

AN ACT

To amend sections 2953.31, 2953.32, and 2953.36 of the Revised Code to expand the definition of "first offender" in the criminal conviction records sealing law to include, in certain situations, offenders who have two or three convictions resulting from the same indictment, information, complaint, guilty plea, or official proceeding and resulting from related criminal acts that were committed within a three-month period, and to exclude from that law all convictions of an offense of violence when the offense is a misdemeanor of the first degree or a felony, an offense of which the victim was a juvenile when the offense is a misdemeanor of the first degree or a felony, or a felony of the first or second degree.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio:

SECTION 1. That sections 2953.31, 2953.32, and 2953.36 of the Revised Code be amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2953.31. As used in sections 2953.31 to 2953.36 of the Revised Code:

(A) "First offender" means anyone who has been convicted of an offense in this state or any other jurisdiction; and who previously or subsequently has not been convicted of the same or a different offense in this state or any other jurisdiction. When two or more convictions result from or are connected with the same act; or result from offenses committed at the same time, they shall be counted as one conviction. When two or three convictions result from the same indictment, information, or complaint, from the same plea of guilty, or from the same official proceeding, and result from related criminal acts that were committed within a three-month period but do not result from the same act or from offenses committed at the same time, they shall be counted as one conviction, provided that a court may decide as provided in division (C)(1)(a) of section 2953.32 of the

Revised Code that it is not in the public interest for the two or three convictions to be counted as one conviction.

For purposes of, and except as otherwise provided in, this division, a conviction for a minor misdemeanor, a conviction for a violation of any section in Chapter 4511., 4513., or 4549. of the Revised Code, or a conviction for a violation of a municipal ordinance that is substantially similar to any section in those chapters, is not a previous or subsequent conviction. A conviction for a violation of section 4511.19, 4511.192, 4511.251, 4549.02, 4549.021, 4549.03, 4549.042, or 4549.07; or sections 4549.41 to 4549.46 of the Revised Code, or a conviction for a violation of a municipal ordinance that is substantially similar to any of those sections, shall be considered a previous or subsequent conviction.

(B) "Prosecutor" means the county prosecuting attorney, city director of law, village solicitor, or similar chief legal officer, who has the authority to prosecute a criminal case in the court in which the case is filed.

(C) "Bail forfeiture" means the forfeiture of bail by a defendant who is arrested for the commission of a misdemeanor, other than a defendant in a traffic case as defined in Traffic Rule 2, if the forfeiture is pursuant to an agreement with the court and prosecutor in the case.

(D) "Official records" has the same meaning as in division (D) of section 2953.51 of the Revised Code.

(E) "Official proceeding" has the same meaning as in section 2921.01 of the Revised Code.

Sec. 2953.32. (A)(1) Except as provided in section 2953.61 of the Revised Code, a first offender may apply to the sentencing court if convicted in this state, or to a court of common pleas if convicted in another state or in a federal court, for the sealing of the conviction record ~~that offender's~~. Application may be made at the expiration of three years after the offender's final discharge if convicted of a felony, or at the expiration of one year after the offender's final discharge if convicted of a misdemeanor.

(2) Any person who has been arrested for any misdemeanor offense and who has effected a bail forfeiture may apply to the court in which the misdemeanor criminal case was pending when bail was forfeited for the sealing of ~~that person's~~ the record of the case. Except as provided in section 2953.61 of the Revised Code, the application may be filed at any time after the expiration of one year from the date on which the bail forfeiture was entered upon the minutes of the court or the journal, whichever entry occurs first.

(B) Upon the filing of an application under this section, the court shall set a date for a hearing and shall notify the prosecutor for the case of the

hearing on the application. The prosecutor may object to the granting of the application by filing an objection with the court prior to the date set for the hearing. The prosecutor shall specify in the objection the reasons ~~the prosecutor~~ for believing a denial of the application is justified. The court shall direct its regular probation officer, a state probation officer, or the department of probation of the county in which the applicant resides to make inquiries and written reports as the court requires concerning the applicant.

