

CHAPTER 2013-98

Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 1325

An act relating to victims of human trafficking; amending s. 90.803, F.S.; revising the mental, emotional, or developmental age of a child victim whose out-of-court statement describing specified criminal acts is admissible in evidence in certain instances; creating s. 943.0583, F.S.; providing definitions; providing for the expungement of the criminal history record of a victim of human trafficking; designating what offenses may be expunged; providing exceptions; providing that an expunged conviction is deemed to have been vacated due to a substantive defect in the underlying criminal proceedings; providing for a period in which such expungement must be sought; providing that official documentation of the victim's status as a human trafficking victim creates a presumption; providing a standard of proof absent official documentation; providing requirements for petitions; providing criminal penalties for false statements on such petitions; providing for parties to and service of such petitions; providing for electronic appearances of petitioners and attorneys at hearings; providing for orders of relief; providing for physical destruction of certain records; authorizing a person whose records are expunged to lawfully deny or fail to acknowledge the arrests covered by the expunged record; providing exceptions; providing that such lawful denial does not constitute perjury or subject the person to liability; providing that cross-references are considered general reference for the purpose of incorporation by reference; amending ss. 943.0582, 943.0585, 943.059, and 961.06, F.S.; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; providing an appropriation; providing for applicability; providing effective dates.

WHEREAS, victims of trafficking may be forced to engage in a variety of illegal acts beyond prostitution, and

WHEREAS, trafficked persons have not always been recognized as victims by the police and prosecutors and plead guilty or do not understand the consequences of criminal charges, and

WHEREAS, all persons with criminal records reflecting their involvement in the sex industry may face barriers to employment and other life opportunities long after they escape from their trafficking situations, and

WHEREAS, there is a genuine need for a workable solution to alleviate the impact of the collateral consequences of conviction for victims of human trafficking, NOW, THEREFORE,

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subsection (23) of section 90.803, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

90.803 Hearsay exceptions; availability of declarant immaterial.—The provision of s. 90.802 to the contrary notwithstanding, the following are not inadmissible as evidence, even though the declarant is available as a witness:

(23) HEARSAY EXCEPTION; STATEMENT OF CHILD VICTIM.—

(a) Unless the source of information or the method or circumstances by which the statement is reported indicates a lack of trustworthiness, an out-of-court statement made by a child victim with a physical, mental, emotional, or developmental age of ~~16~~ 11 or less describing any act of child abuse or neglect, any act of sexual abuse against a child, the offense of child abuse, the offense of aggravated child abuse, or any offense involving an unlawful sexual act, contact, intrusion, or penetration performed in the presence of, with, by, or on the declarant child, not otherwise admissible, is admissible in evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding if:

1. The court finds in a hearing conducted outside the presence of the jury that the time, content, and circumstances of the statement provide sufficient safeguards of reliability. In making its determination, the court may consider the mental and physical age and maturity of the child, the nature and duration of the abuse or offense, the relationship of the child to the offender, the reliability of the assertion, the reliability of the child victim, and any other factor deemed appropriate; and

2. The child either:

a. Testifies; or

b. Is unavailable as a witness, provided that there is other corroborative evidence of the abuse or offense. Unavailability shall include a finding by the court that the child's participation in the trial or proceeding would result in a substantial likelihood of severe emotional or mental harm, in addition to findings pursuant to s. 90.804(1).

Section 2. Section 943.0583, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

943.0583 Human trafficking victim expunction.—

(1) As used in this section, the term:

(a) "Human trafficking" has the same meaning as provided in s. 787.06.

(b) "Official documentation" means any documentation issued by a federal, state, or local agency tending to show a person's status as a victim of human trafficking.

(c) "Victim of human trafficking" means a person subjected to coercion, as defined in s. 787.06, for the purpose of being used in human trafficking, a child under 18 years of age subjected to human trafficking, or an individual subjected to human trafficking as defined by federal law.

(2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the court of original jurisdiction over the crime sought to be expunged may order a criminal justice agency to expunge the criminal history record of a victim of human trafficking who complies with the requirements of this section. This section does not confer any right to the expunction of any criminal history record, and any request for expunction of a criminal history record may be denied at the discretion of the court.

