

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Senate Committee on Health and Welfare

**FROM:** Vermont Department of Health

**DATE:** April 17, 2026

**SUBJECT:** H. 657 – An act relating to various programming and requirements within the Department for Children and Families

The Department of Health has reviewed H. 657, particularly the changes in Sections 4 and 5 of the bill that propose to add 33 V.S.A § 4908 (d)(2)(B) and 18 V.S.A. § 5107(b)(3), which permit an unaccompanied youth to obtain a vital event certificate at no charge and without the consent of a parent or guardian.

The Department has no concerns about the goal of providing unaccompanied youth with access to certified copies of vital event certificates. However, we do not believe additional statutory authority is needed. The Department already allows an unaccompanied youth to obtain certified copies of their vital records (their own birth, marriage or divorce certificates) pursuant to the [Vital Records Rule](#), section 4.3. Pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 5017, the fee for this record is waived for individuals, including unaccompanied youth, attesting to homelessness.

The Department would also like to note that, even if H. 657 authorizes unaccompanied youth to obtain vital events certificates without cost, additional forms will still be required to obtain the certificates. Under the existing process, an unaccompanied youth is eligible to receive a certified copy of a vital event certificate if the unaccompanied youth and a legal representative of a homeless services provider complete and sign the [Affidavit of Homeless Status](#), which establishes the youth's identity. This affidavit to establish identity is necessary to meet the requirements of 18 V.S.A. § 5016(b)(1) and to prevent an unauthorized individual from obtaining certified copies of an unaccompanied youth's vital event certificates.





The Affidavit of Homeless Status is submitted with a copy of the [Application for Certified Copy of Vermont Birth or Death Certificate](#). Requests may be made by a person experiencing homelessness, who can verify their status as a homeless person. A “homeless person” has the same meaning as defined in 42 U.S.C. 113022, which includes unaccompanied youth.

If the language adding 33 V.S.A § 4908 (d)(2)(B) and 18 V.S.A. § 5107(b)(3), remains in the bill, the Affidavit of Homeless Status as described above will still be required for an unaccompanied youth to obtain a certified copy of their own birth certificate or other vital record (marriage or divorce certificates).

Thank you for your consideration and your work to date on this important topic.

