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**WEST VIRGINIA CODE CHAPTER 48**  
**ARTICLE 25**

WV Legislature

**§48-25-101. Petition to circuit court or family court for change of name; contents thereof; notice of application.**

(a) A person desiring a change of his or her own name, or that of his or her child, may apply to the circuit court or family court of the county in which he or she resides by a verified petition setting forth and affirming the following:

(1) That he or she has been a bona fide resident of the county for at least one year prior to the filing of the petition or that he or she is a nonresident of the county who was born in the county, was married in the county and was previously a resident of the county for a period of at least fifteen years;

(2) The cause for which the change of name is sought;

(3) The new name desired;

(4) The name change is not for purposes of avoiding debt or creditors;

(5) The petitioner seeking the name change is not a registered sex offender pursuant to any state or federal law;

(6) The name change sought is not for purposes of avoiding any state or federal law regarding identity;

(7) The name change sought is not for any improper or illegal purpose;

(8) The petitioner is not a convicted felon in any jurisdiction;

(9) The name change sought is not for any purpose of evading detection, identification or arrest by any local, state or federal law-enforcement agency; and

(10) Whether or not the petitioner desires to protect his or her identity for personal safety reasons.

(b) After filing the petition and at least ten days before the hearing to consider the application, the person shall cause a notice of the time and place that the application will be made to be published as a Class I legal advertisement in compliance with the provisions of article three, chapter fifty-nine of this code. The petitioner shall in the notice set forth the name to which his or her name will be changed, unless as shown in the petition to the court, the name change is being requested because the petitioner desires to protect his or her identity for personal safety reasons: Provided, That upon good cause shown, there may be a closed hearing. The publication area for the publication is the county. The publication shall contain a provision that the hearing may be rescheduled without further notice or publication.

**§48-25-102. Objections to change of name.**

Any person who is likely to be injured by the change of name of any person so petitioning, or who knows of any reason why the name of any such petitioner should not be changed, may appear at the time and place named in the notice, and shall be heard in opposition to such change.

WV Legislature

**§48-25-103. When court may or may not order change of name.**

(a) Upon the filing of the verified petition, and upon proof of the publication of the notice and of the matters set forth in the petition, and being satisfied that no injury will be done to any person by reason of the change, and upon a finding that all representations the applicant has affirmed pursuant to subsection (a), section one hundred one of this article are true and the applicant is not prohibited from obtaining a name change pursuant to this article, that reasonable and proper cause exists for changing the name of petitioner and that the change is not desired because of any fraudulent or evil intent on the part of the petitioner, the court or judge may order a change of name.

(b) The court may not grant any change of name for any person convicted of any felony during the time that the person is incarcerated.

(c) The court may not grant any change of name for any person required to register with the State Police pursuant to the provisions of article twelve, chapter fifteen of this code during the period that the person is required to register.

(d) The court may not grant a change of name for persons convicted of first degree murder in violation of section one, article two, chapter sixty-one of this code for a period of ten years after the person is discharged from imprisonment or is discharged from parole, whichever occurs later.

(e) The court may not grant a change of name of any person convicted of violating any provision of section fourteen-a, article two, chapter sixty-one of this code for a period of ten years after the person is discharged from imprisonment or is discharged from parole, whichever occurs later.

**§48-25-104. Recordation of order changing name.**

When such order is made the petitioner shall forthwith cause a certified copy thereof to be filed in the office of the clerk of the county commission of the county where petitioner resides, and such clerk shall record the same in a book to be kept for the purpose and index the same under both the old and the new names. For such recording and indexing the clerk shall be allowed the same fee as for a deed.

WV Legislature

**§48-25-105. When new name to be used.**

When such change has been ordered and a certified copy of the order filed in the office of the county clerk, the new name shall thenceforth be used in place of the former name.

WV Legislature

**§48-25-106. Unlawful change of name.**

Any person residing in this state who shall change his or her name, or assume another name, unlawfully, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not exceeding \$100, and upon a repetition thereof shall be confined in the county or regional jail not exceeding sixty days.

WV Legislature

**§48-25-107. Unlawful change of name by certain felons and registrants.**

(a) It is unlawful for any person convicted of first degree murder in violation of section one, article two, chapter sixty-one of this code, and for any person convicted of violating any provision of section fourteen-a, article two, chapter sixty-one of this code, for which a sentence of life imprisonment is imposed, to apply for a change of name for a period of ten years after the person is discharged from imprisonment or is discharged from parole, whichever occurs later.

(b) It is unlawful for any person required to register with the State Police pursuant to the provisions of article twelve, chapter fifteen of this code to apply for a change of name during the period that the person is required to register.

(c) It is unlawful for any person convicted of a felony to apply for a change of name during the period that such person is incarcerated.

(d) A person who violates the provisions of subsection (a), (b) or (c) of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not less than \$250 nor more than \$10,000 or imprisoned in the county or regional jail for not more than one year, or both fined and incarcerated.