

RÉSUMÉ DIGEST

ACT 494 (HB 729)

2022 Regular Session

Duplessis

Existing law (R.S. 44:1 et seq. – Public Records Law) provides that all books, records, writings, accounts, letters and letter books, maps, drawings, photographs, cards, tapes, recordings, memoranda, and papers, and all copies, duplicates, photographs, including microfilm, or other reproductions thereof, or any other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, including information contained in electronic data processing equipment, having been used, being in use, or prepared, possessed, or retained for use in the conduct, transaction, or performance of any business, transaction, work, duty, or function which was conducted, transacted, or performed by or under the authority of the constitution or laws of the state, or by or under the authority of any ordinance, regulation, mandate, or order of any public body or concerning the receipt or payment of any money received or paid by or under the authority of the constitution or the laws of the state are "public records". Existing law establishes a framework for the ready availability of public records to requesting persons and specifically provides that it is the duty of the custodian of the public records of a public entity or agency to provide copies to persons so requesting. Provides for certain exceptions, exemptions, and limitations.

New law prohibits a law enforcement officer or agency from publishing, releasing, or disseminating a booking photograph to the public or to a private person or entity unless:

- (1) The individual is a fugitive and such release will assist in apprehending the individual.
- (2) The individual is an imminent threat and such release will assist in reducing or eliminating the threat.
- (3) A judge orders such release based upon a finding that the release is in furtherance of a legitimate interest.
- (4) The individual is convicted of the crime for which he was arrested or pleads guilty or nolo contendere to a crime, lesser crime, or lesser included offense in response to the same crime for which he was arrested.
- (5) Criminal litigation related to the crime is pending or reasonably anticipated.
- (6) The individual is charged with a crime of violence as defined in existing law (R.S. 14:2(B), except stalking) or charged with video voyeurism, cruelty to animals, dogfighting, sex offenses as defined in existing law (R.S. 15:541), human trafficking offenses as defined in existing law (R.S. 14:46.2 and 46.3), offenses affecting the health and morals of minors as provided in existing law (R.S. 14:91 et seq.), or offenses affecting the health and safety of persons with infirmities as provided in existing law (R.S. 14:93.3 et seq.).

New law requires a booking photograph that is published, released, or disseminated by a law enforcement officer or agency, except after the subject of the booking photograph has been found guilty or pled nolo contendere, to include a disclaimer that states "all persons are presumed innocent until proven guilty".

New law provides that no law enforcement agency or employee thereof shall be subject to civil action or be held liable when the publication, release, or dissemination was made by mistake of fact or error, or was inadvertent and made in good faith.

New law defines "booking photograph" and "remove-for-pay publication or website" for its purposes.

New law provides that a remove-for-pay publication or website shall remove and destroy a booking photograph of an individual who submits a request for removal and destruction within seven calendar days after the request if both of the following conditions exist:

- (1) The individual in the booking photograph was acquitted of the criminal charge or not prosecuted, or the individual had the criminal charge expunged, vacated, or pardoned.

- (2) The individual submits, in relation to the request, evidence of a disposition of the charge as described above.

New law provides that if the publication or website does not remove and destroy the booking photograph, it shall be liable for all costs, including reasonable attorney fees, resulting from any legal action that the individual brings in relation to such failure.

New law provides that any publication or website that seeks any fee or other valuable consideration for the removal or destruction of a booking photograph shall be subject to prosecution under existing law (R.S. 14:66 – the crime of extortion).

New law further specifies that the publication of a booking photograph of a La. resident constitutes minimum contact with the state and by doing so, the party shall be subject to the jurisdiction of La. courts.

Effective upon signature of governor (June 16, 2022).

(Amends R.S. 44:4.1(B)(38); Adds C.Cr.P. Art. 234)