



Ohio Revised Code

Section 2953.521 Expungement of record of not guilty finding or dismissed charges when defendant victim of human trafficking.

Effective: April 4, 2023

Legislation: Senate Bill 288 - 134th General Assembly

(A) Any person who is found not guilty of an offense by a jury or a court or who is the defendant named in a dismissed complaint, indictment, or information may apply to the court for an order to expunge the person's official records in the case if the complaint, indictment, information, or finding of not guilty that is the subject of the application was the result of the applicant having been a victim of human trafficking. The application may be filed at any time after the finding of not guilty or the dismissal of the complaint, indictment, or information is entered upon the minutes of the court or the journal, whichever entry occurs first. The application may request an order to expunge official records for more than one offense, but if it does, the court shall consider the request for each offense separately as if a separate application had been made for each offense and all references in divisions (A) to (G) of this section to "the offense" or "that offense" mean each of those offenses that are the subject of the application.

(B) The court may deny an application made under division (A) of this section if it finds that the application fails to assert grounds on which relief may be granted.

(C) If the court does not deny an application under division (B) of 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 for believing a denial of the application is justified.

(D) At the hearing held under division (C) of this section, the court shall do all of the following:

(1) If the prosecutor has filed an objection, consider the reasons against granting the application specified by the prosecutor in the objection;

(2) Determine whether the applicant has demonstrated by a preponderance of the evidence that the



complaint, indictment, information, or finding of not guilty that is the subject of the application was the result of the applicant having been a victim of human trafficking;

(3) If the application pertains to a dismissed complaint, indictment, or information, determine whether the dismissal was with prejudice or without prejudice and, if the dismissal was without prejudice, whether the period of limitations applicable to the offense that was the subject of that complaint, indictment, or information has expired;

(4) Determine whether any criminal proceedings are pending against the applicant.

(E)(1) Subject to division (E)(2) of this section, if the court finds that the applicant has demonstrated by a preponderance of the evidence that the complaint, indictment, information, or finding of not guilty that is the subject of the application was the result of the applicant having been a victim of human trafficking, the court shall grant the application and order that the official records be expunged.

(2) The court shall not grant the application and order that the official records be expunged unless the court determines that the interests of the applicant in having the official records pertaining to the complaint, indictment, or information or finding of not guilty that is the subject of the application expunged are not outweighed by any legitimate needs of the government to maintain those records.

(F) If an expungement is ordered under division (E) of this section, the court shall send notice of the order of expungement to each public office or agency that the court has reason to believe may have an official record pertaining to the case.

(G) The proceedings in the case that is the subject of an order issued under division (E) of this section shall be considered not to have occurred and the official records shall be expunged. The official records shall not be used for any purpose, including a criminal records check under section 109.572 of the Revised Code. The applicant may, and the court shall, reply that no record exists with respect to the applicant upon any inquiry into the matter.