

Expungement of delinquency and criminal records

The bill broadens the scope of records that may be expunged for a person (adult or juvenile) convicted of solicitation, loitering to engage solicitation, or prostitution as a victim of human trafficking. Under current law, any person convicted of these offenses as a victim of human trafficking may apply to the sentencing court for the expungement of these specified records. Under the bill, a person convicted of these offenses may apply to the sentencing court for the expungement of any record of conviction, with the exception of aggravated murder, murder, and rape, if participation in the offense is a result of the person being a victim of human trafficking.

In addition, the bill authorizes expungement of records regarding any offense for which a person was found not guilty if the finding was the result of the person having been a human trafficking victim. According to the 2015 Ohio Attorney General's Human Trafficking Annual Report, 203 potential victims of human trafficking were identified in 2015.

Under the bill, a small number of additional persons will be eligible to apply for expungement. Expungement applicants, unless indigent, are required to pay a \$50 fee. The \$50 application fee is divided between the state GRF (\$30) and the county or municipality (\$20). The annual costs for local criminal and juvenile justice systems to handle a potential increase in expungement requests will be minimal at most, with the application fee likely to offset all, or some portion, of those costs.

The bill also establishes a procedure to approve or deny an application to expunge aforementioned records, including notice to the prosecutor, a hearing, and a determination by the court. Given the relatively small number of new records eligible for expungement under the bill, any additional costs for local sentencing courts will be minimal at most annually.

Intervention in lieu of conviction

The bill allows a victim of compelling prostitution to request intervention in lieu of conviction (ILC) when charged with certain offenses¹ in the same manner as current law provides when certain factors may have led to the offense: alcohol or drug usage, mental illness, intellectual disability, or the offender was a victim of human trafficking. LSC conversations with subject matter experts suggest that victims of compelling prostitution may already commonly be granted ILC at the judge's discretion, indicating the bill is widely codifying current practice in this regard. This suggests that any cost for a given municipality or county will be minimal annually, as the likely number of additional persons granted ILC would be relatively small.

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¹ These offenses include: theft, unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, passing bad checks, misuse of credit cards, forgery, and/or nonsupport or contributing to nonsupport of dependents.