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SENATE BILL NO. 230

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
 (Proposed by the Senate Committee for Courts of Justice
 on February 4, 2026)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Surovell)

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 16.1-306, 19.2-298.02, and 19.2-392.2, as it is currently effective and as it shall become effective, of the Code of Virginia, relating to expungement of police and court records.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 16.1-306, 19.2-298.02, and 19.2-392.2, as it is currently effective and as it shall become effective, of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 16.1-306. Expungement of court records.

A. Notwithstanding the provisions of § 16.1-69.55, the clerk of the juvenile and domestic relations district court shall, on January 2 of each year or on a date designated by the court, destroy its files, papers and records, including electronic records, connected with any proceeding concerning a juvenile in such court, if such juvenile has attained the age of 19 years and five years have elapsed since the date of the last hearing in any case of the juvenile which is subject to this section. However, if the juvenile was found guilty of an offense for which the clerk is required by § 46.2-383 to furnish an abstract to the Department of Motor Vehicles, the records shall be destroyed when the juvenile has attained the age of 29. If the juvenile was found guilty of a delinquent act which would be a felony if committed by an adult, the records shall be retained.

B. However, in all files in which the court records concerning a juvenile contain a finding of guilty of any offense ancillary to (i) a delinquent act that would be a felony if committed by an adult or (ii) any offense for which the clerk is required by § 46.2-383 to furnish an abstract to the Department of Motor Vehicles, the records of any such ancillary offense shall also be retained for the time specified for the felony or the offense reported to the Department of Motor Vehicles as specified in subsection A, and all such records shall be available for inspection as provided in § 16.1-305.

C. *A person who has been was the subject of a delinquency or traffic proceeding and (i) has been found innocent thereof or (ii) such proceeding was otherwise dismissed, was not ultimately adjudicated delinquent or convicted, provided that no stipulation of facts sufficient to find guilt was entered or the court did not determine the facts sufficient to find guilt but deferred adjudication or disposition to a later date, such matter is eligible for expungement. Such person may file a motion requesting the destruction of all records pertaining to such charge. Notice of such motion and shall be given give notice of the motion to the attorney for the Commonwealth. Unless good cause is shown why such records should not be destroyed, the court shall grant the motion; and shall send copies of the order to all officers or agencies that are repositories of such records, and all such officers and agencies shall comply with the order. For purposes of this section, an initial charge shall be eligible for expungement if the initial charge is reduced or amended to charge another offense, including a lesser-included offense or the same offense with a lesser punishment, or if such person is convicted of an offense that shares facts with the initial charge, such that the person is not convicted of the initial charge.*

D. Each person shall be notified of his rights under subsections A and C of this section at the time of his dispositional hearing.

E. Upon destruction of the records of a proceeding as provided in subsections A, B, and C, the violation of law shall be treated as if it never occurred. All index references shall be deleted and the court and law-enforcement officers and agencies shall reply and the person may reply to any inquiry that no record exists with respect to such person.

F. All docket sheets shall be destroyed in the sixth year after the last hearing date recorded on the docket sheet.

§ 19.2-298.02. Deferred disposition in a criminal case.

A. A trial court presiding in a criminal case may, with the agreement of the defendant and the Commonwealth, after any plea or trial, with or without a determination, finding, or pronouncement of guilt, and notwithstanding the entry of a conviction order, upon consideration of the facts and circumstances of the case, including (i) mitigating factors relating to the defendant or the offense, (ii) the request of the victim, or (iii) any other appropriate factors, defer proceedings, defer entry of a conviction order, if none, or defer entry of a final order, and continue the case for final disposition, on such reasonable terms and conditions as may be agreed upon by the parties and placed on the record, or if there is no agreement, as may be imposed by the court. Final disposition may include (a) conviction of the original charge, (b) conviction of an alternative charge, or (c) dismissal of the proceedings.

B. Upon violation of a term or condition, the court may enter an adjudication of guilt, if not already entered, and make any final disposition of the case provided by subsection A. Upon fulfillment of the terms

60 and conditions, the court shall adjudicate the matter consistent with the agreement of the parties or, if none, 61 by conviction of an alternative charge or dismissal of the case.

62 C. By consenting to and receiving a deferral of proceedings or a deferral of entry of a final order of guilt 63 and fulfilling the conditions as specified by the court as provided by subsection A, the defendant waives his 64 right to appeal such entry of a final order of guilt.

