
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Senator Dr. Akilah Weber Pierson, Chair

BILL NO: SB 1186
AUTHOR: Seyarto
VERSION: February 19, 2026
HEARING DATE: April 15, 2026
CONSULTANT: Margarita Niemann

SUBJECT: Expedited birth certificates upon adoption

SUMMARY: Requires the State Registrar to establish a new birth certificate within 11 weeks upon receipt of either a report of adoption from any court of record for any child born in California or a readoption order.

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), and sets forth its powers and duties, including duties as the State Registrar related to vital records and health statistics. [HSC §102100, et seq.]
- 2) Requires the certificate of live birth to include only the following information:
 - a) Full name and sex of the child;
 - b) Date of birth, including month, day, hour, and year;
 - c) Place of birth;
 - d) Full name, birthplace, and date of birth of each parent, including month, day, and year, and the parental relationship of the parent to the child;
 - e) Multiple births and birth order of multiple births;
 - f) Signature, and relationship to the child, of a parent or other informant, and date signed;
 - g) Name, title, and mailing address of the attending physician and surgeon or principal attendant, signature, and certification of live birth by the attending physician and surgeon or principal attendant or certifier, date signed, and name and title of the certifier, if other than the attending physician and surgeon or principal attendant;
 - h) Date accepted for registration and signature of local registrar;
 - i) A state birth certificate number and local registration district and number; and,
 - j) A blank space for entry of the date of death with a caption reading "Date of Death". [HSC §102425(a)]
- 3) Requires the clerk of the court to complete a report and forward the report to the State Registrar within five days after a decree of adoption has been entered declaring a child legally adopted. Requires the report to be forward within five days after an interlocutory decree of adoption becomes a final decree of adoption, and not earlier. [HSC §102625]
- 4) Requires the State Registrar to establish a new birth certificate upon receipt of either:
 - a) A report of adoption from any court of record that has jurisdiction of the child in this state, another state, the District of Columbia, in any territory of the U.S., or in any foreign country, for any child born in California and whose certificate of birth is on file in the office of the State Registrar; or
 - b) A readoption order issued. [HSC §102635]
- 5) Prohibits, when requested by the adopting parent, the State Registrar from establishing a new certificate. [HSC §102640]

- 6) Requires the new birth certificate to bear the name of the child as shown in the report of the adoption, the names and ages of his or her adopting parents, the date and place of birth, and prohibits reference to be made in the new birth certificate to the adoption of the child. Requires the new certificate to be identical with a birth certificate registered for the birth of a child of natural parents, except, when requested by the adopting parents, prohibits the new birth certificate from including the specific name and address of the hospital or other facility where the birth occurred, the color and race of the parents, or both. [HSC §102645]
- 7) Requires the new birth certificate to supplant any certificate previously registered, and requires it to be the only birth certificate open to public inspection. [HSC §102680]

This bill: Requires the State Registrar to establish a new birth certificate within 11 weeks upon receipt of either a report of adoption from any court of record for any child born in California or a readoption order.

FISCAL EFFECT: This bill has not yet been analyzed by a fiscal committee.

COMMENTS:

