11 (2) the name of the judge issuing the opinion;

12 (3) the general issue or issues addressed by the opinion;

13 (4) where relevant, for each issue, whether it was granted, denied, or  
14 disposed otherwise; and

15 (5) the date and court of issuance; and

16 (B) For each year:

17 (1) the names of all judges presiding in New York courts;

18 (2) the court or courts where such judges presided, the types of cases  
19 over which such judges had presided;

20 (3) the number of such judges' decisions that were published; and

21 (4) the number of such judges' written decisions that were not  
22 published.

23 (ii) Data regarding defendant characteristics, such as age, gender,  
24 racial and ethnic background, shall be limited to the data maintained by  
25 the office of court administration and the division of criminal justice  
26 services, and shall be provided by them. The first data shall be  
27 published twelve months after the effective date of this paragraph and  
28 shall include data from the first twelve months following such date.

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

LBD01339-01-5

1 New data shall be published on a quarterly basis in machine-readable  
2 tabular format in a manner that permits quantitative analysis. The data  
3 shall be available for bulk download in tabular format, as defined in  
4 subdivision one of section four hundred thirty-three-b of this chapter.

5 § 3. Paragraph (u) of subdivision 2 of section 212 of the judiciary  
6 law is amended by adding a new subparagraph (vii) to read as follows:

7 (vii) The chief administrator shall take such actions and adopt such  
8 measures as may be necessary to create a program by which the act of  
9 docketing an opinion by the clerk of any court, whether of record or not  
10 of record, shall without further intervention transmit a copy of that  
11 opinion to the law reporting bureau in accordance with section four  
12 hundred thirty-two of this chapter. The expenses incurred in the devel-  
13 opment and implementation of such program, including training officials  
14 in the use of such program, shall be borne by the state and not by any  
15 municipality.

16 § 4. Section 432 of the judiciary law, as amended by chapter 138 of  
17 the laws of 1939, is amended to read as follows:

18 § 432. Copies of opinions, decisions and papers to be furnished to  
19 state reporter. 1. For the purposes of this section, the term "machine-  
20 readable format" shall mean data or text presented in a format easily  
21 processed by a computer without human intervention and which ensures no  
22 loss of semantic meaning.

23 2. The chief administrator of the courts shall in every cause provide,  
24 in any program of electronic means that has been employed in the filing  
25 and service of papers in any cause, including but not limited to  
26 programs authorized by section 10.40 of the criminal procedure law and  
27 rule two thousand one hundred and eleven of the civil practice law and  
28 rules, for all opinions of the court filed on the docket in such cause  
29 to be automatically transmitted to the state reporter in machine-reada-  
30 ble format.

31 3. With the exception of court of appeals and appellate division caus-  
32 es directed not to be reported, as provided in section four hundred  
33 thirty-one of this article, and causes where the opinions rendered ther-  
34 ein are automatically transmitted to the state reporter, as provided in  
35 subdivision two of this section, the [~~judges or justices~~] clerks of  
36 every court of record, including surrogates, shall [~~promptly~~] cause to  
37 be delivered in machine-readable format, by such means as the chief  
38 administrator may provide pursuant to subparagraph (vii) of paragraph  
39 (u) of section two hundred twelve of this chapter, to the state repor-  
40 ter, without charge, a copy of every written opinion rendered in causes  
41 determined therein within five days of the rendering of such opinion by  
42 the court.

43 4. The clerks of each criminal court, as that term is defined in  
44 section 10.10 of the criminal procedure law, shall promptly deliver in  
45 machine-readable format to the state reporter, without charge, a copy of  
46 the portions of the transcript of a pre-trial hearing or trial proceed-  
47 ing in a criminal cause in which the court set forth its reasons for a  
48 ruling on any question of law, including mixed questions of fact and  
49 law, that are enumerated in, but not limited to, the list of opinions  
50 designated for publication pursuant to paragraph (a) of subdivision two  
51 of section four hundred thirty-three-b of this article; provided that  
52 oral rulings concerning pretrial detention determination at arraignment,  
53 the imposition of a sentence, and ruling on oral evidentiary objections  
54 made during a trial or in response to testimony in a hearing shall not  
55 be so delivered.

1 5. The chief administrator of the courts shall provide for means by  
2 which the clerks of town and village courts may transmit to the state  
3 reporter a copy of every opinion rendered in a criminal cause therein at  
4 the same time as such opinions are rendered or docketed, that are  
5 enumerated in, but not limited to, the list of opinions designated for  
6 publication pursuant to paragraph (a) of subdivision two of section four  
7 hundred thirty-three-b of this article. The expenses of this system  
8 shall be borne by the state. Upon provision of this system, the clerks  
9 of town and village courts shall transmit in machine-readable format to  
10 the state reporter a copy of every opinion rendered in a criminal cause  
11 therein within five days of the rendering of such an opinion by the  
12 court.

13 6. The provisions of this section shall apply to all criminal causes  
14 terminated in favor of the defendant pursuant to subdivision three of  
15 section 160.50 of the criminal procedure law.

16 7. The [~~judges or justices~~] clerks of the court of appeals and of the  
17 appellate divisions and the appellate terms of the supreme court shall,  
18 in addition, cause to be delivered to the state reporter, without  
19 charge, a list of all decisions rendered by the respective courts,  
20 together with copies of such points of counsel and records and papers on  
21 appeal, if practicable, as the state reporter may require.

