



The Briefing De Jure

Brought to you by the Law Office of Natalie Burston
Where Clients Come First!

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Juvenile Justice in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System is different than our Adult Justice System. I have over 10 years experience defending juveniles, both while working at the Dauphin County Public Defenders Office and in private practice. That is why defense of juveniles is one of my areas of expertise. I frequently receive questions from parents concerned for their child's future when their child makes a mistake by committing a crime. This issue of the newsletter will address two of the most frequent questions I am asked.

If you are need of a guide throughout the Juvenile Justice process, please reach out to me. I offer free consultations.

Question #1—What if my child is detained?

This first couple of days is crucial if your child is detained. It is of the utmost important that you contact an attorney who has expertise in juvenile defense. And your attorney can coordinate visits and phone calls with your child during this trying time.

When a child is placed in a detention facility or shelter care, a detention hearing must be held within 72 hours. Some counties in Pennsylvania do not include weekends or federal holidays in their 72-hour calculation.

At detention hearings, the child has the right to have his parents or guardian notified of and present for the hearing. If the guardian is not notified and did not waive his or her presence, the child may request a rehearing. A rehearing request for lack of guardian presence must be granted within 72 hours of its filing.

Clients Come First at the Law Office of Natale Burston. You can contact me if you are in need of an attorney to represent your child. I will return your phone call or email within 24 hours during this critical time.

Question #2—Can my child's record be expunged?

Yes. An expungement must be granted 5 years after the child's final discharge following an adjudication, unless the court finds there is a cause not to do so. A juvenile record may also be expunged by court order once the child reaches the age of 18 if the Commonwealth consents to the expungement.

There is an exception to expunging a child's record. Pennsylvania does not expunge the records of juveniles convicted of adult crimes, no matter their age at conviction.

Generally, the process of expungement can be completed in about 2–3 months. If you are looking to expunge your child's record, please contact me at any of the option listed on the newsletter.

No matter your legal situation, please contact me. I will be there every step of the way to help you navigate Pennsylvania's court systems. My areas of expertise also include criminal defense (including DUI), family law, and landlord/tenant matters.