JUDICIARY/SUPREME COURT

Dissemination of fabricated and private sexual images

- Creates the offenses of nonconsensual dissemination and nonconsensual creation of fabricated sexual images.
- Modifies continuing law to allow the dissemination of an image or a fabricated sexual image if the person in the image is age 18 or older and the person is knowingly and willingly in a state of nudity or engaged in sexual conduct and is knowingly and willingly in a location where the person does not have a reasonable expectation of privacy.
- Allows for the dissemination of fabricated sexual images under certain circumstances.
- Allows a victim of nonconsensual dissemination or nonconsensual creation of fabricated sexual images to commence a civil action against the offender.
- Allows the court to order a person who is convicted of nonconsensual dissemination or nonconsensual creation of fabricated sexual images or who is adjudicated a delinquent child by reason of committing that offense to criminally forfeit specified property acquired or maintained as a result of committing the offense.

Criminal general docket – online availability

- Requires the common pleas clerk to make available online the court's general docket pertaining to criminal cases.

Probate general docket – online availability

- Requires that the general docket of each probate court be made available online on the clerk of court's website.

Reduction of fees for computerization of court

- Effective December 30, 2025, reduces the fees that that the clerk of courts of a common pleas court can charge for deposit into the computerization fund by 50% if the court fails to make civil, criminal, and probate dockets available online.

Clerk of the court of common pleas

- Requires clerk of the common pleas court to determine and implement the best means and methods for storing, maintaining, and retrieving all papers delivered to the clerk.

Special projects funds

- Prohibits fees collected by municipal, county, common pleas, and appeals courts for special projects of the court from being used for training or education that takes place outside of the state.

Payment for acting judges

- Removes the requirement that county and municipal courts submit quarterly requests to the Administrative Director of the Supreme Court for reimbursements of per diem compensation paid to acting judges.

Sealing and expungement

- Removes a reference to records of conviction that cannot be sealed or expunged that previously applied to sealing and expunging official records in which a person is found not guilty, proceedings are dismissed, a grand jury no bill is entered, or a pardon is granted.

Sealing juvenile records

- Requires the juvenile court to seal certain juvenile records if the court finds that the harm to the person in having the records pertaining to the case disclosed is not outweighed by the potential benefits to the public in having access to those records.

Dissemination of fabricated and private sexual images

(R.C. 2307.66 and 2917.211)

Criminal prohibition and penalty

The act prohibits a person from knowingly disseminating a fabricated sexual image of another person without the other person's consent. A violation of this prohibition is nonconsensual dissemination of fabricated sexual images, a fourth degree felony. If the offender has previously been convicted of or pleaded guilty to nonconsensual dissemination of fabricated sexual images, a sexually oriented offense, or a child-victim oriented offense, nonconsensual dissemination of fabricated sexual images is a third degree felony.

The act defines "fabricated sexual image" as a created, adapted, or modified image that depicts another person, the other person is recognizable in the image by the other person's face, likeness, or other distinguishing characteristic, and the other person depicted in the image is in a state of nudity or is engaged in a sexual act.

The act also prohibits a person, without the consent of the depicted person, in order to harass, extort, threaten, or cause physical, emotional, reputational, or economic harm to a person falsely depicted, from knowingly doing either of the following: (1) creating a fabricated sexual image with intent to distribute or (2) soliciting the creation of a fabricated sexual image with intent to distribute.

A violation of this prohibition is nonconsensual creation of fabricated sexual images, a fourth degree felony. If the offender has previously been convicted of or pleaded guilty to nonconsensual creation of fabricated sexual images, a sexually oriented offense, or a child-victim oriented offense, nonconsensual creation of fabricated sexual images is a third degree felony.

The act modifies continuing law by increasing the penalty for nonconsensual dissemination of private sexual images from a third degree misdemeanor to a fifth degree felony

and increases the penalty from a second degree misdemeanor to a fourth degree felony if the offender was previously convicted of or pleaded guilty to nonconsensual dissemination of private sexual images, as well as a sexually oriented offense, or a child-victim oriented offense.

Exceptions

The act modifies continuing law by specifying that the dissemination of a fabricated sexual image is not prohibited if any of the following apply:

- The fabricated sexual image is disseminated for the purpose of a criminal investigation that is otherwise lawful;
- The fabricated sexual image is disseminated for the purpose of, or in connection with, the reporting of unlawful conduct;
- The fabricated sexual image is part of a news report or commentary or an artistic or expressive work, such as a performance, work of art, literary work, theatrical work, musical work, motion picture, film, or audiovisual work;
- The fabricated sexual image is disseminated by a law enforcement officer, or a corrections officer or guard in a detention facility, acting within the scope of the person's official duties;
- The fabricated sexual image is disseminated for another lawful purpose;
- If the person in the image or fabricated sexual image is age 18 or older, the person in the image or fabricated sexual image is knowingly and willingly in a state of nudity or engaged in a sexual act and is knowingly and willingly in a location in which the person does not have a reasonable expectation of privacy;
- The fabricated sexual image is disseminated for the purpose of medical treatment or examination.