65 Prior to granting a deferral of proceedings, a deferral of entry of a conviction order, if none, or a deferral 66 of a final order, the court shall notify the defendant that he would be waiving his rights to appeal any final 67 order of guilt if such deferral is granted.

68 D. Upon agreement of all parties, a *person whose charge that* is dismissed pursuant to this section, 69 including an original charge that was reduced or a charge that is dismissed after a plea or stipulation of the 70 facts that would justify a finding of guilt, may be considered as *otherwise dismissed not ultimately convicted* 71 and *eligible for purposes of* expungement of police and court records in accordance with § 19.2-392.2, and 72 such agreement of all parties and expungement eligibility may be indicated in the final disposition order.

73 **§ 19.2-392.2. (Effective until July 1, 2026) Expungement of police and court records.**

74 A. If a person is *arrested, charged with, summonsed, or indicted for the commission of an infraction, a* 75 *crime, or a civil offense, or any offense defined in Title 18.2, and*

76 *1. Is acquitted, or*

77 *2. A nolle prosequi is taken or the charge is otherwise dismissed, including dismissal by accord and* 78 *satisfaction pursuant to § 19.2-151, he is not ultimately convicted, provided that no stipulation of facts* 79 *sufficient to find guilt was entered or the court did not determine the facts sufficient to find guilt but deferred* 80 *adjudication or disposition to a later date, such matter is eligible for expungement. Such person may file a* 81 *petition setting forth the relevant facts and requesting expungement of the police records and the court* 82 *records relating to the charge. For purposes of this section, an initial charge shall be eligible for* 83 *expungement if the initial charge is reduced or amended to charge another offense, including a lesser-* 84 *included offense or the same offense with a lesser punishment, or if such person is convicted of an offense* 85 *that shares facts with the initial charge, such that the person is not convicted of the initial charge.*

86 B. If any person whose name or other identification has been used without his consent or authorization by 87 another person who has been charged or arrested using such name or identification, he may file a petition 88 with the court disposing of the charge for relief pursuant to this section. Such person shall not be required to 89 pay any fees for the filing of a petition under this subsection. A petition filed under this subsection shall 90 include one complete set of the petitioner's fingerprints obtained from a law-enforcement agency.

91 C. The petition with a copy of the *warrant, summons, or indictment charging document*, if reasonably 92 available, shall be filed in the circuit court of the county or city in which the case was *disposed of by acquittal* 93 *or being otherwise dismissed resolved* and shall contain, except when not reasonably available, the date of 94 arrest and the name of the arresting agency. *A single petition may request the expungement of the police and* 95 *court records for multiple charges arising out of separate transactions or occurrences.* When this 96 information is not reasonably available, the petition shall state the reason for such unavailability. *Such* 97 *unavailability alone shall not be a basis for refusing expungement.* The petition shall further state the specific 98 criminal charge or civil offense to be expunged, the date of final disposition of the charge as set forth in the 99 petition, the petitioner's date of birth, and the full name used by the petitioner at the time of arrest. If the 100 petition is filed under this subsection, the petitioner shall request that the Central Criminal Records Exchange 101 (CCRE) electronically forward a copy of the petitioner's Virginia criminal history record to the circuit court 102 in which the petition was filed. Upon receiving such request, the CCRE shall electronically forward such 103 record to the circuit court; however, if the circuit court is unable to receive an electronic transmission, the 104 CCRE shall forward a copy of such record to the circuit court which shall be maintained under seal by the 105 clerk unless otherwise ordered by the court.

106 D. A copy of the petition shall be served on the attorney for the Commonwealth of the city or county in 107 which the petition is filed. The attorney for the Commonwealth *may shall* file an objection or answer to the 108 petition, *including the factual basis for such objection*, or may give written notice to the court that he does not 109 object to the petition within 21 days after it is served on him.

110 E. If the petition is filed under subsection B, the petitioner shall obtain from a law-enforcement agency 111 one complete set of the petitioner's fingerprints and shall provide that agency with a copy of the petition for 112 expungement. The law-enforcement agency shall submit the set of fingerprints to the CCRE with a copy of 113 the petition for expungement attached. The CCRE shall forward under seal to the court a copy of the 114 petitioner's criminal history and the set of fingerprints. Upon completion of the hearing, the court shall return 115 the fingerprint card to the petitioner. If no hearing was conducted, upon the entry of an order of expungement 116 or an order denying the petition for expungement, the court shall cause the fingerprint card to be destroyed 117 unless, within 30 days of the date of the entry of the order, the petitioner requests the return of the fingerprint 118 card in person from the clerk of the court or provides the clerk of the court a self-addressed, stamped 119 envelope for the return of the fingerprint card.