(C)(1) The court shall do each of the following:

(a) Determine whether the applicant is a first offender or whether the forfeiture of bail was agreed to by the applicant and the prosecutor in the case; If the applicant applies as a first offender pursuant to division (A)(1) of this section and has two or three convictions that result from the same indictment, information, or complaint, from the same plea of guilty, or from the same official proceeding, and result from related criminal acts that were committed within a three-month period but do not result from the same act or from offenses committed at the same time, in making its determination under this division, the court initially shall determine whether it is not in the public interest for the two or three convictions to be counted as one conviction. If the court determines that it is not in the public interest for the two or three convictions to be counted as one conviction, the court shall determine that the applicant is not a first offender; if the court does not make that determination, the court shall determine that the offender is a first offender.

(b) Determine whether criminal proceedings are pending against the applicant;

(c) If the applicant is a first offender who applies pursuant to division (A)(1) of this section, determine whether the applicant has been rehabilitated to the satisfaction of the court;

(d) If the prosecutor has filed an objection in accordance with division (B) of this section, consider the reasons against granting the application specified by the prosecutor in the objection;

(e) Weigh the interests of the applicant in having the records pertaining to the applicant's conviction sealed against the legitimate needs, if any, of the government to maintain those records.

(2) If the court determines, after complying with division (C)(1) of this section, that the applicant is a first offender or the subject of a bail forfeiture, that no criminal proceeding is pending against the applicant, and that the interests of the applicant in having the records pertaining to the applicant's conviction or bail forfeiture sealed are not outweighed by any

legitimate governmental needs to maintain those records, and that the rehabilitation of an applicant who is a first offender applying pursuant to division (A)(1) of this section has been attained to the satisfaction of the court, the court, except as provided in division (G) of this section, shall order all official records pertaining to the case sealed and, except as provided in division (F) of this section, all index references to the case deleted and, in the case of bail forfeitures, shall dismiss the charges in the case. The proceedings in the case shall be considered not to have occurred and the conviction or bail forfeiture of the person who is the subject of the proceedings shall be sealed, except that upon conviction of a subsequent offense, the sealed record of prior conviction or bail forfeiture may be considered by the court in determining the sentence or other appropriate disposition, including the relief provided for in sections 2953.31 to 2953.33 of the Revised Code.

(3) Upon the filing of an application under this section, the applicant, unless ~~the applicant~~ indigent, shall pay a fee of fifty dollars. The court shall pay thirty dollars of the fee into the state treasury. It shall pay twenty dollars of the fee into the county general revenue fund if the sealed conviction or bail forfeiture was pursuant to a state statute, or into the general revenue fund of the municipal corporation involved if the sealed conviction or bail forfeiture was pursuant to a municipal ordinance.

(D) Inspection of the sealed records included in the order may be made only by the following persons or for the following purposes:

(1) By a law enforcement officer or prosecutor, or the assistants ~~of the law enforcement officer or prosecutor~~ of either, to determine whether the nature and character of the offense with which a person is to be charged would be affected by virtue of the person's previously having been convicted of a crime;

(2) By the parole or probation officer of the person who is the subject of the records, for the exclusive use of the officer in supervising the person while ~~the person~~ on parole or probation and in making inquiries and written reports as requested by the court or adult parole authority;

(3) Upon application by the person who is the subject of the records, by the persons named in ~~that person's~~ the application;

(4) By a law enforcement officer who was involved in the case, for use in the officer's defense of a civil action arising out of the officer's involvement in that case;

(5) By a prosecuting attorney or the prosecuting attorney's assistants ~~of the prosecuting attorney~~ to determine a defendant's eligibility to enter a pre-trial diversion program established pursuant to section 2935.36 of the

Revised Code;

(6) By any law enforcement agency or any authorized employee of a law enforcement agency or by the department of rehabilitation and correction as part of a background investigation of a person who applies for employment with the agency as a law enforcement officer or with the department as a corrections officer;

(7) By any law enforcement agency or any authorized employee of a law enforcement agency, for the purposes set forth in, and in the manner provided in, section 2953.321 of the Revised Code;

(8) By the bureau of criminal identification and investigation or any authorized employee of the bureau for the purpose of providing information to a board or person pursuant to division (F) or (G) of section 109.57 of the Revised Code;

(9) By the bureau of criminal identification and investigation or any authorized employee of the bureau for the purpose of performing a criminal history records check on a person to whom a certificate as prescribed in section 109.77 of the Revised Code is to be awarded.