Continuing law provides the same exceptions for photographs, film, videotape, digital recording, or other depiction or portrayal of a person.

The act also specifies that the providers of interactive computer services, mobile services, telecommunication carriers, internet providers, cable service providers, direct-to-home satellite services, or video service providers are not liable for dissemination of fabricated sexual images solely as a result of a fabricated sexual image along with an image under continuing law or other information is provided by another person.

Civil action for nonconsensual dissemination of fabricated sexual images

Continuing law allows a victim of the offense of nonconsensual dissemination of private sexual images to commence a civil action against the offender for any of the following, in addition to reasonable attorney's fees and the costs of bringing the action:

- An injunction or a temporary restraining order prohibiting further dissemination of the image;

- Compensatory and punitive damages for harm resulting from the violation.

The act allows a victim of the offense of nonconsensual dissemination of fabricated sexual images to commence such a civil action as well.

The act specifies that the victim is presumed to have suffered harm as a result of the nonconsensual dissemination of fabricated sexual images. The civil action must be brought within four years after the victim discovers the private sexual image or fabricated sexual image.

Forfeiture

(R.C. 2981.02)

The act modifies the Criminal and Civil Forfeiture Law by allowing the court to order any person who is convicted of nonconsensual dissemination of fabricated sexual images or of nonconsensual creation of fabricated sexual images, or who is adjudicated a delinquent child by reason of committing the offense, to criminally forfeit the following property to the state under the Criminal and Civil Forfeiture Law:

- Any profits or proceeds and any property the person has acquired or maintained in violation of the offense that the sentencing court determines to have been acquired or maintained as a result of the violation;
- Any interest in, securities of, claim against, or property or contractual right of any kind affording a source of influence over any enterprise that the person has established, operated, controlled, or conducted as a result of committing the offense that the sentencing court determines to have been acquired or maintained as a result of the violation.

Criminal general docket – online availability

(R.C. 2303.12)

Not later than March 30, 2027, the act requires the common pleas clerk of court make available on the clerk of court's website the "general docket" of the court pertaining to criminal cases. The public must be able to remotely access and print the information in that docket, including all individual documents in each "case file," pertaining to criminal cases filed on or after September 30, 2025.

The clerk of court is not required to make available online the general docket of the juvenile court.

Definitions

The act modifies the definition of "case file" to include criminal actions or proceedings. "Case file" means the compendium of original documents filed in a civil or criminal action or proceeding in the court of common pleas, including the pleadings, motions, orders, and judgments of the court on a case-by-case basis.

"General docket" means the appearance docket, trial docket, and case files in relation to those dockets and journal.

Probate general docket – online availability

(R.C. 2101.11 and 2303.12)

The act requires the general docket of each probate court to be made available on the clerk of court's website not later than March 30, 2027. The public must be able to remotely access and print the information in that docket, including all individual documents in each case file, pertaining to probate cases filed on or after the act's effective date. This requirement does not apply to the following documents:

- Internal documents such as notes, electronic mails, drafts, recommendations, advice, or research of judicial officers and court staff;
- Any document or information in a case file the public access to which the court has ordered restricted under the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio.

Reduction of fees for computerization of court

(R.C. 2303.201; Section 820.90)

Online availability of general dockets

Under continuing law, a common pleas clerk of court is required to make available online the court's general docket pertaining to civil cases. Under the act, the common pleas clerk of court is also required to make available online the court's general docket pertaining to criminal cases (see "**Criminal general docket – online availability**," above).

Computerization of the common pleas court

If a common pleas court fails to make civil or criminal general dockets available online, the act reduces the fees that the clerk of courts can charge for deposit into the computerization fund by 50%.

The common pleas court of any county may determine that for the efficient operation of the court, additional funds are required to computerize the court, to make available computerized legal research services, or both. Upon making the determination that additional funds are required for either or both of those purposes, the act requires the court to do one of the following:

- If the common pleas court has complied with the requirement to make available online the court's general docket pertaining to civil or criminal cases, the court must authorize and direct the clerk of the common pleas court to charge one additional fee, not to exceed $6, on the filing of each specified cause of action or appeal (prior law allowed this additional fee regardless of whether the court complied with the requirement to make available online the court's general docket pertaining to civil cases).
- If the common pleas court has not complied with the requirement to make available online the court's general docket pertaining to civil or criminal cases, the court must authorize and direct the clerk of the common pleas court to charge one additional fee, not to exceed $3, on the filing of each specified cause of action or appeal.

