

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 615 Juvenile Diversion Program Expunction

SPONSOR(S): Watson, C. and others

TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 700

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Criminal Justice Subcommittee	14 Y, 0 N	Rochester	Hall
2) Justice Appropriations Subcommittee			
3) Judiciary Committee			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Generally, when a law enforcement officer has probable cause to believe that a juvenile has committed a criminal offense in Florida, the officer may take the juvenile into custody or issue a notice to appear. Both taking a juvenile into custody and issuing of a notice to appear refer the matter to the clerk of courts, where a juvenile delinquency case is generated. The creation of that case becomes part of the juvenile's offender record.

Diversion is a program designed to divert a juvenile from entering the juvenile justice system by placing him or her on a less restrictive track that affords more opportunities for rehabilitation and restoration. The goal of diversion is to maximize the opportunity for success and minimize the likelihood of recidivism. Upon successful completion of a diversion program, the juvenile's charges are dismissed.

Upon receiving an application signed by the juvenile and certified by the state attorney, the Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) must expunge a nonjudicial arrest record of a juvenile who has successfully completed a diversion program for a misdemeanor offense. Moreover, a juvenile who successfully completes a diversion program for a first-time misdemeanor offense may lawfully deny or fail to acknowledge his or her participation in a diversion program and the expunction of the nonjudicial arrest record, unless the inquiry is made by a criminal justice agency for the purpose of:

- Determining eligibility for diversion programs;
- A criminal investigation; or
- Making a prosecutorial decision.

HB 615 authorizes FDLE to expunge a juvenile's nonjudicial arrest record following the successful completion of a diversion program for any offense, including a felony. A juvenile seeking to have his or her arrest record expunged is still required to submit certification from the state attorney that the juvenile meets the qualifications for expunction. Moreover, the decision to refer a juvenile to a diversion program remains at the discretion of either the law enforcement officer who interacts with the juvenile at the time of the offense or the state attorney who is referred the case.

Under the bill, a juvenile who successfully completes a diversion program for any offense, including a felony or subsequent misdemeanor, may lawfully deny or fail to acknowledge his or her participation in a diversion program and the expunction of the nonjudicial arrest record, except when the inquiry is made by a criminal justice agency for specified purposes.

The bill may have an indeterminate fiscal impact on state government due to an increased number of eligible applicants under the expanded criteria for juvenile diversion expunction. The bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on local government.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2020.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Background

Creation and Disposition of a Criminal Case

Generally, when a law enforcement officer has probable cause to believe that a juvenile has committed a criminal offense in Florida, the officer may take the juvenile into custody or issue a notice to appear.¹ Both taking a juvenile into custody and issuing a notice to appear refer the matter to the clerk of courts, where a juvenile delinquency case is generated.

A juvenile delinquency case may be resolved in any of the following ways:

- The case may be dismissed, by a no action or no information,² *nolle prosequi*,³ or court dismissal;⁴
- The juvenile may participate in pretrial diversion;⁵
- The juvenile may plead guilty or no contest to the charges;⁶
- The case may proceed to an adjudicatory hearing, at which the court may:
 - Adjudicate the juvenile delinquent;
 - Withhold adjudication of delinquency;⁷ or
 - Dismiss the case.

Juvenile Offender Records

In contrast to an adult criminal history record,⁸ which is generally accessible to the public, a juvenile offender record in the jurisdiction of a juvenile court is confidential and exempt from public disclosure.⁹

As such, juvenile offender records may only be disclosed to:

- Authorized court personnel;
- The Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and its designees;
- The Department of Corrections;
- The Florida Commission on Offender Review;
- Law enforcement agents;
- School superintendents and their designees;
- Any licensed professional or licensed community agency representative assessing or treating a juvenile; and
- Any person authorized under ch. 985, F.S., to receive such information, or upon court order.¹⁰

¹ A notice to appear is a written order issued by a law enforcement officer, in lieu of taking a juvenile into custody or detaining the juvenile, to appear in a designated court or governmental office at a specified date and time. Fla. R. Juv. P. 8.045.

² A “no action” is a dismissal of the pending charges before an information or indictment has been filed. *Genden v. Fuller*, 648 So.2d 1183, 1183 n. 1 (Fla. 1994).