120 F. After receiving the criminal history record information, the court shall conduct a hearing on the 121 petition. If the court finds that the continued existence and possible dissemination of information relating to

122 the arrest of the petitioner causes or may cause circumstances ~~which~~ that constitute a *potential* manifest
 123 injustice to the petitioner, it shall enter an order requiring the expungement of the police and court records,
 124 including electronic records *and any specifically identified emergency or preliminary protective orders issued*
 125 *pursuant to § 16.1-253, 16.1-253.1, 16.1-253.4, 19.2-152.8, or 19.2-152.9*, relating to the charge. Otherwise,
 126 it shall deny the petition. However, if the petitioner has no prior criminal record and the arrest was for a
 127 misdemeanor violation or the charge was for a civil offense, the petitioner shall be entitled, in the absence of
 128 good cause shown to the contrary by the Commonwealth, to expungement of the police and court records
 129 relating to the charge, and the court shall enter an order of expungement. If the attorney for the
 130 Commonwealth of the county or city in which the petition is filed (i) gives written notice to the court
 131 pursuant to subsection D that he does not object to the petition and (ii) when the charge to be expunged is a
 132 felony, stipulates in such written notice that the continued existence and possible dissemination of
 133 information relating to the arrest of the petitioner causes or may cause circumstances ~~which~~ that constitute a
 134 *potential* manifest injustice to the petitioner, the court may enter an order of expungement without conducting
 135 a hearing. *The existence of a prior conviction alone shall not be a sufficient basis to deny an expungement.*

136 G. The Commonwealth shall be made party defendant to the proceeding. Any party aggrieved by the
 137 decision of the court may appeal, as provided by law in civil cases. *Any person whose petition for relief under*
 138 *this section is the subject of an appeal shall be allowed to proceed under a pseudonym pursuant to*
 139 *§ 8.01-15.1 upon his request.*

140 H. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, when the charge is dismissed because the court
 141 finds that the person arrested or charged is not the person named in the summons, warrant, indictment, or
 142 presentment, the court dismissing the charge shall, upon motion of the person improperly arrested or charged,
 143 enter an order requiring expungement of the police and court records relating to the charge. Such order shall
 144 contain a statement that the dismissal and expungement are ordered pursuant to this subsection and shall be
 145 accompanied by the complete set of the petitioner's fingerprints filed with his petition. Upon the entry of such
 146 order, it shall be treated as provided in subsection K.

147 I. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, upon receiving a copy pursuant to § 2.2-402 of an
 148 absolute pardon for the commission of a crime that a person did not commit, the court shall enter an order
 149 requiring expungement of the police and court records relating to the charge and conviction. Such order shall
 150 contain a statement that the expungement is ordered pursuant to this subsection. Upon the entry of such order,
 151 it shall be treated as provided in subsection K.

152 J. Upon receiving a copy of a writ vacating a conviction pursuant to § 19.2-327.5 or 19.2-327.13, the court
 153 shall enter an order requiring expungement of the police and court records relating to the charge and
 154 conviction. Such order shall contain a statement that the expungement is ordered pursuant to this subsection.
 155 Upon the entry of the order, it shall be treated as provided in subsection K.

156 K. Upon the entry of an order of expungement, the clerk of the court shall cause a copy of such order to be
 157 forwarded to the Department of State Police, which shall, pursuant to rules and regulations adopted pursuant
 158 to § 9.1-134, direct the manner by which the appropriate expungement or removal of such records shall be
 159 effected.

160 L. Costs shall be as provided by § 17.1-275, but shall not be recoverable against the Commonwealth. If
 161 the court enters an order of expungement, the clerk of the court shall refund to the petitioner such costs paid
 162 by the petitioner.

163 M. Any order entered where (i) the court or parties failed to strictly comply with the procedures set forth
 164 in this section or (ii) the court enters an order of expungement contrary to law, shall be voidable upon motion
 165 and notice made within three years of the entry of such order.

166 N. A petition filed under this section and any responsive pleadings filed by the attorney for the
 167 Commonwealth shall be maintained under seal by the clerk unless otherwise ordered by the court. Any order
 168 to expunge issued pursuant to this section shall be sealed and may only be disseminated for the purposes set
 169 forth in § 19.2-392.3 pursuant to regulations and procedures adopted pursuant to § 9.1-128 and procedures
 170 adopted pursuant to § 9.1-134.

171 **§ 19.2-392.2. (Effective July 1, 2026) Expungement of police and court records.**

172 A. If a person is *arrested, charged with, summonsed, or indicted for the commission of an infraction, a*
 173 *crime, or a civil offense, or any offense defined in Title 18.2*, and

174 1. *Is acquitted, or*

175 2. *A nolle prosequi is taken or the charge is otherwise dismissed, including dismissal by accord and*
 176 *satisfaction pursuant to § 19.2-151, he is not ultimately convicted, provided that no stipulation of facts*
 177 *sufficient to find guilt was entered or the court did not determine the facts sufficient to find guilt but deferred*
 178 *adjudication or disposition to a later date, such matter is eligible for expungement. Such person may file a*
 179 *petition setting forth the relevant facts and requesting expungement of the police records and the court*
 180 *records relating to the charge. A person shall not be required to pay any court fees or costs for filing a petition*
 181 *under this subsection. For purposes of this section, an initial charge shall be eligible for expungement if the*
 182 *initial charge is reduced or amended to charge another offense, including a lesser-included offense or the*
 183 *same offense with a lesser punishment, or if such person is convicted of an offense that shares facts with the*

184 *initial charge, such that the person is not convicted of the initial charge.*

185 B. If any person whose name or other identification has been used without his consent or authorization by
186 another person who has been charged or arrested using such name or identification, he may file a petition
187 with the court disposing of the charge for relief pursuant to this section. A person shall not be required to pay
188 any court fees or costs for filing a petition under this subsection. A petition filed under this subsection shall
189 include one complete set of the petitioner's fingerprints obtained from a law-enforcement agency.

190 C. The petition with a copy of the ~~warrant, summons, or indictment charging document~~, if reasonably
191 available, shall be filed in the circuit court of the county or city in which the case was ~~disposed of by acquittal~~
192 ~~or being otherwise dismissed resolved~~ and shall contain, except when not reasonably available, the date of
193 arrest and the name of the arresting agency. *A single petition may request the expungement of the police and*
194 *court records for multiple charges arising out of separate transactions or occurrences.* When this
195 information is not reasonably available, the petition shall state the reason for such unavailability. *Such*
196 *unavailability alone shall not be a basis for refusing expungement.* The petition shall further state the specific
197 criminal charge or civil offense to be expunged, the date of final disposition of the charge as set forth in the
198 petition, the petitioner's date of birth, and the full name used by the petitioner at the time of arrest. If the
199 petition is filed under this subsection, the petitioner shall request that the Central Criminal Records Exchange
200 (CCRE) electronically forward a copy of the petitioner's Virginia criminal history record to the circuit court
201 in which the petition was filed. Upon receiving such request, the CCRE shall electronically forward such
202 record to the circuit court; however, if the circuit court is unable to receive an electronic transmission, the
203 CCRE shall forward a copy of such record to the circuit court which shall be maintained under seal by the
204 clerk unless otherwise ordered by the court.

205 D. A copy of the petition shall be served on the attorney for the Commonwealth of the city or county in
206 which the petition is filed. The attorney for the Commonwealth ~~may~~ shall file an objection or answer to the
207 petition, *including the factual basis for such objection*, or may give written notice to the court that he does not
208 object to the petition within 21 days after it is served on him.

209 E. If the petition is filed under subsection B, the petitioner shall obtain from a law-enforcement agency
210 one complete set of the petitioner's fingerprints and shall provide that agency with a copy of the petition for
211 expungement. The law-enforcement agency shall submit the set of fingerprints to the CCRE with a copy of
212 the petition for expungement attached. The CCRE shall forward under seal to the court a copy of the
213 petitioner's criminal history and the set of fingerprints. Upon completion of the hearing, the court shall return
214 the fingerprint card to the petitioner. If no hearing was conducted, upon the entry of an order of expungement
215 or an order denying the petition for expungement, the court shall cause the fingerprint card to be destroyed
216 unless, within 30 days of the date of the entry of the order, the petitioner requests the return of the fingerprint
217 card in person from the clerk of the court or provides the clerk of the court a self-addressed, stamped
218 envelope for the return of the fingerprint card.

