

1 State of Arkansas
2 94th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2023
4

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1557

5 By: Representative Tosh
6 By: Senator B. Johnson
7

For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO AMEND ARKANSAS LAW CONCERNING THE
10 CONFIDENTIALITY OF CERTAIN RECORDS RELATED TO A
11 CORONER'S INVESTIGATION; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
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Subtitle

15 TO AMEND ARKANSAS LAW CONCERNING THE
16 CONFIDENTIALITY OF CERTAIN RECORDS
17 RELATED TO A CORONER'S INVESTIGATION.
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20 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
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22 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 14-15-304 is amended to read as follows:
23 14-15-304. Confidentiality.

24 (a)(1) ~~Records~~ Except as provided in this section, records, files, and
25 information gathered and created during the course of a coroner's
26 investigation shall be confidential and deemed exempt from the Freedom of
27 Information Act of 1967, § 25-19-101 et seq., but only until such time that
28 the coroner issues his or her final report.

29 (2) If the death that is the subject of the coroner's
30 investigation is the subject of an open and ongoing investigation by a law
31 enforcement agency, including without limitation a criminal investigation or
32 a criminal trial, the following shall be confidential and deemed exempt from
33 the Freedom of Information Act of 1967, § 25-19-101 et seq., until the
34 conclusion of the open and ongoing investigation by a law enforcement agency:

35 (A) All reports issued by the coroner, including without
36 limitation the preliminary written report and any subsequent reports; and



1 (B) Records, files, and information gathered and created
2 during the course of the coroner's investigation.

3 (b) Confidential medical information gathered during the course of the
4 investigation shall remain exempt from public inspection and copying except
5 as quoted in the coroner's final report.

6 (c) If a coroner submits a decedent or records, files, or information
7 related to a decedent to the State Crime Laboratory for forensic examination,
8 then the records, files, and information received by the coroner from the
9 State Crime Laboratory regarding the decedent are privileged and confidential
10 in the same manner as records, files, and information kept, obtained, or
11 retained by the State Crime Laboratory under § 12-12-312 and are subject to
12 the exceptions for disclosure under § 12-12-312.

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16 **APPROVED: 3/21/23**
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