(3) A person who is a victim of human trafficking may petition for the expunction of any conviction for an offense committed while he or she was a victim of human trafficking, which offense was committed as a part of the human trafficking scheme of which he or she was a victim or at the direction of an operator of the scheme, including, but not limited to, violations under chapters 796 and 847. However, this section does not apply to any offense listed in s. 775.084(1)(b)1. Determination of the petition under this section should be by a preponderance of the evidence. A conviction expunged under this section is deemed to have been vacated due to a substantive defect in the underlying criminal proceedings.

(4) A petition under this section must be initiated by the petitioner with due diligence after the victim has ceased to be a victim of human trafficking or has sought services for victims of human trafficking, subject to reasonable concerns for the safety of the victim, family members of the victim, or other victims of human trafficking that may be jeopardized by the bringing of such petition or for other reasons consistent with the purpose of this section.

(5) Official documentation of the victim's status creates a presumption that his or her participation in the offense was a result of having been a victim of human trafficking but is not required for granting a petition under this section. A determination made without such official documentation must be made by a showing of clear and convincing evidence.

(6) Each petition to a court to expunge a criminal history record is complete only when accompanied by:

(a) The petitioner's sworn statement attesting that the petitioner is eligible for such an expunction to the best of his or her knowledge or belief and does not have any other petition to expunge or any petition to seal pending before any court.

(b) Official documentation of the petitioner's status as a victim of human trafficking, if any exists.

Any person who knowingly provides false information on such sworn statement to the court commits a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

(7)(a) In judicial proceedings under this section, a copy of the completed petition to expunge shall be served upon the appropriate state attorney or the statewide prosecutor and upon the arresting agency; however, it is not

necessary to make any agency other than the state a party. The appropriate state attorney or the statewide prosecutor and the arresting agency may respond to the court regarding the completed petition to expunge.

(b) The petitioner or the petitioner's attorney may appear at any hearing under this section telephonically, via video conference, or by other electronic means.

(c) If relief is granted by the court, the clerk of the court shall certify copies of the order to the appropriate state attorney or the statewide prosecutor and the arresting agency. The arresting agency is responsible for forwarding the order to any other agency listed in the court order to which the arresting agency disseminated the criminal history record information to which the order pertains. The department shall forward the order to expunge to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The clerk of the court shall certify a copy of the order to any other agency that the records of the court reflect has received the criminal history record from the court.

(8)(a) Any criminal history record of a minor or an adult that is ordered expunged by the court of original jurisdiction over the crime sought to be expunged pursuant to this section must be physically destroyed or obliterated by any criminal justice agency having custody of such record, except that any criminal history record in the custody of the department must be retained in all cases.

(b) The person who is the subject of a criminal history record that is expunged under this section may lawfully deny or fail to acknowledge the arrests covered by the expunged record, except when the subject of the record is a candidate for employment with a criminal justice agency or is a defendant in a criminal prosecution.

(c) Subject to the exceptions in paragraph (b), a person who has been granted an expunction under this section may not be held under any law of this state to commit perjury or to be otherwise liable for giving a false statement by reason of such person's failure to recite or acknowledge an expunged criminal history record.

(9) Any reference to any other chapter, section, or subdivision of the Florida Statutes in this section constitutes a general reference under the doctrine of incorporation by reference.

Section 3. Subsection (6) of section 943.0582, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

943.0582 Prearrest, postarrest, or teen court diversion program expunction.—

(6) Expunction or sealing granted under this section does not prevent the minor who receives such relief from petitioning for the expunction or sealing of a later criminal history record as provided for in ss. 943.0583, 943.0585, and 943.059, if the minor is otherwise eligible under those sections.

Section 4. Paragraph (a) of subsection (4) of section 943.0585, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

