

Senate Bill No. 504

CHAPTER 388

An act to amend Section 1203.45 of the Penal Code, and to amend Sections 781 and 903.3 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to court records.

[Approved by Governor September 30, 2015. Filed with
Secretary of State September 30, 2015.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 504, Lara. Court records: sealing.

Existing law authorizes a person to petition the court for an order sealing the record of conviction and other official records in a case in which that person was under 18 years of age at the time of commission of a misdemeanor and is eligible for, or has previously received, specified relief. Existing law authorizes that person to be required to reimburse the court, the county, or any city for the actual cost of services rendered, as specified.

This bill would only make persons 26 years of age or older liable to reimburse the court, the county, or any city for the cost of services.

Existing law authorizes in a case in which a petition has been filed with a juvenile court to commence proceedings to adjudge a person a ward of the court, in a case in which a person is cited to appear before a probation officer or is taken before a probation officer pursuant to a specified provision of law, or in a case in which a minor is taken before an officer of a law enforcement agency, the person or the county probation officer to petition the court for the sealing of arrest records and records relating to the person's case in the custody of the juvenile court and the probation officer and any other agencies, including law enforcement agencies and public officials as the petitioner alleges to have custody of the records.

This bill would prohibit an unfulfilled order of restitution that has been converted to a civil judgment from barring the sealing of a record pursuant to the above provisions. The bill would also prohibit outstanding restitution fines and court-ordered fees from being considered when assessing whether a petitioner's rehabilitation has been attained to the satisfaction of the court and from barring the sealing of a record pursuant to the above provisions. The bill would provide that a minor is not relieved of the obligation to pay victim restitution, restitution fines, and court-ordered fines and fees because the minor's records are sealed. The bill would provide that sealing a record does not prohibit a court from enforcing a civil judgment for an unfulfilled order of restitution, and that a victim or a local collection program may continue to enforce victim restitution orders, restitution fines, and court-ordered fines and fees after a record is sealed. By increasing the

number of records local agencies would be required to seal, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

Existing law makes a father, mother, spouse, or other person liable for the support of a minor person, the minor when he or she becomes an adult, or the estates of those persons, liable for the cost to the county and court for any investigation related to the sealing and for the sealing of any juvenile court or arrest records pursuant to the above-mentioned provisions. Existing law also authorizes those persons to be required to reimburse the court, county, or a city for the actual cost of services rendered, as specified.

This bill would only require persons 26 years of age or older who petition for an order sealing his or her record, pursuant to specified provisions, to be liable for the investigative costs and to reimburse the costs of services rendered.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 1203.45 of the Penal Code is amended to read:

1203.45. (a) In a case in which a person was under 18 years of age at the time of commission of a misdemeanor and is eligible for, or has previously received, the relief provided by Section 1203.4 or 1203.4a, that person, in a proceeding under Section 1203.4 or 1203.4a, or a separate proceeding, may petition the court for an order sealing the record of conviction and other official records in the case, including records of arrests resulting in the criminal proceeding and records relating to other offenses charged in the accusatory pleading, whether the defendant was acquitted or charges were dismissed. If the court finds that the person was under 18 years of age at the time of the commission of the misdemeanor, and is eligible for relief under Section 1203.4 or 1203.4a or has previously received that relief, it may issue its order granting the relief prayed for. Thereafter the conviction, arrest, or other proceeding shall be deemed not to have occurred, and the petitioner may answer accordingly any question relating to their occurrence.

(b) This section applies to convictions that occurred before, as well as those that occur after, the effective date of this section.

(c) This section shall not apply to offenses for which registration is required under Section 290, to violations of Division 10 (commencing with Section 11000) of the Health and Safety Code, or to misdemeanor violations of the Vehicle Code relating to operation of a vehicle or of a local ordinance relating to operation, standing, stopping, or parking of a motor vehicle.

(d) This section does not apply to a person convicted of more than one offense, whether the second or additional convictions occurred in the same action in which the conviction as to which relief is sought occurred or in another action, except in the following cases:

(1) One of the offenses includes the other or others.

(2) The other conviction or convictions were for the following:

(A) Misdemeanor violations of Chapters 1 (commencing with Section 21000) to 9 (commencing with Section 22500), inclusive, Chapter 12 (commencing with Section 23100), or Chapter 13 (commencing with Section 23250) of Division 11 of the Vehicle Code, other than Section 23103, 23104, 23105, 23152, 23153, or 23220.

(B) Violation of a local ordinance relating to the operation, stopping, standing, or parking of a motor vehicle.

(3) The other conviction or convictions consisted of any combination of paragraphs (1) and (2).

(e) This section shall apply in a case in which a person was under 21 years of age at the time of the commission of an offense as to which this section is made applicable if that offense was committed prior to March 7, 1973.