Computerization of the clerk of the common pleas court

The clerk of the common pleas court of any county may determine that for the efficient operation of the office of the clerk of the common pleas court, additional funds are required to make technological advances in or to computerize the office of the clerk of the court. Upon making that determination, the act requires the court to do one of the following:

- If the common pleas court has complied with the requirement to make available online the court's general docket pertaining to civil or criminal cases, the court must authorize and direct that an additional fee, not to exceed $20, on the filing of each specified cause of action or appeal, on the filing, docketing, and endorsing of each certificate of judgment, or on the docketing and indexing of each aid in execution or petition to vacate, revive or modify a judgment and not to exceed $1 for specified services, be charged (prior law allowed this additional fee regardless of whether the court has complied with the requirement to make available online the court's general docket pertaining to civil cases).
- If the common pleas court has not complied with the requirement to make available online the court's general docket pertaining to civil or criminal cases, the court must authorize and direct that an additional fee, not to exceed $10, on the filing of each specified cause of action or appeal, on the filing, docketing, and endorsing of each certificate of judgment, or on the docketing and indexing of each aid in execution or petition to vacate, revive or modify a judgment and not to exceed 50¢ for specified services, be charged.

Effective date

The act delays the effective date of these provisions until March 30, 2026.

Clerk of the court of common pleas

(R.C. 2303.26)

The act specifies that the clerk of the common pleas court is responsible for determining and implementing the best means and methods for storing, maintaining, and retrieving all papers delivered to the clerk, whether delivered in writing or electronic form. The clerk must do so in furtherance of the performance of the duties enjoined upon the clerk by statute, common law, and the Rules of Superintendence of the Courts of Ohio, and in compliance with Rule 26 of the Rules of Superintendence of the Courts of Ohio.

Special projects funds

(R.C. 1901.26, 1907.24, 2303.201, and 2501.16)

The act prohibits fees collected by municipal, county, common pleas, and appeals courts for special projects of the court from being used for training or education that takes place outside of the state.

Payment for acting judges

(R.C. 1901.123 and 1907.143)

The act removes the requirement that county and municipal courts submit quarterly requests to the Administrative Director of the Supreme Court for reimbursements of per diem compensation paid to acting judges.

Sealing and expungement

(R.C. 2953.32)

Under continuing law, specified records of conviction cannot be sealed or expunged. This provision applies to the following: (1) the sealing and expungement of records of conviction, (2) the sealing and expungement of official records for a not guilty, dismissal, no bill, or pardon, and (3) general sealing and expungement provisions relating to both (1) and (2).

The act removes the application of the above provision to (2). The sealing and expungement provisions in (2) apply to official records in which a person is found not guilty, proceedings are dismissed, a grand jury no bill is entered, or a pardon is granted, rather than to conviction records. As such, the application of the provision seems unnecessary.

Sealing juvenile records

(R.C. 2151.356)

Under continuing law, the juvenile court must promptly order the immediate sealing of records pertaining to a juvenile in any of the circumstances below. For (4) and (5) below, the act requires the juvenile court to seal juvenile records if the court finds that the harm to the person in having the records pertaining to the case disclosed is not outweighed by the potential benefits to the public in having access to those records:

1. Under continuing law, if the court receives a record from a public office or agency;

2. Under continuing law, if a person was brought before or referred to the court for allegedly committing a delinquent or unruly act and the case was resolved without the filing of a complaint against the person with respect to that act;

3. Under continuing law, if the person was charged with underage consumption or possession of alcohol and the person has successfully completed a diversion program with respect to that charge;

4. Under the act, if a complaint was filed against a person alleging that the person was a delinquent child, an unruly child, or a juvenile traffic offender and the court does both of the following:

a. Dismisses the complaint after a trial on the merits of the case or finds the person not to be a delinquent child, an unruly child, or juvenile traffic offender;

b. Finds that the harm to the person alleged to be a delinquent child, an unruly child, or a juvenile traffic offender in having the records pertaining to the case disclosed is not outweighed by the potential benefits to the public in having access to those records.

5. Subject to certain exceptions, if a person has been adjudicated an unruly child, and both of the following apply:

a. The person is 18 years old, and the person is not under the jurisdiction of the court in relation to a complaint alleging the person to be a delinquent child;

b. The court finds that the harm to the person in having the records pertaining to the case disclosed is not outweighed by the potential benefits to the public in having access to those records.