



**Colorado  
Legislative  
Council  
Staff**

**SB16-116**

**FINAL  
FISCAL NOTE**

**FISCAL IMPACT:**  State  Local  Statutory Public Entity  Conditional  No Fiscal Impact

**Drafting Number:** LLS 16-0961 **Date:** July 19, 2016  
**Prime Sponsor(s):** Sen. Johnston **Bill Status:** Signed into Law  
 Rep. Lee; Lebsock **Fiscal Analyst:** Amanda Hayden (303-866-4918)

**BILL TOPIC:** ALTERNATIVE SIMPLIFIED PROCESS FOR THE SEALING OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE RECORDS OTHER THAN CONVICTIONS

<b>Fiscal Impact Summary</b>	<b>FY 2016-2017</b>	<b>FY 2017-2018</b>
<b>State Revenue</b>	<b><u>\$354,408</u></b>	<b><u>\$402,648</u></b>
Cash Funds	354,408	402,648
<b>State Expenditures</b>	<b><u>\$219,653</u></b>	<b><u>\$245,961</u></b>
Cash Funds	178,173	196,645
Centrally Appropriated Costs	41,480	49,316
<b>TABOR Impact</b>		\$402,648
<b>FTE Position Change</b>	3.5 FTE	4.0 FTE
<b>Appropriation Required:</b> \$178,173 - Judicial Department (FY 2016-17).		
<b>Future Year Impacts:</b> Ongoing state revenue and expenditure increases.		

**Summary of Legislation**

The bill provides a simplified process for sealing criminal justice records. Whenever a defendant is acquitted, completes a diversion agreement or a deferred sentence, or whenever a case against a defendant is dismissed, the court must give an eligible defendant the option to immediately seal criminal justice records. The defendant may make an informal motion in open court at the time of dismissal or acquittal or may later file a written motion. If the defendant opts to seal his or her records using this process, the court must promptly process the defendant's request without the filing of an independent civil action. When sealing records using this process, the court must provide a copy of the court's order to each custodian who may have custody of the defendant's records. Defendants must pay a \$65 fee to seal their records. Fee revenue is credited to the Judicial Stabilization Cash Fund.

**Background**

Under current law, whenever a defendant appears before the court and has charges dismissed or not filed, or whenever a defendant is acquitted, the court must provide him or her with a written advisement of his or her rights concerning the sealing of his or her criminal justice records when certain conditions have been met. In cases where charges were not filed, the defendant may

only elect to have his or her records sealed if the statute of limitations for the offense has run, or if the statute of limitations has not run but the defendant is no longer being investigated for the offense. The court will not seal records for any case in which an offense is not charged or charges are dismissed due to a plea agreement in a separate case or the defendant still owes restitution, fines, fees, or costs ordered by the court.

**State Revenue**

This bill increases state cash fund revenue by \$354,408 in FY 2016-17 and by \$402,648 in FY 2017-18 in the Judicial Department's Stabilization Cash Fund. The bill requires defendants to pay a \$65 fee for the sealing of criminal justice records.

Table 1 shows the anticipated change in fee revenue.

<b>Table 1. Fee Impact Under SB16-116</b>				
<b>Type of Fee</b>	<b>Fee Assessed</b>	<b>Number Affected</b>	<b>Number Paying Fee*</b>	<b>Total Collected</b>
Civil Filing Fee to Seal Records (Current)	\$224	1,859	1,243**	(\$278,432)
Civil Filing Fee to Seal Records (Proposed FY 2016-17)	\$65	14,558	9,736**	\$632,840
<b>FY 2016-17 TOTAL</b>				<b>\$354,408</b>
Civil Filing Fee to Seal Records (Current)	\$224	1,859	1,413	(\$316,512)
Civil Filing Fee to Seal Records (Proposed FY 2017-18)	\$65	14,558	11,064	\$719,160
<b>FY 2017-18 TOTAL</b>				<b>\$402,648</b>

\* All figures in this column are the number affected less 24 percent to account for indigence.

\*\* This number has been prorated in the first year to 88 percent to account for the bill's August 10, 2016, effective date.

**Assumptions.** The fiscal note makes the following assumptions:

- Approximately half of the current 3,717 petitioners seeking to seal records (1,859 cases) will pursue the simplified process for sealing court records.
- Approximately half of the 32,834 defendants potentially eligible to use the simplified process will choose to do so, resulting in 16,416 new cases to be processed. These petitioners include those against whom charges were not filed or were dismissed, or those who were acquitted of all charges.
- Removing the current 3,717 petitioners from the pool of potential new cases leaves 12,699 new petitioners electing at the time of advisement to have their records sealed using the simplified process.

**TABOR Impact**

This bill increases state cash fund revenue collected from fees, which will increase the amount of revenue required to be refunded under TABOR. TABOR refunds are paid from the General Fund. Since the bill increases the TABOR refund obligation without a corresponding change in General Fund revenue, the amount of money available in the General Fund for the budget will decrease by an identical amount. No TABOR impact is expected in FY 2016-17.

**State Expenditures**

**This bill increases state cash fund expenditures by \$219,653 and 3.5 FTE in FY 2016-17 and by \$245,961 and 4.0 FTE in FY 2017-18 in the Judicial Department.**

<b>Table 2. Expenditures Under SB16-116</b>		
<b>Cost Components</b>	<b>FY 2016-17</b>	<b>FY 2017-18</b>
Personal Services	\$155,561	\$192,845
FTE	3.5 FTE	4.0 FTE
Operating Expenses and Capital Outlay	22,612	3,800
Centrally Appropriated Costs*	41,480	49,316
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$219,653</b>	<b>\$245,961</b>

*\*Centrally appropriated costs are not included in the bill's appropriation.*

**Personal services.** Trial courts require an additional 4.0 FTE (prorated to 3.5 FTE in the first year) for support staff to handle the workload associated with processing requests to seal records. The bill shifts the burden from the petitioner to the court to notify the prosecuting attorney and the arresting agency and then to provide every custodian of criminal justice records with a copy of the order requiring the records to be sealed. This process results in approximately 30 minutes of additional workload in the clerk's office for each of the 16,416 new petitions to seal records (prorated to 14,446 new petitions in the first year).

**Centrally appropriated costs.** Pursuant to a Joint Budget Committee policy, certain costs associated with this bill are addressed through the annual budget process and centrally appropriated in the Long Bill or supplemental appropriations bills, rather than in this bill. The centrally appropriated costs subject to this policy are estimated in the fiscal note for informational purposes and summarized in Table 3.

<b>Table 3. Centrally Appropriated Costs Under SB16-116</b>		
<b>Cost Components</b>	<b>FY 2016-17</b>	<b>FY 2017-18</b>
Employee Insurance (Health, Life, Dental, and Short-term Disability)	\$28,168	\$32,036
Supplemental Employee Retirement Payments	13,312	17,280
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$41,480</b>	<b>\$49,316</b>

**Effective Date**

The bill was signed into law by the Governor on June 10, 2016, and takes effect August 10, 2016, assuming no referendum petition is filed. It applies to the sealing of records on or after this date.

**State Appropriations**

For FY 2016-17, the bill requires and includes an allocation of 3.5 FTE and an appropriation of \$178,173 to the Judicial Department from the Judicial Stabilization Cash Fund.

**State and Local Government Contacts**

District Attorneys  
Law

Judicial  
Public Safety

Information Technology