(f) In an action or proceeding based upon defamation, a court, upon a showing of good cause, may order the records sealed under this section to be opened and admitted into evidence. The records shall be confidential and shall be available for inspection only by the court, jury, parties, counsel for the parties, and any other person who is authorized by the court to inspect them. Upon the judgment in the action or proceeding becoming final, the court shall order the records sealed.

(g) A person who is 26 years of age or older and petitions for an order sealing a record under this section may be required to reimburse the court for the actual cost of services rendered, whether or not the petition is granted and the records are sealed or expunged, at a rate to be determined by the court, not to exceed one hundred fifty dollars (\$150), and to reimburse the county for the actual cost of services rendered, whether or not the petition is granted and the records are sealed or expunged, at a rate to be determined by the county board of supervisors, not to exceed one hundred fifty dollars (\$150), and to reimburse any city for the actual cost of services rendered, whether or not the petition is granted and the records are sealed or expunged, at a rate to be determined by the city council, not to exceed one hundred fifty dollars (\$150). Ability to make this reimbursement shall be determined by the court using the standards set forth in paragraph (2) of subdivision (g) of Section 987.8 and shall not be a prerequisite to a person's eligibility under this section. The court may order reimbursement in a case in which the petitioner appears to have the ability to pay, without undue hardship, all or any portion of the cost for services established pursuant to this subdivision.

SEC. 2. Section 781 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

781. (a) (1) (A) In any case in which a petition has been filed with a juvenile court to commence proceedings to adjudge a person a ward of the court, in any case in which a person is cited to appear before a probation officer or is taken before a probation officer pursuant to Section 626, or in any case in which a minor is taken before any officer of a law enforcement agency, the person or the county probation officer may, five years or more after the jurisdiction of the juvenile court has terminated as to the person, or, in a case in which no petition is filed, five years or more after the person was cited to appear before a probation officer or was taken before a probation officer pursuant to Section 626 or was taken before any officer of a law enforcement agency, or, in any case, at any time after the person has reached 18 years of age, petition the court for sealing of the records, including records of arrest, relating to the person's case, in the custody of the juvenile court and probation officer and any other agencies, including law enforcement agencies, entities, and public officials as the petitioner alleges, in his or her petition, to have custody of the records. The court shall notify the district attorney of the county and the county probation officer, if he or she is not the petitioner, and the district attorney or probation officer or any of their deputies or any other person having relevant evidence may testify at the hearing on the petition. If, after hearing, the court finds that since the termination of jurisdiction or action pursuant to Section 626, as the case may be, he or she has not been convicted of a felony or of any misdemeanor involving moral turpitude and that rehabilitation has been attained to the satisfaction of the court, it shall order all records, papers, and exhibits in the person's case in the custody of the juvenile court sealed, including the juvenile court record, minute book entries, and entries on dockets, and any other records relating to the case in the custody of the other agencies, entities, and officials as are named in the order. Once the court has ordered the person's records sealed, the proceedings in the case shall be deemed never to have occurred, and the person may properly reply accordingly to any inquiry about the events, the records of which are ordered sealed.

(B) The court shall send a copy of the order to each agency, entity, and official named in the order, directing the agency or entity to seal its records. Each agency, entity, and official shall seal the records in its custody as directed by the order, shall advise the court of its compliance, and thereupon shall seal the copy of the court's order for sealing of records that the agency, entity, or official received.

(C) In any case in which a ward of the juvenile court is subject to the registration requirements set forth in Section 290 of the Penal Code, a court, in ordering the sealing of the juvenile records of the person, shall also provide in the order that the person is relieved from the registration requirement and for the destruction of all registration information in the custody of the Department of Justice and other agencies, entities, and officials.

(D) Notwithstanding any other law, the court shall not order the person's records sealed in any case in which the person has been found by the juvenile

court to have committed an offense listed in subdivision (b) of Section 707 when he or she had attained 14 years of age or older.

(2) An unfulfilled order of restitution that has been converted to a civil judgment pursuant to Section 730.6 shall not be a bar to sealing a record pursuant to this subdivision.

(3) Outstanding restitution fines and court-ordered fees shall not be considered when assessing whether a petitioner's rehabilitation has been attained to the satisfaction of the court and shall not be a bar to sealing a record pursuant to this subdivision.

(4) The person who is the subject of records sealed pursuant to this section may petition the superior court to permit inspection of the records by persons named in the petition, and the superior court may order the inspection of the records. Except as provided in subdivision (b), the records shall not be open to inspection.

(b) In any action or proceeding based upon defamation, a court, upon a showing of good cause, may order any records sealed under this section to be opened and admitted into evidence. The records shall be confidential and shall be available for inspection only by the court, jury, parties, counsel for the parties, and any other person who is authorized by the court to inspect them. Upon the judgment in the action or proceeding becoming final, the court shall order the records sealed.

