

**As Introduced**

**134th General Assembly**

**Regular Session**

**2021-2022**

**S. B. No. 183**

**Senators Fedor, Kunze**

**Cosponsors: Senators Brenner, Maharath, Yuko, Antonio, Schuring, Romanchuk,  
Lang, Craig, Schaffer, Williams**

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**A BILL**

To amend section 2953.38 of the Revised Code to 1  
allow a victim of human trafficking to expunge 2  
certain criminal records and to name this act 3  
the Expanding Human Trafficking Justice Act. 4

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:**

**Section 1.** That section 2953.38 of the Revised Code be 5  
amended to read as follows: 6

**Sec. 2953.38.** (A) As used in this section: 7

(1) "Expunge" means to destroy, delete, or erase a record 8  
as appropriate for the record's physical or electronic form or 9  
characteristic so that the record is permanently irretrievable. 10

(2) "Prosecutor" has the same meaning as in section 11  
2953.31 of the Revised Code. 12

(3) "Record of conviction" means any record related to a 13  
conviction of or plea of guilty to an offense. 14

(4) "Victim of human trafficking" means a person who is or 15  
was a victim of a violation of section 2905.32 of the Revised 16

Code, regardless of whether anyone has been convicted of a 17  
violation of that section or of any other section for 18  
victimizing the person. 19

(B) Any person who is or was ~~convicted of a violation of~~ 20  
~~section 2907.24, 2907.241, or 2907.25 of the Revised Code~~ a 21  
victim of human trafficking may apply to the sentencing court 22  
for the expungement of the record of conviction of any offense, 23  
other than a record of conviction of a violation of section 24  
2903.01, 2903.02, or 2907.02 of the Revised Code, the person's 25  
participation in which was a result of the person having been a 26  
victim of human trafficking. The person may file the application 27  
at any time. The application may request an order to expunge the 28  
record of conviction for more than one offense, but if it does, 29  
the court shall consider the request for each offense separately 30  
as if a separate application had been made for each offense and 31  
all references in divisions (B) to (H) of this section to "the 32  
offense" or "that offense" mean each of those offenses that are 33  
the subject of the application. The application shall do all of 34  
the following: 35

(1) Identify the applicant, the offense for which the 36  
expungement is sought, the date of the conviction of that 37  
offense, and the court in which the conviction occurred; 38

(2) Describe the evidence and provide copies of any 39  
documentation showing that the person is entitled to relief 40  
under this section; 41

(3) Include a request for expungement of the record of 42  
conviction of that offense under this section. 43

(C) The court may deny an application made under division 44  
(B) of this section if it finds that the application fails to 45

assert grounds on which relief may be granted. 46

(D) If the court does not deny an application under 47  
division (C) of this section, it shall set a date for a hearing 48  
and shall notify the prosecutor for the case from which the 49  
record of conviction resulted of the hearing on the application. 50  
The prosecutor may object to the granting of the application by 51  
filing an objection with the court prior to the date set for the 52  
hearing. The prosecutor shall specify in the objection the 53  
reasons for believing a denial of the application is justified. 54  
The court may direct its regular probation officer, a state 55  
probation officer, or the department of probation of the county 56  
in which the applicant resides to make inquiries and written 57  
reports as the court requires concerning the applicant. 58

(E) (1) At the hearing held under division (D) of this 59  
section, the court shall do both of the following: 60

(a) If the prosecutor has filed an objection, consider the 61  
reasons against granting the application specified by the 62  
prosecutor in the objection; 63

(b) Determine whether the applicant has demonstrated by a 64  
preponderance of the evidence that the applicant's participation 65  
in the offense that is the subject of the application was a 66  
result of the applicant having been a victim of human 67  
trafficking. 68

(2) If the court at the hearing held under division (D) of 69  
this section determines that the applicant's participation in 70  
the offense that is the subject of the application was a result 71  
of the applicant having been a victim of human trafficking and 72  
if that subject offense is a felony of the first or second 73  
degree, the court at the hearing also shall consider all of the 74

following factors and, upon consideration of the factors, shall 75  
determine whether the interests of the applicant in having the 76  
record of the conviction of that offense expunged are outweighed 77  
by any legitimate needs of the government to maintain that 78  
record of conviction: 79

(a) The degree of duress under which the applicant acted 80  
in committing the subject offense, including, but not limited 81  
to, the history of the use of force or threatened use of force 82  
against the applicant or another person, whether the applicant's 83  
judgment or control was impaired by the administration to the 84  
applicant of any intoxicant, drug, or controlled substance, and 85  
the threat of withholding from the applicant food, water, or any 86  
drug; 87

(b) The seriousness of the subject offense; 88

(c) The relative degree of physical harm done to any 89  
person in the commission of the subject offense; 90

(d) The length of time that has expired since the 91  
commission of the subject offense; 92

(e) Whether the prosecutor represents to the court that 93  
criminal proceedings are likely to still be initiated against 94  
the applicant for a felony offense for which the period of 95  
limitations has not expired; 96

(f) Whether the applicant at the time of the hearing is 97  
subject to supervision as a result of the subject offense. 98

(F) If after a hearing held under division (D) of this 99  
section the court finds that the applicant has demonstrated by a 100  
preponderance of the evidence that the applicant's participation 101  
in the offense that is the subject of the application was the 102  
result of the applicant having been a victim of human 103

trafficking, and, if the offense that is the subject of the 104  
application is a felony of the first or second degree, after 105  
consideration of the factors required under division (E) (2) of 106  
this section, it finds that the interests of the applicant in 107  
having the record of the conviction of that offense expunged are 108  
not outweighed by any legitimate needs of the government to 109  
maintain that record of conviction, the court shall grant the 110  
application and order that the record of conviction be expunged. 111

(G) (1) The court shall send notice of the order of 112  
expungement issued under division (F) of this section to each 113  
public office or agency that the court has reason to believe may 114  
have an official record pertaining to the case if the court, 115  
after complying with division (E) of this section, determines 116  
both of the following: 117

(a) That the applicant ~~has been convicted of a violation~~ 118  
~~of section 2907.24, 2907.241, or 2907.25 of the Revised Code~~ is 119  
or was a victim of human trafficking; 120

(b) That the interests of the applicant in having the 121  
records pertaining to the applicant's conviction expunged are 122  
not outweighed by any legitimate needs of the government to 123  
maintain those records. 124

(2) The proceedings in the case that is the subject of an 125  
order of expungement issued under division (F) of this section 126  
shall be considered not to have occurred and the conviction of 127  
the person who is the subject of the proceedings shall be 128  
expunged. The record of the conviction shall not be used for any 129  
purpose, including, but not limited to, a criminal records check 130  
under section 109.572 of the Revised Code. The applicant may, 131  
and the court shall, reply that no record exists with respect to 132  
the applicant upon any inquiry into the matter. 133

(H) Upon the filing of an application under this section, 134  
the applicant, unless indigent, shall pay a fee of fifty 135  
dollars. The court shall pay thirty dollars of the fee into the 136  
state treasury and shall pay twenty dollars of the fee into the 137  
county general revenue fund. 138

**Section 2.** That existing section 2953.38 of the Revised 139  
Code is hereby repealed. 140

**Section 3.** This act shall be known as the Expanding Human 141  
Trafficking Justice Act. 142