

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6669

To require automatic sealing of certain criminal records, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 14, 2018

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER (for herself, Mr. EVANS, Ms. MOORE, Mr. RUSH, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. LEE, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. CLAY, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. PAYNE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To require automatic sealing of certain criminal records,
and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Clean Slate Act of
5 2018”.

1 **SEC. 2. SEALING OF CERTAIN RECORDS.**

2 (a) AMENDMENT.—Subchapter A of chapter 227 of
3 title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the
4 end the following:

5 **“§ 3560. Automatic sealing of certain records**

6 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

7 “(1) the term ‘covered individual’ means an in-
8 dividual who—

9 “(A) is not a sex offender;

10 “(B)(i) has been arrested for a Federal of-
11 fense; or

12 “(ii) has been convicted of an offense
13 under section 404 of the Controlled Substances
14 Act (21 U.S.C. 844) or any Federal nonviolent
15 offense involving marijuana; and

16 “(C) in the case of a conviction described
17 in subparagraph (B)(ii), has fulfilled each re-
18 quirement of the sentence for the offense, in-
19 cluding—

20 “(i) completing each term of imprison-
21 ment, probation, or supervised release; and

22 “(ii) satisfying each condition of im-
23 prisonment, probation, or supervised re-
24 lease;

1 “(2) the term ‘nonviolent offense’ means an of-
2 fense that is not a crime of violence, as defined in
3 subsections (a) and (c) of section 3156; and

4 “(3) the term ‘sex offender’ has the meaning
5 given the term in section 111 of the Adam Walsh
6 Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 (42 U.S.C.
7 16911).

8 “(b) AUTOMATIC SEALING FOR CERTAIN ARRESTS
9 AND NONVIOLENT OFFENSES.—

10 “(1) IN GENERAL.—At the time of sentencing
11 of a covered individual for a conviction pursuant to
12 section 404 of the Controlled Substances Act (21
13 U.S.C. 844) or of any Federal nonviolent offense in-
14 volving marijuana, the court shall enter an order
15 that each record and portion thereof that relates to
16 the offense shall be sealed automatically on the date
17 that is one year after the covered individual fulfills
18 each requirement of the sentence, except that such
19 record shall not be sealed if the individual has been
20 convicted of a subsequent criminal offense.

21 “(2) ACQUITTAL; DETERMINATION NOT TO FILE
22 CHARGES.—

23 “(A) ACQUITTAL.—Sixty days after the
24 date on which a covered individual is acquitted,
25 exonerated, or otherwise subject to a judgment

1 which did not result in a conviction for a Fed-
2 eral offense, each record or portion thereof that
3 relates to the Federal offense shall be sealed
4 automatically.

5 “(B) DETERMINATION NOT TO FILE
6 CHARGES.—

7 “(i) IN GENERAL.—If a covered indi-
8 vidual is arrested for a Federal offense and
9 the Government does not file charges
10 against the covered individual in relation
11 to the Federal offense before the date that
12 is 180 days after the date on which the ar-
13 rest was made, each record or portion
14 thereof that relates to the arrest and Fed-
15 eral offense shall be sealed automatically
16 on such date.

17 “(ii) UNSEALING FOR FILING OF
18 CHARGES.—At the request of the Govern-
19 ment, a court may unseal a record sealed
20 under clause (i) in order for the Govern-
21 ment to file charges against the covered in-
22 dividual in relation to the Federal offense
23 described in clause (i).

24 “(iii) LIMITATION.—If a record is un-
25 sealed under clause (ii), the record may

1 only be resealed in accordance with sub-
2 paragraph (A), paragraph (1), or para-
3 graph (2).

4 “(c) NOTICE OF AUTOMATIC SEALING.—Not later
5 than 60 days after an individual is arrested for a Federal
6 offense, the Attorney General shall, in writing, inform the
7 individual of the automatic sealing of records and the ef-
8 fect of such sealing under this section.

9 “(d) EFFECT OF SEALING ORDER.—

10 “(1) PROTECTION FROM ACCESS.—Except as
11 provided in paragraph (3), a record that has been
12 sealed under subsection (b) shall not be accessible to
13 any person.