- 1) *Author's statement.* According to the author, when an adoption is finalized, families can wait close to a year for a new birth certificate that reflects their child's legal name and new status. During this period, parents may struggle to enroll their child in school, access health care, obtain identification or travel documents, or correctly claim their child on their taxes. These delays add stress at the very moment when a child needs stability and reassurance the most in their new home, while undermining the sense of belonging that a finalized adoption is meant to provide. This bill sets an eleven-week deadline for the State Registrar to issue a new birth certificate after receiving an adoption report or readoption order, so that California's adoptive families can move forward with accurate documentation and their children can fully integrate into their new families without unnecessary bureaucratic delay.
- 2) *The State Registrar.* CDPH's Vital Records Registration Branch is charged with maintaining a uniform, comprehensive, and continuous index for all birth, death, fetal death, and marriage events which occur in California, of which there are over one million each year. Certified copies of vital records are available from CDPH, 58 county recorders, and 61 local health jurisdictions. CDPH maintains, and can provide, birth and death records from 1905 to the present. For marriage records, CDPH maintains and can provide those from 1946 to the present, with some years excluded. CDPH uses the data collected through vital records for public health research and planning. Prior to 2000, CDPH created a replacement birth certificate by photocopying the public portion of the original record to amend registrant and parent information. The unaltered original certificate was sealed and archived. After 2000, birth certificates are altered electronically and original records are stored in an internal electronic system, on microfiche, or at the State Records Center. CDPH maintains all copies of original birth certificates. When a new birth certificate is created by CDPH, they send a "sealing notice" to the county of birth, instructing the county to replace the original certificate with the new certificate. Counties are instructed to confidentially destroy or delete all other records.
- 3) *Amendment of records following an adoption.* CDPH utilizes the Electronic Birth Registration-Amendment Request Portal to create a Court Report of Adoption form to amend a birth certificate after an adoption has been finalized. The clerk of the California Superior

Court granting the adoption is required to complete the Court Report of Adoption and send it to CDPH. The new birth certificate will be prepared by the vital records office in the child's state of birth. If the adoptee was born in another state, CDPH will forward the Court Report of Adoption to the vital records office in the state of birth to prepare the new birth certificate. The information provided in the Court Report of Adoption is used to locate and seal the original birth record of the adopted child and to prepare the new birth certificate. The Report contains the child's original birth name, sex, date and place of birth, physician's or attendant's name, and the natural parents' names, as well as the child's new name and information about the adoptive parents. When CDPH processes the adoption papers, they will prepare the new birth certificate and provide one certified copy of the new certificate at no cost, as it is included in the court fee paid at the time the adoption petition is filed. The adoptive parents do not have to request CDPH to prepare the new certificate unless they want additional copies, as the court clerks are required to do so. CDPH's website states that the average time to process an amendment request is currently 9 to 11 weeks. For incomplete requests, it takes approximately 12 to 14 weeks from the date received to issue a letter requesting the outstanding required documentation. Once the required documents are received, it takes an additional 8 to 10 weeks for a request to be completed and mailed from their office. According to the National Council for Adoption, in 2023, there were an estimated 10,597 children adopted in California.

- 4) *Related legislation.* SB 381 (Wahab of 2026) authorizes the disclosure of an original birth certificate to an adopted person, or descendant of a deceased adopted person, requires the State Registrar to provide a copy of the original birth certificate to those persons, and establishes a process to request an original birth certificate. SB 381 also requires the State Registrar to remove the adopted parents' exception that requires the certificate to omit the facility of birth and the race and color of the parents. *SB 381 is pending in the Assembly.*
- 5) *Prior legislation.* AB 1332 (Evans of 2007), among other provisions, would have required the State Registrar to establish procedures for the issuance of an expedited amended birth certificate within 30 days following an adoption, and would have authorized a fee to be charged for the issuance of that certificate. *AB 1332 was held on the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.*
- 6) *Support.* The Alliance for Children's Rights writes that without access to the new birth certificate, parents may struggle to enroll their child in school, obtain health care, secure identification, or arrange travel. Families are forced to navigate months of avoidable stress and uncertainty simply to access this critical document. This bill would establish a clear timeline to ensure families have timely access to services as they transition to permanency.
- 7) *Amendments.* The author requests the Committee approve amendments to require the State Registrar to notify the court within 14 weeks if the report of adoption is incomplete, and to require the State Registrar to establish a new birth certificate within 11 weeks upon receipt of a completed report of adoption, as follows:

(a)(1) If the State Registrar determines that the report of adoption is incomplete, the State Registrar shall notify the court within 14 weeks requesting the missing required documentation. The State Registrar shall establish a new birth certificate within 11 weeks of receipt of the required documentation.

SUPPORT AND OPPOSITION:

Support: Alliance for Children's Rights

Oppose: None received.

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