³ A *nolle prosequi* is the dismissal of a pending information or indictment. *Id.*

⁴ The court may dismiss a case under certain circumstances, including on a defense motion to dismiss under Fla. R. Juv. P. 8.085(a)(4), upon expiration of the speedy trial period under Fla. R. Juv. P. 8.090(d), or upon granting Stand Your Ground immunity under s. 776.032, F.S.

⁵ S. 985.12, F.S.

⁶ Fla. R. Juv. P. R. 8.070(b).

⁷ A withhold of adjudication allows a court to impose a sentence without imposing an adjudication of delinquency and the collateral consequences that accompany that adjudication. George E. Tragos and Peter A. Sartes, *Withhold of Adjudication: What Everyone Needs to Know*, Florida Bar Journal, (Feb. 2008), <https://www.floridabar.org/the-florida-bar-journal/withhold-of-adjudication-what-everyone-needs-to-know/> (last visited Jan. 13, 2020). Fla. R. Juv. P. 8.110(g).

⁸ “Criminal history record” means any nonjudicial record maintained by a criminal justice agency containing criminal history information. S. 943.045(6), F.S.

⁹ S. 985.04(1)(a), F.S.

¹⁰ S. 985.04(1)(b), F.S.

Notwithstanding juvenile offender record confidentiality and exemption from public disclosure:

- The name, photograph, address, and crime or arrest report of a juvenile is not considered confidential and exempt if the juvenile has been:
 - Taken into custody by a law enforcement officer for a violation of law which, if committed by an adult, would be a felony;
 - Charged with a violation of law which, if committed by an adult, would be a felony;
 - Found to have committed an offense which, if committed by an adult, would be a felony;or
 - Transferred to adult court under to part X of ch. 985, F.S.;¹¹
- A law enforcement agency may release a copy of a juvenile offense report to the victim of the offense;¹²
- A law enforcement agency must notify the superintendent of schools that a juvenile is alleged to have committed a delinquent act when he or she is taken into custody for an offense that would have been a felony if committed by an adult, or a crime of violence;¹³
- Records maintained by DJJ, including copies of court records pertaining to a juvenile found to have committed a delinquent act which, if committed by an adult, would be a disqualifying crime in a level two background screening,¹⁴ may not be destroyed for 25 years after the juvenile's final referral to DJJ, except upon a juvenile's death; and
- Records in DJJ's custody may be inspected upon order of the Secretary or his or her authorized agent by persons with sufficient reason and under such conditions as the Secretary or his or her authorized agent deems proper.¹⁵

Records pertaining to juveniles committed to or supervised by DJJ are retained until a juvenile reaches the age of 24 years, or 26 years in the case of a serious or habitual delinquent child.^{16,17}

Juvenile Diversion Expunction

Diversion Programs

Diversion is a program designed to divert a juvenile from entering the juvenile justice system by placing him or her on a less restrictive track that affords more opportunities for rehabilitation and restoration.¹⁸ The goal of diversion is to maximize the opportunity for success and minimize the likelihood of recidivism.¹⁹

A juvenile may have the opportunity to participate in either a prearrest or postarrest diversion program. A prearrest diversion program is an intervention program that holds a juvenile accountable for their

¹¹ S. 985.04(2)(a)1., F.S.

¹² Information gained by the victim pursuant to ch. 985, F.S., including the next of kin of a homicide victim, regarding any case handled in juvenile court, must not be revealed to any outside party, except as is reasonably necessary in pursuit of legal remedies. S. 985.04(3), F.S.

¹³ When a juvenile is formally charged by a state attorney with a felony or a delinquent act that would be a felony if committed by an adult, the state attorney must notify the superintendent of the juvenile's school that he or she has been charged with such felony or delinquent act. The information obtained by the superintendent of schools must be released within 48 hours after receipt to appropriate school personnel, including the principal of the juvenile's school and the director of transportation. The principal must immediately notify the juvenile's classroom teachers, assigned bus driver, and any other school personnel whose duties include directly supervising the juvenile. S. 985.04(4)(b), F.S.

¹⁴ S. 435.04, F.S.

¹⁵ S. 985.04(6)(a), F.S.