14 “(2) PROTECTION FROM PERJURY LAWS.—

15 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in
16 subparagraph (B), a covered individual with re-
17 spect to whom a record has been sealed under
18 subsection (b) shall not be required to disclose
19 such information, and shall not be subject to
20 prosecution under any civil or criminal provi-
21 sion of Federal or State law relating to perjury,
22 false swearing, or making a false statement, in-
23 cluding under section 1001, 1621, 1622, or
24 1623, for failing to recite or acknowledge any
25 information that has been sealed with respect to

1 the offense, or respond to any inquiry made of
2 the covered individual, relating to the protected
3 information.

4 “(B) EXCEPTION.—A covered individual
5 shall disclose information contained in a record
6 that has been sealed under subsection (b)—

7 “(i) when testifying in court;

8 “(ii) in the course of questioning by a
9 law enforcement officer in connection with
10 a subsequent criminal investigation; or

11 “(iii) in connection with employment
12 described in subclause (I) or (II) of para-
13 graph (3)(A)(ii) that the individual is seek-
14 ing.

15 “(3) BACKGROUND CHECKS.—Except as pro-
16 vided in paragraph (4), a sealed record of a covered
17 individual shall not be included in any background
18 check conducted on the covered individual.

19 “(4) LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COURT EXCEP-
20 TION.—

21 “(A) ACCESS.—An officer or employee of a
22 law enforcement agency or a court may access
23 a sealed record of a covered individual in the
24 possession of the agency or court, or another
25 law enforcement agency or court, solely—

1 “(i) for investigatory or prosecutorial
2 purposes; or

3 “(ii) for a background check that re-
4 lates to—

5 “(I) employment with a law en-
6 forcement agency; or

7 “(II) any position that a Federal
8 agency designates as a—

9 “(aa) national security posi-
10 tion; or

11 “(bb) high-risk, public trust
12 position.

13 “(B) DISCLOSURE.—An officer or em-
14 ployee of a law enforcement agency or a court
15 may disclose information contained in a sealed
16 record only in order to carry out the purposes
17 described in subparagraph (A).

18 “(e) PENALTY FOR UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURE.—

19 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Whoever knowingly ac-
20 cesses or discloses information contained in a sealed
21 record in a manner that is prohibited under this sec-
22 tion, shall be fined under this title, imprisoned for
23 not more than 1 year, or both.

24 “(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in
25 this subsection prevents a covered individual or an

1 individual who was the victim of an offense from ac-
 2 ccessing or disclosing information contained in a
 3 sealed record.

4 “(f) RULEMAKING.—The Attorney General shall, by
 5 rule, establish a process to ensure that any record in the
 6 possession of a Federal agency required to be sealed under
 7 this section, is automatically sealed in accordance with this
 8 section.

9 “(g) APPLICABILITY.—This section shall apply to an
 10 arrest or conviction that occurred or was entered before,
 11 on, or after the date of enactment of this section. Not later
 12 than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this sec-
 13 tion, the Attorney General shall ensure that any record
 14 related to an arrest or conviction that occurred or was en-
 15 tered prior to the automatic sealing of such a record,
 16 which record is required to be sealed under this section,
 17 is so sealed.

18 **“§ 3561. Sealing of certain records upon petition**

19 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

20 “(1) the term ‘covered nonviolent offense’
 21 means a Federal criminal offense that is not—

22 “(A) a crime of violence (as defined in sub-
 23 sections (a) and (c) of section 3156); or

1 “(B) a sex offense (as that term is defined
2 in section 111 of the Sex Offender Registration
3 and Notification Act (42 U.S.C. 16911));

4 “(2) the term ‘eligible individual’ means an in-
5 dividual who—

6 “(A) has been convicted of a covered non-
7 violent offense;

8 “(B) has fulfilled each requirement of the
9 sentence for the covered nonviolent offense, in-
10 cluding—

11 “(i) completing each term of imprison-
12 ment, probation, or supervised release; and

13 “(ii) satisfying each condition of im-
14 prisonment, probation, or supervised re-
15 lease;

16 “(C) has not been convicted of more than
17 2 felonies that are covered nonviolent offenses,
18 including any such convictions that have been
19 sealed (except that for purposes of this sub-
20 paragraph, two or more felony convictions that
21 are covered nonviolent offenses arising out of
22 the same act, or acts committed at the same
23 time, shall be treated as 1 felony conviction);
24 and