22 § 5. The judiciary law is amended by adding a new section 433-b to  
23 read as follows:

24 § 433-b. Publication of unreported opinions. 1. For the purposes of  
25 this section, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

26 (a) "Bulk download" shall mean the efficient retrieval of a large  
27 volume of data from a source, typically a database, in a single opera-  
28 tion.

29 (b) "Machine-readable format" shall mean data or text presented in a  
30 format easily processed by a computer without human intervention and  
31 which ensures no loss of semantic meaning.

32 (c) "Online electronic database" shall mean a free and publicly acces-  
33 sible website hosted on the law reporting bureau's official website that  
34 offers both basic and advanced opinion search functionalities, including  
35 but not limited to searches of opinions by the issuing judge, party  
36 name, date range, court of issuance, and keywords within the opinion  
37 text, identifies each reported cause by a unique citation, and permits  
38 bulk download of its contents for free in tabular and machine-readable  
39 format.

40 (d) "Tabular format" shall mean a systematic organization of data into  
41 rows and columns for easy interpretation, including but not limited to a  
42 spreadsheet or CSV file.

43 (e) "Unreported opinions" shall mean all opinions transmitted to the  
44 law reporting bureau pursuant to section four hundred thirty-two of this  
45 article, including transcripts of oral rulings not reported pursuant to  
46 section four hundred thirty-one of this article.

47 2. (a) (i) The state reporter shall publish, at a minimum, all opin-  
48 ions in criminal causes that are not selected for reporting pursuant to  
49 section four hundred thirty-one of this article and that decide on any  
50 of the following legal issues raised in a pre-trial motion:

51 (A) A motion to suppress evidence or to controvert a search warrant.

52 (B) A motion to dismiss individual charges, or the entirety of an  
53 accusatory instrument, as defined by sections 100.05, 200.10, and 200.15  
54 of the criminal procedure law.

55 (C) An omnibus motion filed pursuant to section 255.20 of the criminal  
56 procedure law.

1 (D) A motion to exclude expert testimony.

2 (E) A motion to challenge the validity of a certificate of compliance,  
3 as defined by section 245.50 of the criminal procedure law.

4 (F) A motion to sever made pursuant to sections 200.20 and 200.40 of  
5 the criminal procedure law.

6 (ii) The state reporter may publish additional opinions beyond those  
7 required to be published pursuant to subparagraph (i) of this paragraph  
8 for the purpose of enhancing legal transparency and public understanding  
9 of criminal jurisprudence.

10 (b) The state reporter shall publish opinions pursuant to this section  
11 in an online electronic database no later than seven business days after  
12 receipt of such opinions. The state reporter may include headnotes,  
13 tables, or indices in any opinion published pursuant to this subdivi-  
14 sion.

15 (c) The state reporter may publish in an online electronic database  
16 any opinion in a civil cause.

17 3. The provisions of this section shall apply to all criminal causes  
18 terminated in favor of the defendant pursuant to subdivision three of  
19 section 160.50 of the criminal procedure law.

20 § 6. The judiciary law is amended by adding a new section 433-c to  
21 read as follows:

22 § 433-c. Redaction of personal identifying information of parties and  
23 witnesses. The state reporter shall publish or report opinions pursuant  
24 to this article only after ensuring that such opinions have been redact-  
25 ed to preserve the privacy interests of parties to the case to the  
26 extent required by law, in accordance with rules and regulations promul-  
27 gated by the chief administrator of the courts with the approval of the  
28 administrative board. The rules and regulations promulgated by the chief  
29 administrator shall incorporate all preexisting requirements in state  
30 and federal law that would require the non-publication or redaction of  
31 private information in judicial opinions, including but not limited to  
32 protection of the privacy interests of defendants and witnesses, as  
33 defined by subdivision one of section 640.10 of the criminal procedure  
34 law. The guidelines shall establish the duty of the state reporter to  
35 ensure that such defendants and witnesses are exclusively referred to by  
36 their initials in all criminal causes reported or published pursuant to  
37 section four hundred thirty-one and paragraph (a) of subdivision two of  
38 section four hundred thirty-three-b of this article, including, but not  
39 limited to, in the title of the published document. The guidelines shall  
40 further require the redaction of all addresses and other personal iden-  
41 tifying information of all such defendants and witnesses. The guidelines  
42 shall further provide that the state reporter may not redact the names  
43 of police officers and peace officers, as defined by subdivision thir-  
44 ty-four of section 1.20 and section 2.10 of the criminal procedure law,  
45 when described in their professional capacity as witnesses, or individ-  
46 uals qualified or professed as expert witnesses by any party, to the  
47 extent that such names appear in an opinion.

48 § 7. Paragraph (e) of subdivision 2 of section 10.40 of the criminal  
49 procedure law is amended by adding a new subparagraph (iv) to read as  
50 follows:

51 (iv) Nothing in this section shall be construed as to limit or qualify  
52 the delivery of opinions to the law reporting bureau and reporting or  
53 publication thereof pursuant to article fourteen of the judiciary law.

54 § 8. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after  
55 it shall have become a law.