¹⁶ If a person 18 older is charged with or convicted of a forcible felony and the person's criminal history record as a minor has not yet been destroyed, the person's record as a minor must be merged with the person's adult criminal history record and must be retained as a part of the person's adult record. Moreover, if at any time a minor is adjudicated as an adult for a forcible felony, the minor's criminal history record prior to the time of the minor's adjudication as an adult must be merged with his or her record as an adjudicated adult. S. 943.0515(2), F.S.

¹⁷ S. 985.04(7)(b), F.S.

¹⁸ Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, *Glossary*, <http://www.djj.state.fl.us/youth-families/glossary> (last visited Jan. 13, 2020).

¹⁹ Center for Health & Justice at TASC, *A National Survey of Criminal Justice Diversion Programs and Initiatives*, pg. 6, (December 2013),

http://www2.centerforhealthandjustice.org/sites/www2.centerforhealthandjustice.org/files/publications/CHJ%20Diversion%20Report_web.pdf (last visited Jan. 13, 2020).

behavior, while diverting them from any court proceeding or formal arrest record.²⁰ A postarrest diversion program is a similar intervention program, but diverts the juvenile from further court proceedings after an arrest.²¹ While prearrest diversion diverts a juvenile before an arrest record is ever created, an arrest record is created and maintained pending the juvenile's participation and completion of the diversion program in postarrest diversion. Upon successful completion of a postarrest diversion program, the juvenile's charges are dismissed.

The decision to refer a juvenile to a diversion program is at the discretion of either the law enforcement officer who interacts with the juvenile at the time of the offense or the state attorney who is referred the case. Examples of such programs are Community Arbitration, Juvenile Alternative Services Program, Teen Court, Intensive Delinquency Diversion Services, Civil Citation, Boy and Girl Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, mentoring programs, and alternative schools.²²

Expunction

Generally, expunction is the court-ordered physical destruction or obliteration of a criminal history record or portion of a record by any criminal justice agency having custody of the record.²³ A juvenile who completes one of the following diversion programs may petition for juvenile diversion expunction:²⁴

- Civil citation or a similar prearrest diversion program;²⁵
- Prearrest or postarrest diversion program;²⁶
- Neighborhood restorative justice;²⁷
- Community arbitration;²⁸ or
- A program to which a state attorney refers the juvenile.²⁹

FDLE is required to expunge a juvenile's misdemeanor nonjudicial arrest record after successfully completing a diversion program, if the juvenile:

- Submits an application for prearrest or postarrest diversion expunction;
- Participated in a diversion program based on the commission of a nonviolent misdemeanor that is not a crime of domestic violence;
- Has not committed any other criminal offense or comparable ordinance violation;
- Participated in a diversion program that expressly allows for such expunction; and
- Submits certification from the state attorney that the juvenile meets the expunction qualifications.³⁰

²⁰ Mark A. Greenwald, Overview of Florida's Pre-Arrest and Post-Arrest Juvenile Diversion Programs and Applicable Laws, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (June 7, 2018), <http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/MSDHS/Meetings/June-Meeting-Documents/Presentations/June-7-930AM-DJJ-Greenwald-Diversion-Programs.aspx> (last visited Jan. 13, 2020).

²¹ *Id.*
²² Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, *Probation & Community Intervention*, <http://www.djj.state.fl.us/services/probation> (last visited Jan. 13, 2020).

²³ Criminal history records in the custody of FDLE must be retained in all cases for purposes of evaluating subsequent requests by the subject of the record for sealing or expunction, or for purposes of recreating the record in the event an order to expunge is vacated by a court of competent jurisdiction. S. 943.045(16), F.S.

²⁴ S. 943.0582, F.S.

²⁵ The civil citation program offers early intervention, community counseling referrals, and other appropriate community resources to divert juvenile misdemeanor offenders from the Juvenile Justice System. The program works with other community partners in an effort to reduce juvenile crime and to provide services for at-risk youth. Nineteenth Judicial Circuit, *Civil Citation* (2019), <http://www.circuit19.org/programs-services/court-programs/juvenile/civil-citation> (last visited Jan. 13, 2020). S. 985.12, F.S.

²⁶ S. 985.125, F.S.

