



ENACTMENT SUMMARY

House Bill 234 Sentencing on *Alford* pleas; sealing/expungement Effective March 20, 2025

On December 19, 2024, Governor DeWine signed into law House Bill 234 (Rep. Williams and Rep. Rogers), which modifies sentencing requirements when sentencing on an *Alford* plea. The bill also makes changes to sealing/expungement eligibility requirements.

***Alford* plea sentencing**

The bill prohibits a court sentencing an offender who entered an *Alford* plea from considering whether the offender showed a genuine lack of remorse for the offense.

Sealing/expungement eligibility

The bill adds “theft in office” to the list of offenses that are not eligible to be sealed or expunged.

Additionally, under existing law, convictions for an M4 domestic violence offense are eligible for sealing, but not expungement. The bill expands this to allow for the sealing, not expungement, of M3 domestic violence. Finally, the bill provides that M1 and M2 domestic violence offenses are not eligible for either sealing or expungement.

The bill also clarifies that, for the purposes of determining eligibility for sealing/expunging, multiple convictions that result from or are connected with the same act, or result from offenses committed at the same time, are to be treated as a single conviction. Additionally, two or three convictions may be treated as one conviction if they resulted from the same indictment/information/complaint, from the same guilty plea, or from the same official proceeding, and resulted from related criminal acts that were committed within a three month period but do not result from the same act or from offenses committed at the same time. This, however, does not apply if the court finds that it would not be in the public interest to treat the 2-3 convictions as one.

The bill passed the Ohio House of Representatives by a vote of 90-0 on May 8, 2024 and the Ohio Senate by a vote of 27-1 on December 4, 2024. The House voted on December 10, 2024 to concur on Senate amendments, by a vote of 89-0. It was signed into law on December 19, 2024 and becomes effective on March 20, 2025.