



**Colorado
Legislative
Council
Staff**

SB16-116

**REVISED
FISCAL NOTE**

(replaces fiscal note dated March 31, 2016)

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

Drafting Number: LLS 16-0961

Date: April 25, 2016

Prime Sponsor(s): Sen. Johnston
Rep. Lee; Lebsock

Bill Status: House Finance

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

Fiscal Impact Summary	FY 2016-2017	FY 2017-2018
State Revenue	\$201,436	\$402,648
Cash Funds	201,436	402,648
State Expenditures	\$157,258	\$245,961
Cash Funds	117,135	196,645
Centrally Appropriated Costs	40,123	49,316
TABOR Impact	\$201,436	\$402,648
FTE Position Change	2.0 FTE	4.0 FTE
Appropriation Required: \$117,135 - Judicial Department (FY 2016-17).		
Future Year Impacts: Ongoing state revenue and expenditure increases.		

Summary of Legislation

The *reengrossed* 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 \$201,436 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.

Table 1. Fee Impact Under SB16-116				
Type of Fee	Fee Assessed	Number Affected	Number Paying Fee*	Total Collected
Civil Filing Fee to Seal Records (Current)	\$224	1,859	706**	(\$158,144)
Civil Filing Fee to Seal Records (Proposed FY 2016-17)	\$65	14,558	5,532**	\$359,580
FY 2016-17 TOTAL				\$201,436
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
FY 2017-18 TOTAL				\$402,648

* 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 50 percent to account for the bill's January 1, 2017, 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 dismissed, or those who completed a diversion agreement or deferred sentence or 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.

State Expenditures

This bill increases state cash fund expenditures by \$157,258 and 2.0 FTE in FY 2016-17 and by \$245,961 and 4.0 FTE in FY 2017-18 in the Judicial Department.

Table 2. Expenditures Under SB16-116		
Cost Components	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18
Personal Services	\$96,423	\$192,845
FTE	2.0 FTE	4.0 FTE
Operating Expenses and Capital Outlay	20,712	3,800
Centrally Appropriated Costs*	40,123	49,316
TOTAL	\$157,258	\$245,961

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

Personal services. Trial courts require an additional 4.0 FTE (prorated to 2.0 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 8,208 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.

Table 3. Centrally Appropriated Costs Under SB16-116		
Cost Components	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18
Employee Insurance (Health, Life, Dental, and Short-term Disability)	\$31,872	\$32,036
Supplemental Employee Retirement Payments	8,251	17,280
TOTAL	\$40,123	\$49,316

Effective Date

The bill takes effect January 1, 2017, if the General Assembly adjourns on May 11, 2016, as scheduled, and no referendum petition is filed, and applies to the sealing of records on or after this date.

State Appropriations

For FY 2016-17, the bill requires an allocation of 2.0 FTE and an appropriation of \$117,135 to the Judicial Department from the Judicial Stabilization Cash Fund.

State and Local Government Contacts

District Attorneys
Law

Judicial
Public Safety

Information Technology