1 “(D) has not been convicted of any felony
2 that is not a covered nonviolent offense;

3 “(3) the term ‘petitioner’ means an individual
4 who files a sealing petition;

5 “(4) the term ‘protected information’, with re-
6 spect to a covered nonviolent offense, means any ref-
7 erence to—

8 “(A) an arrest, conviction, or sentence of
9 an individual for the offense;

10 “(B) the institution of criminal pro-
11 ceedings against an individual for the offense;
12 or

13 “(C) the result of criminal proceedings de-
14 scribed in subparagraph (B);

15 “(5) the term ‘sealing hearing’ means a hearing
16 held under subsection (c)(2); and

17 “(6) the term ‘sealing petition’ means a petition
18 for a sealing order filed under subsection (b).

19 “(b) RIGHT TO FILE SEALING PETITION.—

20 “(1) IN GENERAL.—On and after the date that
21 is 1 year after the date on which the eligible indi-
22 vidual has fulfilled each requirement described in
23 subsection (a)(2)(B), an eligible individual may file
24 a petition for a sealing order with respect to a cov-

1 ered nonviolent offense in a district court of the
2 United States.

3 “(2) NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY TO FILE PETI-
4 TION.—

5 “(A) IN GENERAL.—If an individual is
6 convicted of a covered nonviolent offense and
7 will potentially be eligible to file a sealing peti-
8 tion with respect to the offense upon fulfilling
9 each requirement of the sentence for the offense
10 as described in subsection (a)(2)(B), the court
11 in which the individual is convicted shall, in
12 writing, inform the individual, on each date de-
13 scribed in subparagraph (B), of—

14 “(i) that potential eligibility;

15 “(ii) the necessary procedures for fil-
16 ing the sealing petition; and

17 “(iii) the benefits of sealing a record.

18 “(B) DATES.—The dates described in this
19 subparagraph are—

20 “(i) the date on which the individual
21 is convicted; and

22 “(ii) the date on which the individual
23 has completed every term of imprisonment,
24 probation, or supervised release relating to
25 the offense.

1 “(c) PROCEDURES.—

2 “(1) NOTIFICATION TO PROSECUTOR.—If an in-
3 dividual files a petition under subsection (b), the dis-
4 trict court in which the petition is filed shall provide
5 notice of the petition—

6 “(A) to the office of the United States at-
7 torney that prosecuted the petitioner for the of-
8 fense; and

9 “(B) upon the request of the petitioner, to
10 any other individual that the petitioner deter-
11 mines may testify as to the—

12 “(i) conduct of the petitioner since the
13 date of the offense; or

14 “(ii) reasons that the sealing order
15 should be entered.

16 “(2) HEARING.—

17 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180
18 days after the date on which an individual files
19 a sealing petition, the district court shall—

20 “(i) except as provided in subpara-
21 graph (D), conduct a hearing in accord-
22 ance with subparagraph (B); and

23 “(ii) determine whether to enter a
24 sealing order for the individual in accord-
25 ance with paragraph (3).

1 “(B) OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY AND
2 OFFER EVIDENCE.—

3 “(i) PETITIONER.—The petitioner
4 may testify or offer evidence at the sealing
5 hearing in support of sealing.

6 “(ii) PROSECUTOR.—The office of a
7 United States attorney that receives notice
8 under paragraph (1)(A) may send a rep-
9 resentative to testify or offer evidence at
10 the sealing hearing in support of or
11 against sealing.

12 “(iii) OTHER INDIVIDUALS.—An indi-
13 vidual who receives notice under paragraph
14 (1)(B) may testify or offer evidence at the
15 sealing hearing as to the issues described
16 in clauses (i) and (ii) of that paragraph.

17 “(C) MAGISTRATE JUDGES.—A magistrate
18 judge may preside over a hearing under this
19 paragraph.

20 “(D) WAIVER OF HEARING.—If the peti-
21 tioner and the United States attorney that re-
22 ceives notice under paragraph (1)(A) so agree,
23 the court shall make a determination under
24 paragraph (3) without a hearing.

