

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Criminal Justice

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BILL: SB 1426

INTRODUCER: Senators Flores and Bullard

SUBJECT: Public Records/ Human Trafficking Victims

DATE: March 28, 2014

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Dugger	Cannon	CJ	<b>Pre-meeting</b>
2.			GO	
3.			RC	

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## I. Summary:

SB 1426, which is linked to the passage of SB 1440 or similar legislation, creates a public record exemption for investigative information relating to criminal history records of human trafficking victims that have been ordered expunged under s. 943.0583, F.S. Specifically, such information retained by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) is confidential and exempt from public record requirements, except that the information must be made available to criminal justice agencies for their respective criminal justice purposes; otherwise, it cannot be disclosed to any person or entity except upon a court order.

The bill provides for repeal of the exemption on October 2, 2019, pursuant to the Open Government Sunset Review Act, unless reviewed and reenacted by the Legislature. It also provides a statement of public necessity as required by the Florida Constitution.

This bill creates a new public record exemption; therefore, it requires a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting in each house of the Legislature for final passage.

## II. Present Situation:

### Public Records Laws

The Florida Constitution provides every person the right to inspect or copy any public record made or received in connection with the official business of any public body, officer, or employee of the state, or of persons acting on their behalf.<sup>1</sup> The records of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches are specifically included.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> FLA. CONST., art. I, s. 24(a).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

The Florida Statutes also specify conditions under which public access must be provided to government records. The Public Records Act<sup>3</sup> guarantees every person's right to inspect and copy any state or local government public record<sup>4</sup> at any reasonable time, under reasonable conditions, and under supervision by the custodian of the public record.<sup>5</sup>

Only the Legislature may create an exemption to public records requirements.<sup>6</sup> Such an exemption must be created by general law and must specifically state the public necessity justifying the exemption.<sup>7</sup> Further, the exemption must be no broader than necessary to accomplish the stated purpose of the law. A bill enacting an exemption may not contain other substantive provisions<sup>8</sup> and must pass by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting in each house of the Legislature.<sup>9</sup>

The Open Government Sunset Review Act<sup>10</sup> requires a newly created or expanded public records exemption to be repealed on October 2 of the fifth year after enactment, unless reviewed and reenacted by the Legislature.<sup>11</sup> It further provides that a public records exemption may be created or maintained only if it serves an identifiable public purpose and is no broader than is necessary to meet the public purpose it serves.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Chapter 119, F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Section 119.011(12), F.S., defines "public records" to mean "all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, films, sound recordings, data processing software, or other material, regardless of the physical form, characteristics, or means of transmission, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by any agency." Section 119.011(2), F.S., defines "agency" to mean "any state, county, district, authority, or municipal officer, department, division, board, bureau, commission, or other separate unit of government created or established by law including, for the purposes of this chapter, the Commission on Ethics, the Public Service Commission, and the Office of Public Counsel, and any other public or private agency, person, partnership, corporation, or business entity acting on behalf of any public agency." The Public Records Act does not apply to legislative or judicial records (*see Locke v. Hawkes*, 595 So.2d 32 (Fla. 1992)).

<sup>5</sup> Section 119.07(1)(a), F.S.

<sup>6</sup> FLA. CONST., art. I, s. 24(c). There is a difference between records the Legislature designates as exempt from public records requirements and those the Legislature designates *confidential and* exempt. A record classified as exempt from public disclosure may be disclosed under certain circumstances (*see WFTV, Inc. v. The School Board of Seminole*, 874 So.2d 48 (Fla. 5th DCA 2004), review denied 892 So.2d 1015 (Fla. 2004); *City of Riviera Beach v. Barfield*, 642 So.2d 1135 (Fla. 4th DCA 2004); and *Williams v. City of Minneola*, 575 So.2d 687 (Fla. 5th DCA 1991)). If the Legislature designates a record as confidential and exempt from public disclosure, such record may not be released, by the custodian of public records, to anyone other than the persons or entities specifically designated in the statutory exemption (*see Attorney General Opinion 85-62*, August 1, 1985).

<sup>7</sup> FLA. CONST., art. I, s. 24(c).

<sup>8</sup> The bill may, however, contain multiple exemptions that relate to one subject.

<sup>9</sup> FLA. CONST., art. I, s. 24(c).

<sup>10</sup> Section 119.15, F.S.

<sup>11</sup> Section 119.15(3), F.S.

<sup>12</sup> Section 119.15(5)(b), F.S.

