



RI Department of Health
Three Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5097

TTY: 771
www.health.ri.gov

March 7, 2024

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley, Chair
House Committee on State Government & Elections
State House
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H 7663 – An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Vital Records

Dear Chair Shanley:

Please accept this letter of support for H 7663, legislation that would require the Rhode Island Department of Health's (RIDOH's) Center for Vital Records to ensure that the records are accessible to the local registrars and grant local registrars the authority to issue certified copies of certificates and records. This legislation, which was introduced by the Rhode Island Secretary of State, would take effect upon passage.

Currently, at the end of each calendar year, original records of births and marriages that have occurred 100 years or more from the date of transfer and deaths that have occurred 50 years or more from the date of transfer, shall be permanently transferred by the RIDOH Center for Vital Records to the custody of the Rhode Island State Archives under the Secretary of State.

H 7663 would allow that, before transferring the records, which are in electronic format, to the state archives, the Center for Vital Records' records shall ensure that an electronic copy of the records is provided to all local registrars to issue accurate copies, or certified copies, to the public. Amendments to records on file with the local registrar, which are not available in electronic format, would be forwarded upon amendment to the local registrar to issue accurate copies, or certified copies, to the public. Local registrars would, upon request, issue a certified copy of any certificate or record in his or her custody or to which the registrar has access, only in a form and fees charged that shall be prescribed by the state director of health or the state archives under the control of the Secretary of State, following transfer.

RIDOH thanks the Secretary of State, the sponsors of H 7663, and Rhode Island's local registers for working together to propose these important amendments to the current law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Utpala Bandy", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right. The word "for" is written in smaller blue ink below the signature.

Utpala Bandy, MD, MPH
Interim Director

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on State Government & Elections
The Honorable Terri Cortvriend
Nicole McCarty, Chief Legal Counsel
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy