

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2011

SESSION LAW 2011-278
SENATE BILL 397

AN ACT TO PROVIDE THAT A YOUTHFUL OFFENDER'S CRIMINAL RECORD MAY BE EXPUNGED OF NONVIOLENT FELONIES BUT TO ALLOW THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION AND TRAINING STANDARDS COMMISSION AND THE SHERIFFS' EDUCATION AND TRAINING STANDARDS COMMISSION ACCESS TO THE RECORDS OF EXPUNCTION.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Article 5 of Chapter 15A of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 15A-145.4. Expunction of records for first offenders who are under 18 years of age at the time of the commission of a nonviolent felony.

(a) For purposes of this section, the term "nonviolent felony" means any felony except the following:

- (1) A Class A through G felony.
- (2) A felony that includes assault as an essential element of the offense.
- (3) A felony that is an offense for which the convicted offender must register under Article 27A of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes.
- (4) A felony that is an offense that did not require registration under Article 27A of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes at the time of the commission of the offense but does require registration on the date the petition to expunge the offense would be filed.
- (5) A felony charged for any of the following sex-related or stalking offenses: G.S. 14-27.7A(b), 14-190.6, 14-190.7, 14-190.8, 14-202, 14-208.11A, 14-208.18, 14-277.3A, 14-321.1.
- (6) Any felony offense charged pursuant to Chapter 90 of the General Statutes where the offense involves methamphetamines, heroin, or possession with intent to sell or deliver or sell and deliver cocaine.
- (7) A felony offense charged pursuant to G.S. 14-12.12(b), 14-12.13, or 14-12.14, or any offense charged as a felony pursuant to G.S. 14-3(c).
- (8) A felony offense charged pursuant to G.S. 14-401.16.
- (9) A felony offense in which a commercial motor vehicle was used in the commission of the offense.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if the person is convicted of more than one nonviolent felony in the same session of court and none of the nonviolent felonies are alleged to have occurred after the person had already been charged and arrested for the commission of a nonviolent felony, then the multiple nonviolent felony convictions shall be treated as one nonviolent felony conviction under this section, and the expunction order issued under this section shall provide that the multiple nonviolent felony convictions shall be expunged from the person's record in accordance with this section.

(c) Whenever any person who had not yet attained the age of 18 years at the time of the commission of the offense and has not previously been convicted of any felony or misdemeanor other than a traffic violation under the laws of the United States or the laws of this State or any other state pleads guilty to or is guilty of a nonviolent felony, the person may file a petition in the court where the person was convicted for expunction of the nonviolent felony from the person's criminal record. The petition shall not be filed earlier than four years after the date of the conviction or when any active sentence, period of probation, and post-release supervision has been served, whichever occurs later. The person shall also perform



at least 100 hours of community service, preferably related to the conviction, before filing a petition for expunction under this section. The petition shall contain the following:

- (1) An affidavit by the petitioner that the petitioner has been of good moral character since the date of conviction of the nonviolent felony in question and has not been convicted of any other felony or any misdemeanor other than a traffic violation under the laws of the United States or the laws of this State or any other state.
- (2) Verified affidavits of two persons who are not related to the petitioner or to each other by blood or marriage, that they know the character and reputation of the petitioner in the community in which the petitioner lives and that the petitioner's character and reputation are good.
- (3) A statement that the petition is a motion in the cause in the case wherein the petitioner was convicted.
- (4) An application on a form approved by the Administrative Office of the Courts requesting and authorizing (i) a State and national criminal history record check by the Department of Justice using any information required by the Administrative Office of the Courts to identify the individual; (ii) a search by the Department of Justice for any outstanding warrants or pending criminal cases; and (iii) a search of the confidential record of expunctions maintained by the Administrative Office of the Courts. The application shall be forwarded to the Department of Justice and to the Administrative Office of the Courts, which shall conduct the searches and report their findings to the court.
- (5) An affidavit by the petitioner that no restitution orders or civil judgments representing amounts ordered for restitution entered against the petitioner are outstanding.
- (6) An affidavit by the petitioner that the petitioner has performed at least 100 hours of community service since the conviction for the nonviolent felony. The affidavit shall include a list of the community services performed, a list of the recipients of the services, and a detailed description of those services.
- (7) An affidavit by the petitioner that the petitioner possesses a high school diploma, a high school graduation equivalency certificate, or a General Education Development degree.

The petition shall be served upon the district attorney of the court wherein the case was tried resulting in conviction. The district attorney shall have 30 days thereafter in which to file any objection thereto and shall be duly notified as to the date of the hearing of the petition. The district attorney shall make his or her best efforts to contact the victim, if any, to notify the victim of the request for expunction prior to the date of the hearing.

(d) The court in which the petition was filed shall take the following steps and shall consider the following issues in rendering a decision upon a petition for expunction of records of a nonviolent felony under this section:

- (1) Call upon a probation officer for additional investigation or verification of the petitioner's conduct during the four-year period since the date of conviction of the nonviolent felony in question.
- (2) Review the petitioner's juvenile record, ensuring that the petitioner's juvenile records remain separate from adult records and files and are withheld from public inspection as provided under Article 30 of Chapter 7B of the General Statutes.
- (3) Review the amount of restitution made by the petitioner to the victim of the nonviolent felony to be expunged and give consideration to whether or not restitution was paid in full.
- (4) Review any other information the court deems relevant, including, but not limited to, affidavits or other testimony provided by law enforcement officers, district attorneys, and victims of nonviolent felonies committed by the petitioner.

(e) The court may order that the person be restored, in the contemplation of the law, to the status the person occupied before the arrest or indictment or information if the court finds all of the following after a hearing:

- (1) The petitioner has remained of good moral character and has been free of conviction of any felony or misdemeanor, other than a traffic violation, for four years from the date of conviction of the nonviolent felony in question or any active sentence, period of probation, or post-release supervision has been served, whichever is later.
- (2) The petitioner has not previously been convicted of any felony or misdemeanor other than a traffic violation under the laws of the United States or the laws of this State or any other state.
- (3) The petitioner has no outstanding warrants or pending criminal cases.
- (4) The petitioner has no outstanding restitution orders or civil judgments representing amounts ordered for restitution entered against the petitioner.
- (5) The petitioner was less than 18 years old at the time of the commission of the offense in question.
- (6) The petitioner has performed at least 100 hours of community service since the time of the conviction and possesses a high school diploma, a high school graduation equivalency certificate, or a General Education Development degree.
- (7) The search of the confidential records of expunctions conducted by the Administrative Office of the Courts shows that the petitioner has not been previously granted an expunction.

(f) No person as to whom an order has been entered pursuant to subsection (e) of this section shall be held thereafter under any provision of any laws to be guilty of perjury or otherwise giving a false statement by reason of that person's failure to recite or acknowledge the arrest, indictment, information, trial, or conviction. Persons pursuing certification under the provisions of Chapter 17C or 17E of the General Statutes, however, shall disclose any and all felony convictions to the certifying Commission regardless of whether or not the felony convictions were expunged pursuant to the provisions of this section.

Persons required by State law to obtain a criminal history record check on a prospective employee shall not be deemed to have knowledge of any convictions expunged under this section.

(g) The court shall also order that the nonviolent felony conviction be expunged from the records of the court and direct all law enforcement agencies bearing record of the same to expunge their records of the conviction. The clerk shall notify State and local agencies of the court's order as provided in G.S. 15A-150.

(h) Any other applicable State or local government agency shall expunge from its records entries made as a result of the conviction ordered expunged under this section. The agency shall also reverse any administrative actions taken against a person whose record is expunged under this section as a result of the charges or convictions expunged. This subsection shall not apply to the Department of Justice for DNA records and samples stored in the State DNA Database and the State DNA Databank.

(i) Any person eligible for expunction of a criminal record under this section shall be notified about the provisions of this section by the probation officer assigned to that person. If no probation officer is assigned, notification of the provisions of this section shall be provided by the court at the time of the conviction of the felony which is to be expunged under this section."

SECTION 2. G.S. 15A-151(a) reads as rewritten:

"§ 15A-151. Confidential agency files; exceptions to expunction.

(a) The Administrative Office of the Courts shall maintain a confidential file containing the names of those people for whom it received a notice under G.S. 15A-150. The information contained in the file may be disclosed only as follows:

- (1) To a judge of the General Court of Justice of North Carolina for the purpose of ascertaining whether a person charged with an offense has been previously granted a discharge or an expunction.
- (2) To a person requesting confirmation of the person's own discharge or expunction, as provided in G.S. 15A-152.
- (3) To the General Court of Justice of North Carolina in response to a subpoena or other court order issued pursuant to a civil action under G.S. 15A-152.
- (4) If the criminal record was expunged pursuant to G.S. 15A-145.4, to State and local law enforcement agencies for employment purposes only.

- (5) If the criminal record was expunged pursuant to G.S. 15A-145.4, to the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission for certification purposes only.
- (6) If the criminal record was expunged pursuant to G.S. 15A-145.4, to the North Carolina Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards Commission for certification purposes only."

SECTION 3. G.S. 17C-13 reads as rewritten:

"§ 17C-13. ~~Pardons.~~Pardons; expunctions.

(a) When a person presents competent evidence that he has been granted an unconditional pardon for a crime in this State, any other state, or the United States, the Commission may not deny, suspend, or revoke that person's certification based solely on the commission of that crime or for an alleged lack of good moral character due to the commission of that crime.

(b) Notwithstanding G.S. 15A-145.4, the Commission may gain access to a person's felony conviction records, including those maintained by the Administrative Office of the Courts in its confidential files containing the names of persons granted expunctions. The Commission may deny, suspend, or revoke a person's certification based solely on that person's felony conviction, whether or not that conviction was expunged."

SECTION 4. G.S. 17E-12 reads as rewritten:

"§ 17E-12. ~~Pardons.~~Pardons; expunctions.

(a) When a person presents competent evidence that the person has been granted an unconditional pardon of innocence for a crime in this State, any other state, or the United States, the Commission may not deny, suspend, or revoke that person's certification based solely on the commission of that crime or for alleged lack of good moral character due to the commission of that crime.

(b) Notwithstanding G.S. 15A-145.4, the Commission may gain access to a person's felony conviction records, including those maintained by the Administrative Office of the Courts in its confidential files containing the names of persons granted expunctions. The Commission may deny, suspend, or revoke a person's certification based solely on that person's felony conviction, whether or not that conviction was expunged."

SECTION 5. This act becomes effective December 1, 2011.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 17th day of June, 2011.

s/ Walter H. Dalton
President of the Senate

s/ Thom Tillis
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Beverly E. Perdue
Governor

Approved 5:20 p.m. this 23rd day of June, 2011