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## ATTORNEY GENERAL

- Repeals the journalist access exception to the general prohibition against the release of confidential records a sheriff keeps relative to the issuance, renewal, suspension, or revocation of a concealed handgun license.
- Requires the Attorney General to adopt rules governing the training of peace officers on companion animal encounters and behavior and specifies what the rules must include.
- Requires the peace officer basic training program and the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy to include training on companion animal encounters and behavior.
- With respect to recipients of state economic development awards, requires the Attorney General to determine compliance with the terms of the award at the end of the year by which the recipient is required to meet one of those metrics, rather than annually.
- Requires the Attorney General to enter into an agreement with the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury to participate in the federal Treasury Offset Program for the collection of outstanding state income tax and unemployment debts.

### **Concealed Handgun Law – repeal of journalist access exception**

(R.C. 2923.129)

The act repeals a provision of law that provided an exception to the general prohibition against release of records that a sheriff keeps with respect to concealed handgun licenses. Under the exception, a "journalist" could view the name, county of residence, and date of birth of each person to whom the sheriff had issued, renewed, or issued a replacement for, or for whom the sheriff had suspended or revoked, a standard or temporary emergency concealed handgun license (CHL).

The journalist's exception was an exception to the provisions in continuing law that specify that, notwithstanding the state's Public Records Law, the records a sheriff keeps relative to the issuance, renewal, suspension, or revocation of a CHL are confidential and are not public records and that no person may release or otherwise disseminate any such confidential records unless required to do so pursuant to a court order. A violation of the prohibition is "illegal release of confidential concealed



handgun license records," a fifth degree felony with a possible separate \$1,000 civil fine and authorized civil action in specified circumstances.

Under the former journalist's access exception, a journalist could submit to a sheriff a signed, written request to view the name, county of residence, and date of birth of each person to whom the sheriff had issued, renewed, issued a replacement for, or for whom the sheriff had suspended or revoked, a CHL. The request had to include the journalist's name and title, the name and address of the journalist's employer, and state that disclosure of the information sought would be in the public interest. Upon receipt of the request, the sheriff was required to grant it. The journalist could not copy the name, county of residence, or date of birth of a person to or for whom the sheriff had issued, suspended, or revoked a CHL. As used in the exception, "journalist" meant a person engaged in, connected with, or employed by any news medium, including a newspaper, magazine, press association, news agency, or wire service, a radio or television station, or a similar medium, for the purpose of gathering, processing, transmitting, compiling, editing, or disseminating information for the general public.

### **Training of peace officers on companion animal encounters**

(R.C. 109.747, 109.77, and 109.79)

The act requires the Attorney General to adopt administrative rules governing the training of peace officers on companion animal encounters and behavior. The rules must include all of the following:

(1) A specified amount of training that is necessary for satisfactory completion of basic training programs at approved peace officer training schools, other than the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy;

(2) The time within which a peace officer is required to receive that training, if the peace officer is appointed as a peace officer before receiving that training;

(3) A requirement that the training include training in all of the following:

- Handling companion animal-related calls or unplanned encounters with companion animals, with an emphasis on canine-related incidents and the use of nonlethal methods and tools in handling an encounter with a canine;
- Identifying and understanding companion animal behavior;
- State laws and municipal ordinances related to companion animals;
- Avoiding a companion animal attack;



- Using nonlethal methods to defend against a companion animal.

The act also requires that the training provided in the peace officer basic training program and provided by the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy include training on companion animal encounters and behavior.

### **Monitoring compliance with economic development awards**

(R.C. 125.112)

Under continuing law, entities that receive a state award for economic development (such as a grant, loan, or other similar form of financial assistance or a contract, purchase order, or other similar transaction) must comply with certain terms and conditions, including performance metrics. The Attorney General is required to monitor the compliance of such entities with the terms and conditions of their awards and submit a report to the General Assembly regarding the level of compliance of each entity.

The act eliminates the requirement that compliance by such entities be monitored annually. Instead, the Attorney General must determine the extent to which an entity has complied with the terms and conditions of its award, including the performance metrics, at the end of the calendar year by which the entity is required to meet a performance metric under the award (referred to as the "closeout year.") Annually, the Attorney General is to report on the compliance levels of only those entities.

### **Treasury Offset Program**

(R.C. 131.025)

The act requires the Attorney General to enter into an agreement with the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury to participate in the federal Treasury Offset Program for the collection of state income tax obligations and unemployment compensation debts that have been certified to the Attorney General for collection pursuant to continuing law. Under that Program, an individual's or an entity's federal tax refund can be reduced by the amount the individual or entity owes for specified government debt.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> 26 U.S.C. 6402(e) and (f) and 31 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) 285.8.