²⁷ In neighborhood restorative justice programs, victims, the offender, and all others impacted by the crime discuss the impact, obligations, and actions needed to repair harm. Florida Restorative Justice Association, *Retributive Justice vs. Restorative Justice* (2014), <https://www.floridarestorativejustice.com/about-rj.html> (last visited Jan. 13, 2020). S. 985.155, F.S.

²⁸ Community arbitration is a program where a juvenile who has committed a relatively minor offense can have his or her case resolved in an informal manner, and appear before a community arbitrator instead of a judge in juvenile court. Twentieth Judicial Circuit, *Juvenile Arbitration Program* (2014), <https://www.ca.cjis20.org/home/main/juvarb.asp> (last visited Jan. 13, 2020). S. 985.16, F.S.

²⁹ S. 985.15, F.S. See s. 943.0582(2)(a), F.S.

³⁰ S. 943.0582(3), F.S.

Juvenile diversion expunction has the same effect as court-ordered expunction of criminal history records under s. 943.0585, F.S., except that:

- FDLE may make an expunged juvenile diversion criminal record available to:
 - Criminal justice agencies for the purpose of determining eligibility for diversion programs;
 - When the record is sought as part of a criminal investigation; or
 - When making a prosecutorial decision;³¹ and
- Local criminal justice agencies in the county in which an arrest occurred must seal instead of destroy any relevant records.³²

A juvenile who successfully completes a diversion program for a first-time misdemeanor offense may lawfully deny or fail to acknowledge his or her participation in the program and the expunction of the nonjudicial arrest record, unless the inquiry is made by a criminal justice agency³³ for the purpose of:

- Determining eligibility for diversion programs;
- A criminal investigation; or
- Making a prosecutorial decision.³⁴

As of November 2019, there are 21,773 minors with 53,294 juvenile felony arrest charges with or without a disposition that may qualify for juvenile diversion expunction.³⁵

Effect of Proposed Changes

HB 615 requires FDLE to expunge a juvenile's nonjudicial arrest record following the successful completion of a diversion program for any offense, including a felony. The bill expands current law, which restricts eligibility for this type of expunction to an arrest for a misdemeanor offense.

A juvenile seeking to have his or her arrest record expunged after successfully completing a diversion program is still required to submit certification from the state attorney that the juvenile meets the qualifications for the expunction. Moreover, the decision to refer a juvenile to a diversion program remains at the discretion of either the law enforcement officer who interacts with the juvenile at the time of the offense or the state attorney who is referred the case.

The bill permits a juvenile who has successfully completed a diversion program for any offense, including a felony or subsequent misdemeanor, to lawfully deny or fail to acknowledge his or her participation in the program and the expunction of the nonjudicial arrest record, except when the inquiry is made by a criminal justice agency for specified purposes.³⁶ This also expands current law, which restricts authorization of such denial to a juvenile who has successfully completed a diversion program for a first-time misdemeanor only.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2020.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1: Amends s. 943.0582, F.S., relating to diversion program expunction.

Section 2: Amends s. 985.126, F.S., relating to diversion programs; data collection; denial of participation or expunged record.

Section 3: Provides an effective date of July 1, 2020.

³¹ S. 943.0582(2)(b)1., F.S.

³² S. 943.0582(2)(b)2., F.S.

³³ "Criminal justice agency" means a court; FDLE; DJJ; the protective investigations component of the Department of Children and Families, investigating abuse or neglect; and any other governmental agency or subunit thereof that performs the administration of criminal justice pursuant to a statute or rule of court and that allocates a substantial part of its annual budget to the administration of criminal justice. S. 942.045(11), F.S.

³⁴ S. 985.126(5), F.S. S. 943.0582(2)(b)1.a.-c., F.S.

³⁵ Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Agency Analysis of 2019 House Bill 615, p. 3 (Nov 22, 2019).

³⁶ *Supra*, n 34.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

The bill will likely have a positive fiscal impact on FDLE. The department estimates that it will incur an estimated cost of \$25,050 to modify the Computerized Criminal History (CCH) program used to process applications for a juvenile diversion expunction.³⁷ FDLE may also incur costs associated with processing an increased number of applications under the expanded criteria for juvenile diversion expunction.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not applicable. This bill does not appear to affect county or municipal governments.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

FDLE has existing rulemaking authority to implement this bill.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

³⁷ *Supra*, n 35.