25 “(3) BASIS FOR DECISION.—

1 “(A) IN GENERAL.—In determining wheth-
2 er to enter a sealing order with respect to pro-
3 tected information relating to a covered non-
4 violent offense, the court—

5 “(i) shall consider—

6 “(I) the petition and any docu-
7 ments in the possession of the court;
8 and

9 “(II) all the evidence and testi-
10 mony presented at the sealing hear-
11 ing, if such a hearing is conducted;

12 “(ii) may not consider any non-Fed-
13 eral nonviolent crimes for which the peti-
14 tioner has been arrested or proceeded
15 against, or of which the petitioner has been
16 convicted; and

17 “(iii) shall balance—

18 “(I)(aa) the interest of public
19 knowledge and safety; and

20 “(bb) the legitimate interest, if
21 any, of the Government in maintain-
22 ing the accessibility of the protected
23 information, including any potential
24 impact of sealing the protected infor-

1 mation on Federal licensure, permit,
2 or employment restrictions; against

3 “(II)(aa) the conduct and dem-
4 onstrated desire of the petitioner to be
5 rehabilitated and positively contribute
6 to the community; and

7 “(bb) the interest of the peti-
8 tioner in having the protected infor-
9 mation sealed, including the harm of
10 the protected information to the abil-
11 ity of the petitioner to secure and
12 maintain employment.

13 “(B) BURDEN ON GOVERNMENT.—The
14 burden shall be on the Government to show
15 that the interests under subclause (I) of sub-
16 paragraph (A)(iii) outweigh the interests of the
17 petitioner under subclause (II) of that subpara-
18 graph.

19 “(4) WAITING PERIOD AFTER DENIAL.—If the
20 district court denies a sealing petition, the petitioner
21 may not file a new sealing petition with respect to
22 the same offense until the date that is 2 years after
23 the date of the denial.

24 “(5) UNIVERSAL FORM.—The Director of the
25 Administrative Office of the United States Courts

1 shall create a universal form, available over the
2 Internet and in paper form, that an individual may
3 use to file a sealing petition.

4 “(6) FEE WAIVER.—The Director of the Ad-
5 ministrative Office of the United States Courts shall
6 by regulation establish a minimally burdensome
7 process under which indigent petitioners may obtain
8 a waiver of any fee for filing a sealing petition.

9 “(7) EFFECT OF SEALING.—Subsections (d)
10 and (e) of section 3560 shall apply to any record
11 that is sealed under this section.

12 “(8) REPORTING.—Not later than 2 years after
13 the date of enactment of this section, and each year
14 thereafter, each district court of the United States
15 shall issue a public report that—

16 “(A) describes—

17 “(i) the number of sealing petitions
18 granted and denied under this section; and

19 “(ii) the number of instances in which
20 the office of a United States attorney sup-
21 ported or opposed a sealing petition;

22 “(B) includes any supporting data that the
23 court determines relevant and that does not
24 name any petitioner; and

1 “(C) disaggregates all relevant data by
2 race, ethnicity, gender, and the nature of the
3 offense.

4 “(9) PUBLIC DEFENDER ELIGIBILITY.—

5 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The district court
6 may, in its discretion, appoint counsel in ac-
7 cordance with the plan of the district court in
8 operation under section 3006A to represent a
9 petitioner for purposes of this section.

10 “(B) CONSIDERATIONS.—In making a de-
11 termination whether to appoint counsel under
12 subparagraph (A), the court shall consider—

13 “(i) the anticipated complexity of the
14 sealing hearing, including the number and
15 type of witnesses called to advocate against
16 the sealing of the protected information of
17 the petitioner; and

18 “(ii) the potential for adverse testi-
19 mony by a victim or a representative of the
20 office of the United States attorney.

21 “(10) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in
22 this section may be construed to require a covered
23 individual (as such term is defined in section 3560)
24 to submit a sealing petition with respect to records

1 required to be automatically sealed under section
2 3560.”.

3 (b) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections for
4 subchapter A of chapter 227 of title 18, United States
5 Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to
6 section 3559 the following:

“3560. Automatic sealing of certain records.

“3561. Sealing of certain records upon petition.”.

