

LEGISLATIVE BILL 504

Approved by the Governor May 27, 2015

Introduced by Krist, 10.

A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to criminal procedure; to amend section 29-2261, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2014; to change provisions relating to presentence reports and examinations; to provide for access to substance abuse evaluations; and to repeal the original section.
Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. Section 29-2261, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2014, is amended to read:

29-2261 (1) Unless it is impractical to do so, when an offender has been convicted of a felony other than murder in the first degree, the court shall not impose sentence without first ordering a presentence investigation of the offender and according due consideration to a written report of such investigation. When an offender has been convicted of murder in the first degree and (a) a jury renders a verdict finding the existence of one or more aggravating circumstances as provided in section 29-2520 or (b)(i) the information contains a notice of aggravation as provided in section 29-1603 and (ii) the offender waives his or her right to a jury determination of the alleged aggravating circumstances, the court shall not commence the sentencing determination proceeding as provided in section 29-2521 without first ordering a presentence investigation of the offender and according due consideration to a written report of such investigation.

(2) A court may order a presentence investigation in any case, except in cases in which an offender has been convicted of a Class IIIA misdemeanor, a Class IV misdemeanor, a Class V misdemeanor, a traffic infraction, or any corresponding city or village ordinance.

(3) The presentence investigation and report shall include, when available, an analysis of the circumstances attending the commission of the crime, the offender's history of delinquency or criminality, physical and mental condition, family situation and background, economic status, education, occupation, and personal habits, and any other matters that the probation officer deems relevant or the court directs to be included. All local and state police agencies and Department of Correctional Services adult correctional facilities shall furnish to the probation officer copies of such criminal records, in any such case referred to the probation officer by the court of proper jurisdiction, as the probation officer shall require without cost to the court or the probation officer.

Such investigation shall also include:

(a) Any written statements submitted to the county attorney by a victim;
and

(b) Any written statements submitted to the probation officer by a victim.

(4) If there are no written statements submitted to the probation officer, he or she shall certify to the court that:

(a) He or she has attempted to contact the victim; and

(b) If he or she has contacted the victim, such officer offered to accept the written statements of the victim or to reduce such victim's oral statements to writing.

For purposes of subsections (3) and (4) of this section, the term victim shall be as defined in section 29-119.

(5) Before imposing sentence, the court may order the offender to submit to psychiatric observation and examination for a period of not exceeding sixty days or such longer period as the court determines to be necessary for that purpose. The offender may be remanded for this purpose to any available clinic or mental hospital, or the court may appoint a qualified psychiatrist to make the examination. The report of the examination shall be submitted to the court.

(6) Any presentence report, substance abuse evaluation, or psychiatric examination shall be privileged and shall not be disclosed directly or indirectly to anyone other than a judge, probation officers to whom an offender's file is duly transferred, the probation administrator or his or her designee, alcohol and drug counselors, mental health practitioners, psychiatrists, and psychologists licensed or certified under the Uniform Credentialing Act to conduct substance abuse evaluations and treatment, or others entitled by law to receive such information, including personnel and mental health professionals for the Nebraska State Patrol specifically assigned to sex offender registration and community notification for the sole purpose of using such report, evaluation, or examination for assessing risk and for community notification of registered sex offenders. For purposes of this subsection, mental health professional means (a) a practicing physician licensed to practice medicine in this state under the Medicine and Surgery Practice Act, (b) a practicing psychologist licensed to engage in the practice of psychology in this state as provided in section 38-3111, or (c) a practicing mental health professional licensed or certified in this state as provided in the Mental Health Practice Act.

(7) The court shall permit inspection of the presentence report, substance

abuse evaluation, or psychiatric examination or parts of the report, evaluation, or examination, as determined by the court, by the prosecuting attorney and defense counsel. Beginning July 1, 2016, such inspection shall be by electronic access only unless the court determines such access is not available to the prosecuting attorney or defense counsel. The State Court Administrator shall determine and develop the means of electronic access to such presentence reports, evaluations, and examinations. Upon application by the prosecuting attorney or defense counsel, the court may order that addresses, telephone numbers, and other contact information for victims or witnesses named in the report, evaluation, or examination be redacted upon a showing by a preponderance of the evidence that such redaction is warranted in the interests of public safety. The court may permit inspection of the presentence report, substance abuse evaluation, or psychiatric examination or examination of parts of the report, evaluation, or examination thereof by any the offender or his or her attorney, or other person having a proper interest therein, whenever the court finds it is in the best interest of a particular offender. The court may allow fair opportunity for an offender to provide additional information for the court's consideration.

(8 7) If an offender is sentenced to imprisonment, a copy of the report of any presentence investigation, substance abuse evaluation, or psychiatric examination shall be transmitted immediately to the Department of Correctional Services. Upon request, the Board of Parole or the Office of Parole Administration may receive a copy of the report from the department.

(9 8) Notwithstanding subsections subsection (6) and (7) of this section, the Supreme Court or an agent of the Supreme Court acting under the direction and supervision of the Chief Justice shall have access to psychiatric examinations, substance abuse evaluations, and presentence investigations and reports for research purposes. The Supreme Court and its agent shall treat such information as confidential, and nothing identifying any individual shall be released.

Sec. 2. Original section 29-2261, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2014, is repealed.