## Public Record Exemption for Investigation Information

Section 119.071(2)(h), F.S., provides that specified criminal intelligence information<sup>13</sup> or criminal investigative information<sup>14,15</sup> is confidential and exempt from public records requirements, including the following:

- Any information, including the photograph, name, address, or other fact, which reveals the identity of the victim of the crime of child abuse as defined by ch. 827, F.S. (child abuse);
- Any information, which may reveal the identity of a person who is a victim of any sexual offense, including a sexual offense proscribed in ch. 794, F.S. (sexual battery), ch. 796, F.S. (prostitution), ch. 800, F.S. (lewdness and indecent exposure), ch. 827, F.S. (abuse of children), or ch. 847, F.S. (obscenity); and
- A photograph, videotape, or image of any part of the body of the victim of a sexual offense prohibited under ch. 794, F.S. (sexual battery), ch. 796, F.S. (prostitution), ch. 800, F.S. (lewdness and indecent exposure), s. 810.145, F.S. (video voyeurism), ch. 827, F.S. (abuse of children), or ch. 847, F.S. (obscenity), regardless of whether the photograph, videotape, or image identifies the victim.<sup>16</sup>

This confidential and exempt criminal investigative and criminal intelligence information may be disclosed by a law enforcement agency in specified instances, including:

- In the furtherance of its official duties and responsibilities;
- For print, publication, or broadcast if the law enforcement agency determines that such release would assist in locating or identifying a person that such agency believes to be missing or endangered;<sup>17</sup> or
- To another governmental agency in the furtherance of its official duties and responsibilities.

<sup>13</sup> Section 119.011(3)(a), F.S., defines “criminal intelligence information” to mean information with respect to an identifiable person or group of persons collected by a criminal justice agency in an effort to anticipate, prevent, or monitor possible criminal activity.

<sup>14</sup> Section 119.011(3)(b), F.S., defines “criminal investigative information” to mean information with respect to an identifiable person or group of persons compiled by a criminal justice agency in the course of conducting a criminal investigation of a specific act or omission, including, but not limited to, information derived from laboratory tests, reports of investigators or informants, or any type of surveillance.

<sup>15</sup> Section 119.011(3)(c), F.S., provides “criminal intelligence information” and “criminal investigative information” shall not include:

- The time, date, location, and nature of a reported crime.
- The name, sex, age, and address of a person arrested or of the victim of a crime except as provided in s. 119.071(2)(h), F.S.
- The time, date, and location of the incident and of the arrest.
- The crime charged.
- Documents given or required by law or agency rule to be given to the person arrested, except as provided in s. 119.071(2)(h), F.S., and, except that the court in a criminal case may order that certain information required by law or agency rule to be given to the person arrested be maintained in a confidential manner and exempt from the provisions of s. 119.071(1), F.S., until released at trial if it is found that the release of such information would:
  - Be defamatory to the good name of a victim or witness or would jeopardize the safety of such victim or witness; and
  - Impair the ability of a state attorney to locate or prosecute a codefendant.
- Informations and indictments except as provided in s. 905.26, F.S.

<sup>16</sup> Section 119.071(2)(h)3., F.S., requires the exemption to apply to confidential and exempt criminal intelligence and criminal investigative information held by a law enforcement agency before, on, or after the effective date of the exemption.

<sup>17</sup> Section 119.071(2)(h)2.c., F.S., provides the information disclosed should be limited to that needed to identify or locate the victim and not include the sexual nature of the offense committed against the person.

### **Public Record Exemption for Expunged Criminal History Records**

A criminal history record of a minor or an adult that is ordered expunged must be physically destroyed by any criminal justice agency having custody of such record, except that the FDLE must retain criminal history records in all cases.<sup>18</sup> Current law provides that a criminal history record ordered expunged that is retained by FDLE is confidential and exempt from public records requirements, and is not available to any person or entity except upon order of the court with jurisdiction.<sup>19</sup>

In addition, information relating to the existence of an expunged criminal history record is confidential and exempt from public record requirements, except that FDLE must disclose the existence of such record to specified entities for their respective licensing, access authorization, and employment purposes as well as to criminal justice agencies for their respective criminal justice purposes.<sup>20</sup> Disclosure of the existence of such record to unauthorized persons is a first degree misdemeanor.<sup>21</sup>

### **Human Trafficking Victim Expunction/Public Record Exemption**

Last session the Legislature created s. 943.0583, F.S., entitled “human trafficking victim expunction.”<sup>22</sup> This statute authorizes a victim of human trafficking to petition the court for an expunction of any conviction for an offense, except an offense listed in s. 775.084(1)(b)1., F.S.,<sup>23</sup> committed while he or she was a victim of human trafficking, if the 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. It defines “victim of human trafficking” to mean a person subjected to coercion 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.

