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**SENATE BILL 5030**

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**State of Washington 69th Legislature 2025 Regular Session**

**By** Senator C. Wilson

AN ACT Relating to improving access to educational services by reducing barriers to obtaining vital records and allowing alternative forms of documentation; amending RCW 70.58A.560; adding a new section to chapter 43.216 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28A.225 RCW; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that reducing barriers to enrollment in early learning programs and public schools will increase enrollment and well-being for students and families. The legislature finds that fees to obtain vital records, including birth certificates, present a burden to families earning lower incomes. The legislature therefore resolves to improve access to education services by waiving fees to obtain birth certificates for families receiving certain types of public assistance and allowing alternative forms of documentation for enrollment.

**Sec.**  RCW 70.58A.560 and 2019 c 148 s 24 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The department and local registrars shall charge a fee of ((~~twenty-five dollars~~)) $25 for a certification or informational copy of a vital record or for a search of the vital records system when no matching record was identified, except as provided in subsection (2) of this section.

(2) The department and local registrars may not charge a fee for issuing a certification of:

(a) A vital record for use in connection with a claim for compensation or pension pending before the veterans administration;

(b) The death of a sex offender, for use by a law enforcement agency in maintaining a registered sex offender database; ((~~or~~))

(c) The death of any offender, requested by a county clerk or court in the state for purposes of extinguishing the offender's legal financial obligation; or

(d) The birth of a child, requested by a parent or guardian who has a child who is a member of an assistance unit that is eligible for or receiving basic food benefits under the federal supplemental nutrition assistance program or the state food assistance program and is enrolling the child in an early learning program as defined in RCW 43.216.010 or a public school as defined in RCW 28A.150.010. Eligibility for benefits described in this subsection can be proven through, among other methods, a benefits letter or unexpired benefits card with a corresponding piece of identification.

(3) The department may not charge a fee for issuing a birth certification for homeless persons as defined in RCW 43.185C.010 living in state.

(4) The department and local registrars may charge an electronic payment fee, in addition to the ((~~twenty-five dollar~~)) $25 fee for certification and informational copy of vital records or for a search of the vital records system, in cases where payment is made by credit card, charge card, debit card, smart card, stored value card, federal wire, automatic clearinghouse system, or other electronic communication.

(5) Local registrars shall keep a true and correct account of all fees received under this section for the issuance of certifications and informational copies.

(6) A portion of the ((~~twenty-five dollar~~)) $25 fee collected by the local registrars must be transmitted to the state treasurer on a monthly basis as follows:

(a) ((~~Thirteen dollars~~)) $13 for each birth certification and birth informational copy issued;

(b) ((~~Thirteen dollars~~)) $13 for each first copy of a death certification and death informational copy; and

(c) ((~~Twenty dollars~~)) $20 for each additional death certification and death informational copy.

(7) For each fee turned over to the state treasurer by the local registrars, the state treasurer shall:

(a) Pay the department ((~~two dollars~~)) $2 of each fee for birth certifications and birth informational copies and first copies of death certifications and death informational copies;

(b) Pay the department ((~~nine dollars~~)) $9 of each fee for additional death certifications and death informational copies; and

(c) Hold ((~~eleven dollars~~)) $11 of each fee in the death investigations account established under RCW 43.79.445, except for an heirloom birth certification issued under RCW 70.58A.530.

(8) ((~~Eleven dollars~~)) $11 of the ((~~twenty-five dollar~~)) $25 fee collected by the department for certifications and informational copies issued by the department must be transmitted to the state treasurer for the death investigations account established under RCW 43.79.445.

(9) The department of children, youth, and families shall set a fee for an heirloom birth certification established under RCW 70.58A.530 for the children's trust fund established under RCW 43.121.100. The department shall collect the fee established under this subsection when issuing an heirloom birth certification and transmit the fees collected to the state treasurer for credit to the children's trust fund.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.216 RCW under the subchapter heading "early childhood education and assistance" to read as follows:

The department shall adopt a rule that requires early childhood education and assistance program contractors and providers to accept birth certificates, passports, and alternative documents to show a child's age or date of birth for the purposes of enrollment. Alternative documents include, but are not limited to, a religious, hospital, or physician's certificate showing the date of birth, an entry in a family bible, an adoption record, an affidavit from a parent, or a previously verified school record.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28A.225 RCW to read as follows:

The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall adopt a rule that requires public schools to accept birth certificates, passports, and alternative documents to show a child's age or date of birth for the purposes of enrollment. Alternative documents include, but are not limited to, a religious, hospital, or physician's certificate showing the date of birth, an entry in a family bible, an adoption record, an affidavit from a parent, or a previously verified school record.

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