(c) (1) Subdivision (a) does not apply to Department of Motor Vehicles records of any convictions for offenses under the Vehicle Code or any local ordinance relating to the operation, stopping and standing, or parking of a vehicle where the record of any such conviction would be a public record under Section 1808 of the Vehicle Code. However, if a court orders a case record containing any such conviction to be sealed under this section, and if the Department of Motor Vehicles maintains a public record of such a conviction, the court shall notify the Department of Motor Vehicles of the sealing and the department shall advise the court of its receipt of the notice.

(2) Notwithstanding any other law, subsequent to the notification, the Department of Motor Vehicles shall allow access to its record of convictions only to the subject of the record and to insurers which have been granted requestor code numbers by the department. Any insurer to which a record of conviction is disclosed, when the conviction record has otherwise been sealed under this section, shall be given notice of the sealing when the record is disclosed to the insurer. The insurer may use the information contained in the record for purposes of determining eligibility for insurance and insurance rates for the subject of the record, and the information shall not be used for any other purpose nor shall it be disclosed by an insurer to any person or party not having access to the record.

(3) This subdivision does not prevent the sealing of any record which is maintained by any agency or party other than the Department of Motor Vehicles.

(4) This subdivision does not affect the procedures or authority of the Department of Motor Vehicles for purging department records.

(d) Unless for good cause the court determines that the juvenile court record shall be retained, the court shall order the destruction of a person's juvenile court records that are sealed pursuant to this section as follows: five years after the record was ordered sealed, if the person who is the subject of the record was alleged or adjudged to be a person described by Section 601; or when the person who is the subject of the record reaches 38 years of age if the person was alleged or adjudged to be a person described by Section 602, except that if the subject of the record was found to be a person described in Section 602 because of the commission of an offense listed in subdivision (b) of Section 707 when he or she was 14 years of age or older, the record shall not be destroyed. Any other agency in possession of sealed records may destroy its records five years after the record was ordered sealed.

(e) The court may access a file that has been sealed pursuant to this section for the limited purpose of verifying the prior jurisdictional status of a ward who is petitioning the court to resume its jurisdiction pursuant to subdivision (e) of Section 388. This access shall not be deemed an unsealing of the record and shall not require notice to any other entity.

(f) This section shall not permit the sealing of a person's juvenile court records for an offense where the person is convicted of that offense in a criminal court pursuant to the provisions of Section 707.1. This subdivision is declaratory of existing law.

(g) (1) This section does not prohibit a court from enforcing a civil judgment for an unfulfilled order of restitution obtained pursuant to Section 730.6. A minor is not relieved from the obligation to pay victim restitution, restitution fines, and court-ordered fines and fees because the minor's records are sealed.

(2) A victim or a local collection program may continue to enforce victim restitution orders, restitution fines, and court-ordered fines and fees after a record is sealed. The juvenile court shall have access to any records sealed pursuant to this section for the limited purposes of enforcing a civil judgment or restitution order.

(h) (1) On and after January 1, 2015, each court and probation department shall ensure that information regarding the eligibility for and the procedures to request the sealing and destruction of records pursuant to this section shall be provided to each person who is either of the following:

(A) A person for whom a petition has been filed on or after January 1, 2015, to adjudge the person a ward of the juvenile court.

(B) A person who is brought before a probation officer pursuant to Section 626.

(2) The Judicial Council shall, on or before January 1, 2015, develop informational materials for purposes of paragraph (1) and shall develop a form to petition the court for the sealing and destruction of records pursuant to this section. The informational materials and the form shall be provided to each person described in paragraph (1) when jurisdiction is terminated or when the case is dismissed.

SEC. 3. Section 903.3 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

903.3. (a) A person who is 26 years of age or older shall, unless indigent, be liable for the cost to the county and court for any investigation related to the sealing and for the sealing of any juvenile court or arrest records pursuant to Section 781 pertaining to that person.

(b) In the event a petition is filed for an order sealing a record, a person who is 26 years of age or older may be required to reimburse the county and court for the actual cost of services rendered, whether or not the petition is granted and the records are sealed or expunged, at a rate to be determined by the county board of supervisors for the county and by the court for the court, not to exceed one hundred fifty dollars (\$150). Ability to make this reimbursement shall be determined by the court using the standards set forth in paragraph (2) of subdivision (g) of Section 987.8 of the Penal Code and shall not be a prerequisite to a person's eligibility under this section. The court may order reimbursement in any case in which the petitioner appears to have the ability to pay, without undue hardship, all or any portion of the cost for services.

(c) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), a person shall not be liable for the costs described in this section if a petition to declare the minor a dependent child of the court pursuant to Section 300 is dismissed at or before the jurisdictional hearing.

(d) Any determination of amount made by a court under this section shall be valid only if either (1) made under procedures adopted by the Judicial Council or (2) approved by the Judicial Council.

SEC. 4. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.