

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2056

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE,  
APRIL 4, 1991

**Brief Description:** Making major changes to the regulation and provision of vital statistics.

**SPONSORS:** House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representative Braddock; by request of Department of Health).

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE**

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators West, Chairman; L. Smith, Vice Chairman; Amondson, Johnson, L. Kreidler, Niemi, and Wojahn.

**Staff:** Suzanne Brown (786-7483)

**Hearing Dates:** April 3, 1991; April 4, 1991

**BACKGROUND:**

Current Washington state vital record laws are not in compliance with federal public health recommendations. In addition, these statutes do not establish a process whereby vital records can be transmitted from the Department of Health to local health departments.

**SUMMARY:**

Vital records compiled by the state Board of Health are required to include at least the items recommended by the federal agency responsible for national vital statistics. The State Board of Health may require by rule additional birth and delivery information that are necessary for statistical study. This additional birth certificate information must be treated in a confidential manner. The State Board of Health may delete birth certificate items that are not deemed necessary for statistical study.

Vital records information may be filed and registered by photographic, electronic or other means prescribed by the state registrar. No vital records certificate is complete or correct unless all requested information is supplied or omitted items are satisfactorily explained.

The Department of Health is authorized to prescribe by rule the schedule and system for electronic and hard copy transmission of vital records certificates and documents.

Statutory responsibilities governing birth certificate preparation, filing and registration are clarified.

The Department of Health, in mutual agreement with a local health officer, may authorize a local registrar to access the statewide birth or death data base and issue a certified copy of the birth or death certificate from the electronic data base. The Department of Health may bill local registrars for line fees associated with accessing the electronic data base.

The statute governing the contents and confidentiality of birth, death, marriage, divorce decrees, annulment or separate maintenance certificates are repealed.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** requested April 2, 1991

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SENATE AMENDMENTS:**

The statutory responsibilities governing birth certificate preparation, filing and registration are deleted.

The Department of Health may bill local registrars for only direct line fees associated with accessing the electronic data base.

Local registrars in health districts or departments containing a city of the first class, such as Seattle or Spokane, are no longer required to possess an original certificate or its exact reproduction in order to issue a new birth, death or fetal death certificate.

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

Current electronic technology offers the potential for a faster and more efficient vital records system. The use of an electronic data base and vital records system will provide better access and vital records services for both consumers and service providers.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** PRO: Elizabeth Ward, Teresa Jennings, Dept. of Health;  
Bea Kelleigh, Seattle King County Dept. of Health