

H.629

An act relating to a study committee to examine laws related to the administration and issuance of vital records

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. VITAL RECORDS STUDY COMMITTEE; REPORT

(a) Creation and membership. There is created a Vital Records Study

Committee composed of the following members:

(1) the Commissioner of Health or designee;

(2) the State Archivist or designee;

(3) a Probate judge appointed by the Chief Justice of the Vermont

Supreme Court;

(4) one municipal clerk designated by the Vermont Municipal Clerks'

and Treasurers' Association; and

(5) one municipal clerk designated by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, who is the clerk of a municipality that is not a member of the Vermont Municipal Clerks' and Treasurers' Association.

(b) Powers and duties. The Committee shall study Vermont's laws governing the administration and issuance of vital records and best practices in other jurisdictions with regard to the administration and issuance of vital records, and recommend proposed legislation to reform Vermont's vital records laws. At a minimum, the Committee's recommendations shall address the following issues:

(1) the persons who should be entitled to receive certified copies of birth and death certificates and the process and evidence used to verify the identity of such persons;

(2) the collection and maintenance of information about persons who request certified copies of vital records;

(3) the persons who should have authority to issue certified copies of vital records and the process and standards under which such persons should be granted such authority and audited for compliance;

(4) physical requirements and security standards for storage of vital record certificates and related supplies;

(5) whether the existing process for filing and registering birth certificates should be streamlined;

(6) the penalties that should be associated with fraudulent activities related to vital records;

(7) which vital records or specific information contained in vital records should be designated confidential and any exceptions to confidentiality that should be created;

(8) rulemaking that the Department of Health should be required to carry out related to the administration and issuance of vital records;

(9) appropriate fees for certified and informational copies of vital records; and

(10) effective dates and any transition provisions needed to implement the Committee's recommendations.

(c) Assistance. The Committee shall receive technical assistance from the Office of the Secretary of State and from the Department of Health. The Committee may consult with and shall have the assistance of the Office of Legislative Council.

(d) Report. On or before November 15, 2016, the Committee shall submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Government Operations with its findings and recommendations for proposed legislation.

(e) Meetings; selection of chair.

(1) The Probate judge appointed by the Chief Justice to serve on the Committee shall call the first meeting of the Committee to occur on or before June 15, 2016.

(2) The Committee shall select a chair from among its members at the first meeting.

(3) A majority of the membership of the Committee shall constitute a quorum.

(f) Termination. The Committee shall cease to exist on January 15, 2017.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.