943.0585 Court-ordered expunction of criminal history records.—The courts of this state have jurisdiction over their own procedures, including the maintenance, expunction, and correction of judicial records containing criminal history information to the extent such procedures are not inconsistent with the conditions, responsibilities, and duties established by this section. Any court of competent jurisdiction may order a criminal justice agency to expunge the criminal history record of a minor or an adult who complies with the requirements of this section. The court shall not order a criminal justice agency to expunge a criminal history record until the person seeking to expunge a criminal history record has applied for and received a certificate of eligibility for expunction pursuant to subsection (2). A criminal history record that relates to a violation of s. 393.135, s. 394.4593, s. 787.025, chapter 794, s. 796.03, s. 800.04, s. 810.14, s. 817.034, s. 825.1025, s. 827.071, chapter 839, s. 847.0133, s. 847.0135, s. 847.0145, s. 893.135, s. 916.1075, a violation enumerated in s. 907.041, or any violation specified as a predicate offense for registration as a sexual predator pursuant to s. 775.21, without regard to whether that offense alone is sufficient to require such registration, or for registration as a sexual offender pursuant to s. 943.0435, may not be expunged, without regard to whether adjudication was withheld, if the defendant was found guilty of or pled guilty or nolo contendere to the offense, or if the defendant, as a minor, was found to have committed, or pled guilty or nolo contendere to committing, the offense as a delinquent act. The court may only order expunction of a criminal history record pertaining to one arrest or one incident of alleged criminal activity, except as provided in this section. The court may, at its sole discretion, order the expunction of a criminal history record pertaining to more than one arrest if the additional arrests directly relate to the original arrest. If the court intends to order the expunction of records pertaining to such additional arrests, such intent must be specified in the order. A criminal justice agency may not expunge any record pertaining to such additional arrests if the order to expunge does not articulate the intention of the court to expunge a record pertaining to more than one arrest. This section does not prevent the court from ordering the expunction of only a portion of a criminal history record pertaining to one arrest or one incident of alleged criminal activity. Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, a criminal justice agency may comply with laws, court orders, and official requests of other jurisdictions relating to expunction, correction, or confidential handling of criminal history records or information derived therefrom. This section does not confer any right to the expunction of any criminal history record, and any request for expunction of a criminal history record may be denied at the sole discretion of the court.

(4) EFFECT OF CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD EXPUNCTION.—Any criminal history record of a minor or an adult which is ordered expunged by a court of competent jurisdiction pursuant to this section must be physically destroyed or obliterated by any criminal justice agency having custody of such record; except that any criminal history record in the custody of the

department must be retained in all cases. A criminal history record ordered expunged that is retained by the department is confidential and exempt from the provisions of s. 119.07(1) and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution and not available to any person or entity except upon order of a court of competent jurisdiction. A criminal justice agency may retain a notation indicating compliance with an order to expunge.

(a) The person who is the subject of a criminal history record that is expunged under this section or under other provisions of law, including former s. 893.14, former s. 901.33, and former s. 943.058, may lawfully deny or fail to acknowledge the arrests covered by the expunged record, except when the subject of the record:

1. Is a candidate for employment with a criminal justice agency;
2. Is a defendant in a criminal prosecution;
3. Concurrently or subsequently petitions for relief under this section, s. 943.0583, or s. 943.059;
4. Is a candidate for admission to The Florida Bar;
5. Is seeking to be employed or licensed by or to contract with the Department of Children and Family Services, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation within the Department of Education, the Agency for Health Care Administration, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, the Department of Health, the Department of Elderly Affairs, or the Department of Juvenile Justice or to be employed or used by such contractor or licensee in a sensitive position having direct contact with children, the disabled, or the elderly;
6. Is seeking to be employed or licensed by the Department of Education, any district school board, any university laboratory school, any charter school, any private or parochial school, or any local governmental entity that licenses child care facilities; or
7. Is seeking authorization from a seaport listed in s. 311.09 for employment within or access to one or more of such seaports pursuant to s. 311.12.

Section 5. Paragraph (a) of subsection (4) of section 943.059, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

943.059 Court-ordered sealing of criminal history records.—The courts of this state shall continue to have jurisdiction over their own procedures, including the maintenance, sealing, and correction of judicial records containing criminal history information to the extent such procedures are not inconsistent with the conditions, responsibilities, and duties established by this section. Any court of competent jurisdiction may order a criminal justice agency to seal the criminal history record of a minor or an adult who complies with the requirements of this section. The court shall not order a

