

SENATE BILL 405

By Stevens

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 40,  
Chapter 30, Part 1, relative to evidence.

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

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 40-30-103, is amended by deleting the section and substituting instead the following:

Relief under this part shall be granted when the conviction or sentence is void or voidable because of the abridgment of any right guaranteed by the Constitution of Tennessee or the Constitution of the United States or because of newly discovered evidence of actual innocence as described in § 40-30-102(b)(2).

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 40-30-102(b), is amended by deleting subdivision (b)(2) and substituting instead the following:

(2)

(A) The claim in the petition is based upon new scientific or new non-scientific evidence establishing that the petitioner is actually innocent of the offense or offenses for which the petitioner was convicted;

(B) The new evidence must:

(i) Be currently available and must not have been available to the petitioner through the exercise of due diligence at the time of conviction;

and

(ii) Be such that had such new evidence been available, there is a reasonable probability that the petitioner would not have been convicted;

(C) "New scientific evidence" as applied in this section means scientific evidence that:

(i) Was not available to be offered by the petitioner at the time of the conviction or that undermines forensic scientific evidence used to convict the petitioner; and

(ii) Includes:

(a) Scientific or technical knowledge;

(b) A testifying forensic analyst's or expert's scientific or technical knowledge or opinion;

(c) Reports or testimony offered by experts or scientific analysts; or

(d) Scientific standards, methods, or techniques upon which the relevant scientific evidence is based; or

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 40-30-102(c), is amended by deleting the subsection and substituting instead the following:

(c) This part contemplates the filing of only one (1) petition for post-conviction relief. In no event may more than one (1) petition for post-conviction relief be filed attacking a single judgment, unless a subsequent petition is filed based on new evidence of actual innocence as described in subdivision (b)(2) and such evidence was not ascertainable by the petitioner through the exercise of due diligence at the time a previous petition was filed under this section. If a prior petition has been filed which was resolved on the merits by a court of competent jurisdiction, any second or subsequent petition must be summarily dismissed. A petitioner may move to reopen a post-conviction proceeding that has been concluded, under the limited circumstances set out in § 40-30-117.

SECTION 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2019, the public welfare requiring it.