When the nature and character of the offense with which a person is to be charged would be affected by the information, it may be used for the purpose of charging the person with an offense.

(E) In any criminal proceeding, proof of any otherwise admissible prior conviction may be introduced and proved, notwithstanding the fact that for any such prior conviction an order of sealing previously was issued pursuant to sections 2953.31 to 2953.36 of the Revised Code.

(F) The person or governmental agency, office, or department that maintains sealed records pertaining to convictions or bail forfeitures that have been sealed pursuant to this section may maintain a manual or computerized index to the sealed records. The index shall contain only the name of, and alphanumeric identifiers that relate to, the persons who are the subject of the sealed records, the word "sealed," and the name of the person, agency, office, or department that has custody of the sealed records, and shall not contain the name of the crime committed. The index shall be made available by the person who has custody of the sealed records only for the purposes set forth in divisions (C), (D), and (E) of this section.

(G) Notwithstanding any provision of this section or section 2953.33 of the Revised Code that requires otherwise, a board of education of a city, local, exempted village, or joint vocational school district that maintains records of an individual who has been permanently excluded under sections 3301.121 and 3313.662 of the Revised Code is permitted to maintain records regarding a conviction that was used as the basis for the individual's

permanent exclusion, regardless of a court order to seal the record. An order issued under this section to seal the record of a conviction does not revoke the adjudication order of the superintendent of public instruction to permanently exclude the individual who is the subject of the sealing order. An order issued under this section to seal the record of a conviction of an individual may be presented to a district superintendent as evidence to support the contention that the superintendent should recommend that the permanent exclusion of the individual who is the subject of the sealing order be revoked. Except as otherwise authorized by this division and sections 3301.121 and 3313.662 of the Revised Code, any school employee in possession of or having access to the sealed conviction records of an individual that were the basis of a permanent exclusion of the individual is subject to section 2953.35 of the Revised Code.

Sec. 2953.36. Sections 2953.31 to 2953.35 of the Revised Code do not apply to ~~convictions~~ any of the following:

(A) Convictions when the offender is subject to a mandatory prison term, ~~convictions~~;

(B) Convictions under section 2907.02, 2907.03, 2907.04, 2907.05, 2907.06, 2907.321, 2907.322, or 2907.323, former section 2907.12, or Chapter 4507., 4511., or 4549. of the Revised Code, or a conviction for a violation of a municipal ordinance that is substantially similar to any section contained in any of those chapters, ~~or bail~~;

(C) convictions of an offense of violence when the offense is a misdemeanor of the first degree or a felony and when the offense is not a violation of section 2917.03 of the Revised Code and is not a violation of section 2903.13, 2917.01 or 2917.31 of the Revised Code that is a misdemeanor of the first degree;

(D) Convictions of an offense in circumstances in which the victim of the offense was under eighteen years of age when the offense is a misdemeanor of the first degree or a felony;

(E) Convictions of a felony of the first or second degree;

(F) Bail forfeitures in a traffic case as defined in Traffic Rule 2.

SECTION 2. That existing sections 2953.31, 2953.32, and 2953.36 of the Revised Code are hereby repealed.

SECTION 3. Section 2953.32 of the Revised Code is presented in this act as a composite of the section as amended by both Am. Sub. H.B. 566 and Am. Sub. S.B. 160 of the 121st General Assembly, with the new language of neither of the acts shown in capital letters. Section 2953.36 of the Revised Code is presented in this act as a composite of the section as amended by Am. Sub. H.B. 445, Am. Sub. H.B. 353, and Am. Sub. S.B. 269 of the 121st General Assembly, with the new language of none of the acts shown in capital letters. This is in recognition of the principle stated in division (B) of section 1.52 of the Revised Code that such amendments are to be harmonized where not substantively irreconcilable and constitutes a legislative finding that such is the resulting version in effect prior to the effective date of this act.

Speaker _____ *of the House of Representatives.*

President _____ *of the Senate.*

Passed _____, 20____

Approved _____, 20____

Governor.

Am. Sub. S. B. No. 13

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The section numbering of law of a general and permanent nature is complete and in conformity with the Revised Code.

Director, Legislative Service Commission.

Filed in the office of the Secretary of State at Columbus, Ohio, on the
____ day of _____, A. D. 20____.

Secretary of State.

File No. _____ Effective Date _____