

State of Arkansas
94th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2023

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1557

By: Representative Tosh
By: Senator B. Johnson

For An Act To Be Entitled

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

Subtitle

TO AMEND ARKANSAS LAW CONCERNING THE
CONFIDENTIALITY OF CERTAIN RECORDS
RELATED TO A CORONER'S INVESTIGATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 14-15-304 is amended to read as follows:
14-15-304. Confidentiality.

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

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

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



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

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

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

APPROVED: 3/21/23