criminal justice agency to seal a criminal history record until the person seeking to seal a criminal history record has applied for and received a certificate of eligibility for sealing pursuant to subsection (2). A criminal history record that relates to a violation of s. 393.135, s. 394.4593, s. 787.025, chapter 794, s. 796.03, s. 800.04, s. 810.14, s. 817.034, s. 825.1025, s. 827.071, chapter 839, s. 847.0133, s. 847.0135, s. 847.0145, s. 893.135, s. 916.1075, a violation enumerated in s. 907.041, or any violation specified as a predicate offense for registration as a sexual predator pursuant to s. 775.21, without regard to whether that offense alone is sufficient to require such registration, or for registration as a sexual offender pursuant to s. 943.0435, may not be sealed, without regard to whether adjudication was withheld, if the defendant was found guilty of or pled guilty or nolo contendere to the offense, or if the defendant, as a minor, was found to have committed or pled guilty or nolo contendere to committing the offense as a delinquent act. The court may only order sealing of a criminal history record pertaining to one arrest or one incident of alleged criminal activity, except as provided in this section. The court may, at its sole discretion, order the sealing of a criminal history record pertaining to more than one arrest if the additional arrests directly relate to the original arrest. If the court intends to order the sealing of records pertaining to such additional arrests, such intent must be specified in the order. A criminal justice agency may not seal any record pertaining to such additional arrests if the order to seal does not articulate the intention of the court to seal records pertaining to more than one arrest. This section does not prevent the court from ordering the sealing of only a portion of a criminal history record pertaining to one arrest or one incident of alleged criminal activity. Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, a criminal justice agency may comply with laws, court orders, and official requests of other jurisdictions relating to sealing, correction, or confidential handling of criminal history records or information derived therefrom. This section does not confer any right to the sealing of any criminal history record, and any request for sealing a criminal history record may be denied at the sole discretion of the court.

(4) EFFECT OF CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD SEALING.—A criminal history record of a minor or an adult which is ordered sealed by a court of competent jurisdiction pursuant to this section is confidential and exempt from the provisions of s. 119.07(1) and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution and is available only to the person who is the subject of the record, to the subject's attorney, to criminal justice agencies for their respective criminal justice purposes, which include conducting a criminal history background check for approval of firearms purchases or transfers as authorized by state or federal law, to judges in the state courts system for the purpose of assisting them in their case-related decisionmaking responsibilities, as set forth in s. 943.053(5), or to those entities set forth in subparagraphs (a)1., 4., 5., 6., and 8. for their respective licensing, access authorization, and employment purposes.

(a) The subject of a criminal history record sealed under this section or under other provisions of law, including former s. 893.14, former s. 901.33,

and former s. 943.058, may lawfully deny or fail to acknowledge the arrests covered by the sealed record, except when the subject of the record:

1. Is a candidate for employment with a criminal justice agency;
2. Is a defendant in a criminal prosecution;
3. Concurrently or subsequently petitions for relief under this section, s. 943.0583, or s. 943.0585;
4. Is a candidate for admission to The Florida Bar;
5. Is seeking to be employed or licensed by or to contract with the Department of Children and Family Services, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation within the Department of Education, the Agency for Health Care Administration, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, the Department of Health, the Department of Elderly Affairs, or the Department of Juvenile Justice or to be employed or used by such contractor or licensee in a sensitive position having direct contact with children, the disabled, or the elderly;
6. Is seeking to be employed or licensed by the Department of Education, any district school board, any university laboratory school, any charter school, any private or parochial school, or any local governmental entity that licenses child care facilities;
7. Is attempting to purchase a firearm from a licensed importer, licensed manufacturer, or licensed dealer and is subject to a criminal history check under state or federal law; or
8. Is seeking authorization from a Florida seaport identified in s. 311.09 for employment within or access to one or more of such seaports pursuant to s. 311.12.

Section 6. Paragraph (e) of subsection (1) of section 961.06, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

961.06 Compensation for wrongful incarceration.—

(1) Except as otherwise provided in this act and subject to the limitations and procedures prescribed in this section, a person who is found to be entitled to compensation under the provisions of this act is entitled to:

(e) Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary in s. 943.0583 or s. 943.0585, immediate administrative expunction of the person's criminal record resulting from his or her wrongful arrest, wrongful conviction, and wrongful incarceration. The Department of Legal Affairs and the Department of Law Enforcement shall, upon a determination that a claimant is entitled to compensation, immediately take all action necessary to administratively expunge the claimant's criminal record arising from his or her

wrongful arrest, wrongful conviction, and wrongful incarceration. All fees for this process shall be waived.

The total compensation awarded under paragraphs (a), (c), and (d) may not exceed \$2 million. No further award for attorney’s fees, lobbying fees, costs, or other similar expenses shall be made by the state.

Section 7. Effective July 1, 2013, the sum of \$99,275 in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Law Enforcement to fund programming costs associated with this act during the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

Section 8. Except as otherwise expressly provided in this act, this act shall take effect January 1, 2014, except that, before March 1, 2014, the Department of Law Enforcement or any other criminal justice agency is not required to comply with an order to expunge a criminal history record as required by this act.

Approved by the Governor May 30, 2013.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 30, 2013.