

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
1997 SESSION

S.L. 1997-242
HOUSE BILL 476

AN ACT TO AMEND THE VITAL RECORDS LAWS PERTAINING TO ACCESS
TO, COPIES, AND PUBLIC NATURE OF, AND APPLICATION OF
AUTHORIZED FEES, FOR VITAL RECORDS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. G.S. 130A-93 reads as rewritten:

"§ 130A-93. Access to vital records; copies.

(a) Only the State Registrar shall have access to original vital records and to indices to the original vital records. County offices authorized to issue certificates and the North Carolina State Archives also shall have access to indices to these original vital records, when specifically authorized by the State Registrar.

(b) The following birth data, in any form and on any medium, in the possession of the Department, local health departments, or local register of deeds offices shall not be public records pursuant to Chapter 132 of the General Statutes: the names of children and parents, the addresses of parents (other than county of residence and postal code), and the social security numbers of parents. Access to copies and abstracts of these data shall be provided in accordance with G.S. 130A-99, Chapter 161 of the General Statutes, and this section. All other birth data shall be public records pursuant to Chapter 132 of the General Statutes. All birth records and data are State property and shall be managed only in accordance with official disposition instructions prepared by the Department of Cultural Resources. The application of this Chapter is subject to the provisions of Article 1 of Chapter 121 of the General Statutes, the North Carolina Archives and History Act. The State Registrar and other officials authorized to issue certified copies of vital records shall provide copies or abstracts of vital records, except those described in subsections (d), (e), (f) and ~~(g)~~, ~~(g)~~ of this section, to any person upon request.

(c) The State Registrar and other officials authorized to issue certified copies of vital records shall provide certified copies of vital records, except those described in subsections (d), (e), (f), and ~~(g)~~, ~~(g)~~ of this section, only to the following:

- (1) A person requesting a copy of the person's own vital records or that of the person's spouse, ~~child, parent, brother or sister; sibling, direct ancestor or descendant, or stepparent or stepchild;~~
- (2) A person seeking information for a legal determination of personal or property rights; or

(3) An authorized agent, attorney or legal representative of a person described above.

(c1) A funeral director or funeral service licensee shall be entitled upon request to a certified copy of a death certificate.

(d) Copies, certified copies or abstracts of birth certificates of adopted persons shall be provided in accordance with G.S. 48-9-107.

(e) Copies or abstracts of the health and medical information contained on birth certificates shall be provided only to a person requesting a copy of the health and medical information contained on the person's own birth certificate, a person authorized by that person, or a person who will use the information for medical research purposes. Copies of or abstracts from any computer or microform database which contains individual-specific health or medical birth data, whether the database is maintained by the Department, a local health department, or any other public official, shall be provided only to an individual requesting his or her own data, a person authorized by that individual, or a person who will use the information for medical research purposes. The State Registrar shall adopt rules providing for the use of this information for medical research purposes. The rules shall, at a minimum, require a written description of the proposed use of the data, including protocols for protecting confidentiality of the data.

(f) Copies, certified copies or abstracts of new birth certificates issued to persons in the federal witness protection program shall be provided only to a person requesting a copy of the person's own birth certificate and that person's supervising federal marshall.

(g) No copies, certified copies or abstracts of vital records shall be provided to a person purporting to request copies, certified copies or abstracts of that person's own vital records upon determination that the person whose vital records are being requested is deceased.

(h) A certified copy issued under the provisions of this section shall have the same evidentiary value as the original and shall be prima facie evidence of the facts stated in the document. The State Registrar may appoint agents who shall have the authority to issue certified copies under a facsimile signature of the State Registrar. These copies shall have the same evidentiary value as those issued by the State Registrar.

(i) Fees for issuing any copy of a vital record or for conducting a search of the files when no copy is made shall be as established in G.S. ~~130A-93.1~~, 130A-93.1 and G.S. 161-10.

(j) No person shall prepare or issue any certificate which purports to be an official certified copy of a vital record except as authorized in this Article or the rules."

Section 2. G.S. 130A-93.1 reads as rewritten:

"§ 130A-93.1. Fees for vital records copies or search; automation fund.

(a) The State Registrar shall collect, process, and utilize fees for services as follows:

- (1) A fee not to exceed ten dollars (\$10.00) shall be charged for issuing any copy of a vital record or for conducting a routine search of the files for the record when no copy is made. When certificates are issued or searches conducted by local agencies using databases

maintained by the State Registrar, the local agency shall charge this fee and shall forward five dollars (\$5.00) of this fee to the State Registrar for purposes established in subsection (b) of this section.

- (2) A fee not to exceed ten dollars (\$10.00) shall be charged in addition to the fee charged under subdivision (1) of this subsection and to all shipping and commercial charges when expedited service is specifically requested.
- (2a) The fee for a copy of a computer or microform database shall not exceed the cost to the agency of making and providing the copy.
- (3) Except as provided in subsection ~~(b)~~, (b) of this section, fees collected under this subsection shall be used by the Department for public health purposes.

(b) The Vital Records Automation Account is established as a nonreverting account within the Department. Five dollars (\$5.00) of each fee collected pursuant to subdivision (a)(1) shall be credited to this Account. The Department shall use the revenue in the Account to fully automate and maintain the vital records system. When funds sufficient to fully automate and maintain the system have accumulated in the Account, fees shall no longer be credited to the Account but shall be used as specified in subdivision ~~(a)(3)~~ (a)(3) of this section."

Section 3. This act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 26th day of June, 1997.

s/ Marc Basnight
President Pro Tempore of the Senate

s/ Harold J. Brubaker
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ James B. Hunt, Jr.
Governor

Approved 4:20 p.m. this 27th day of June, 1997