The Legislature also created a public records exemption for such expunged criminal history records of human trafficking victims.<sup>24</sup> Specifically, these records retained by FDLE are confidential and exempt from public record requirements and shall only be made available to criminal justice agencies for their respective criminal justice purposes. A criminal justice agency may retain a notation indicating compliance with an order to expunge. The exemption is repealed on October 2, 2018, unless reviewed and reenacted by the Legislature.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Section 943.0585(4), F.S.

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

<sup>20</sup> Section 943.0585(4)(c), F.S.

<sup>21</sup> *Id.* A first degree misdemeanor is punishable by serving up to one year in county jail and/or paying a fine not exceeding \$1,000. Sections 775.082 and 775.083, F.S.

<sup>22</sup> CS/CS/HB 1325 (ch. 2013-98, L.O.F.)

<sup>23</sup> The offenses listed in s. 775.084(1)(b)1., F.S, are arson; sexual battery; robbery; kidnapping; aggravated child abuse; aggravated abuse of an elderly person or disabled adult; aggravated assault with a deadly weapon; murder; manslaughter; aggravated manslaughter of an elderly person or disabled adult; aggravated manslaughter of a child; unlawful throwing, placing, or discharging of a destructive device or bomb; armed burglary; aggravated battery; or aggravated stalking.

<sup>24</sup> CS/HB 1327 (ch. 2013-99, L.O.F.)

<sup>25</sup> Section 943.0583(10), F.S.

**SB 1440 (linked to this bill)**

During the current 2014 Legislative Session, SB 1440, in part, proposes to expand the provisions relating to the expunction of certain criminal records for victims of human trafficking to include the expunction of any criminal history record resulting from the filing of charges for an offense committed or reported to have been 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.

**III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

SB 1426, which is linked to the passage of SB 1440 or similar legislation, creates a public record exemption for investigative information relating to criminal history records of human trafficking victims that have been ordered expunged under s. 943.0583, F.S. Specifically, such information retained by the FDLE is confidential and exempt from public record requirements, except that the information must be made available to criminal justice agencies for their respective criminal justice purposes; otherwise, it cannot be disclosed to any person or entity except upon a court order.

The bill provides the following public necessity statement as required by the Florida Constitution:<sup>26</sup>

The Legislature finds that it is a public necessity that investigative records related to a criminal history record ordered expunged under s. 943.0583, Florida Statutes, that are retained by the Department of Law Enforcement be made confidential and exempt from s. 119.07(1), Florida Statutes, and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution. Persons who are victims of human trafficking and who have been charged with crimes allegedly committed at the behest of their traffickers are themselves victims of crimes. Such victims face barriers to employment and other life opportunities as long as these criminal charges remain on record and accessible to potential employers and others. It is necessary that these records be made confidential in order for human trafficking victims to have the chance to rebuild their lives and reenter society.

It also provides for repeal of the exemption on October 2, 2019, unless reviewed and reenacted by the Legislature.

Finally, it will take effect on the same date that SB 1440 or similar legislation takes effect, if such legislation is adopted in the same legislative session or an extension thereof and becomes law.

**IV. Constitutional Issues:****A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

Not applicable. The bill does not appear to require counties or municipalities to take an action requiring the expenditure of funds, reduce the authority that counties or

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<sup>26</sup> FLA. CONST., art. I, s. 24 (c).

municipalities have to raise revenue in the aggregate, or reduce the percentage of state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

**B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

**Vote Requirement**

Article I, s. 24(c) of the Florida Constitution requires a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting for final passage of a newly created or expanded public record or public meeting exemption. The bill creates a public record exemption; thus, it requires a two-thirds vote for final passage.

**Public Necessity Statement**

Article I, s. 24(c) of the Florida Constitution requires a public necessity statement for a newly created or expanded public record or public meeting exemption. The bill creates a public record exemption; thus, it includes a public necessity statement.

**Breadth of Exemption**

Article I, s. 24(c) of the Florida Constitution requires a newly created public record or public meeting exemption to be no broader than necessary to accomplish the stated purpose of the law. The bill creates a public record exemption limited to investigative information relating to criminal history records of human trafficking victims that have been ordered expunged.

**C. Trust Funds Restrictions:**

None.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

**B. Private Sector Impact:**

None.

**C. Government Sector Impact:**

None.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends section 943.0583 of the Florida Statutes.

**IX. Additional Information:**

**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

**B. Amendments:**

None.

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This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

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