219 F. After receiving the criminal history record information, the court shall conduct a hearing on the
220 petition. If the court finds that the continued existence and possible dissemination of information relating to
221 the arrest of the petitioner causes or may cause circumstances *which that* constitute a *potential* manifest
222 injustice to the petitioner, it shall enter an order requiring the expungement of the police and court records,
223 including electronic records *and any specifically identified emergency or preliminary protective orders issued*
224 *pursuant to § 16.1-253, 16.1-253.1, 16.1-253.4, 19.2-152.8, or 19.2-152.9*, relating to the charge. Otherwise,
225 it shall deny the petition. However, if the petitioner has no prior criminal record and the arrest was for a
226 misdemeanor violation or the charge was for a civil offense, the petitioner shall be entitled, in the absence of
227 good cause shown to the contrary by the Commonwealth, to expungement of the police and court records
228 relating to the charge, and the court shall enter an order of expungement. If the attorney for the
229 Commonwealth of the county or city in which the petition is filed (i) gives written notice to the court
230 pursuant to subsection D that he does not object to the petition and (ii) when the charge to be expunged is a
231 felony, stipulates in such written notice that the continued existence and possible dissemination of
232 information relating to the arrest of the petitioner causes or may cause circumstances *which that* constitute a
233 *potential* manifest injustice to the petitioner, the court may enter an order of expungement without conducting
234 a hearing. *The existence of a prior conviction alone shall not be a sufficient basis to deny an expungement.*

235 G. The Commonwealth shall be made party defendant to the proceeding. Any party aggrieved by the
236 decision of the court may appeal, as provided by law in civil cases. *Any person whose petition for relief under*
237 *this section is the subject of an appeal shall be allowed to proceed under a pseudonym pursuant to*
238 *§ 8.01-15.1 upon his request.*

239 H. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, when the charge is dismissed because the court
240 finds that the person arrested or charged is not the person named in the summons, warrant, indictment, or
241 presentment, the court dismissing the charge shall, upon motion of the person improperly arrested or charged,
242 enter an order requiring expungement of the police and court records relating to the charge. Such order shall
243 contain a statement that the dismissal and expungement are ordered pursuant to this subsection and shall be
244 accompanied by the complete set of the petitioner's fingerprints filed with his petition. Upon the entry of such
245 order, it shall be treated as provided in subsection K.

246 I. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, upon receiving a copy pursuant to § 2.2-402 of an
247 absolute pardon for the commission of a crime that a person did not commit, the court shall enter an order
248 requiring expungement of the police and court records relating to the charge and conviction. Such order shall
249 contain a statement that the expungement is ordered pursuant to this subsection. Upon the entry of such order,
250 it shall be treated as provided in subsection K.

251 J. Upon receiving a copy of a writ vacating a conviction pursuant to § 19.2-327.5 or 19.2-327.13, the court
252 shall enter an order requiring expungement of the police and court records relating to the charge and
253 conviction. Such order shall contain a statement that the expungement is ordered pursuant to this subsection.
254 Upon the entry of the order, it shall be treated as provided in subsection K.

255 K. Upon the entry of an order of expungement, the clerk of the court shall cause a copy of such order to be
256 forwarded to the Department of State Police, which shall, pursuant to rules and regulations adopted pursuant
257 to § 9.1-134, direct the manner by which the appropriate expungement or removal of such records shall be
258 effected. The Department of State Police shall validate the accuracy of any criminal history record ordered to
259 be expunged pursuant to this section but shall not validate whether such record is eligible for expungement.

260 L. Any order entered where (i) the court or parties failed to strictly comply with the procedures set forth in
261 this section or (ii) the court enters an order of expungement contrary to law, shall be voidable upon motion
262 and notice made within three years of the entry of such order.

263 M. A petition filed under this section and any responsive pleadings filed by the attorney for the
264 Commonwealth shall be maintained under seal by the clerk unless otherwise ordered by the court. Any order
265 to expunge issued pursuant to this section shall be sealed and may only be disseminated for the purposes set
266 forth in § 19.2-392.3 pursuant to regulations and procedures adopted pursuant to § 9.1-128 and procedures
267 adopted pursuant to § 9.1-134.

268 **2. That the provisions of this act shall become effective on December 1, 2026.**