

Date of Hearing: June 23, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Mia Bonta, Chair
SB 1186 (Seyarto) – As Amended April 20, 2026

SENATE VOTE: 33-0

SUBJECT: Expedited birth certificates upon adoption.

SUMMARY: Requires the State Registrar (SR) to establish a new birth certificate within 11 weeks upon receipt of a report of adoption or a readoption order. Requires, if the SR determines that the report of adoption or readoption order is incomplete, the SR to notify the court that issued the report of adoption or readoption order within 14 weeks to request the missing required documentation and requires the SR to establish a new birth certificate within 11 weeks of receipt of the required documentation.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the State Department of Public Health (DPH), and sets forth its powers and duties, including duties as the SR related to vital records and health statistics. [Health and Safety Code (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 SR 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 SR 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 United States (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 SR; or
 - b) A readoption order issued pursuant to 8) of Existing Law below. [HSC § 102635]
- 5) Prohibits, when requested by the adopting parent, the SR from establishing a new birth 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]
- 8) Requires a state resident who has finalized an intercountry adoption in a foreign country to file the petition to readopt within the earlier of 60 days of the adoptee's entry into the U.S. or the adoptee's 16th birthday in order to establish a record by which an adoptee can prove the facts of the foreign adoption. Requires the clerk of the court to submit to the SR the order granting the petition to readopt. Requires the SR issue a delayed registration of birth that lists the adoptive parent or parents as the child's legal parent or parents. [Family Code § 8919]

FISCAL EFFECT: According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, unknown ongoing General Fund costs, potentially tens of thousands, for DPH to comply with the timelines.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **PURPOSE OF THIS BILL.** 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. The author continues that 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. The author further states that 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. The author continues that this bill sets an 11-week deadline for the SR 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) BACKGROUND.

- a) **Adoption by the numbers in California.** According to a report by the National Council for Adoption titled, “*Adoption by the Numbers,*” in 2023, an estimated 10,597 children were adopted in California. This increased 11.23% from the previous year. In 2023, adoptions from foster care made up 59.5% of total adoptions, while private domestic adoptions made up 39.42%, and intercountry adoptions made up 1.09%. The total number of adoptions from foster care was 6,305, which increased 1.14% from the previous year. The total number of private domestic adoptions was 4,177, which increased 32.23% from the previous year. Lastly, the total number of intercountry adoptions was 115, which decreased 14.18% from the previous year.
- b) **DPH Vital Records.** DPH registers adoptions for individuals born in California, regardless of where the individual was adopted, and individuals adopted in California who were born outside the U.S., territories of the U.S., or Canada. DPH’s Vital Records Registration Branch is charged with maintaining a uniform, comprehensive, and continuous index for all birth, death, fetal death, and marriage vital events which occur in California, of which there are over one million each year. Certified copies of vital records are available from DPH, 58 county recorders, and 61 local health jurisdictions. DPH maintains, and can provide, birth and death records from 1905 to the present. For marriage records, DPH maintains and can provide those from 1946 to the present, with some years excluded. DPH uses the data collected through vital records for public health research and planning.
- c) **Adoptee birth certificates.** Under existing law, the SR is required to issue a new birth certificate upon receiving either a court report of adoption or a readoption order, unless otherwise requested by the adopting parents.

When a new birth certificate is established by DPH, 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. DPH utilizes the Electronic Birth Registration-Amendment Request Portal for adoptive families to complete a Court Report of Adoption form to amend a birth certificate after an adoption has been finalized. The amendment request package must be printed, certified by the court, and submitted to DPH.

State law does not specify a timeframe for the SR to establish a new birth certificate after adoption or readoption. According to information provided by the author, some families report waiting 49–52 weeks for an updated birth certificate, long after the court has finalized the adoption. During this gap, parents may be unable to enroll children in school, secure medical care, obtain passports or other identification, or claim the child correctly for tax purposes.

According to DPH’s website, the average time to process an amendment to a vital record is 9 to 11 weeks. Processing times for incomplete requests vary. If a request is incomplete, DPH sends a letter requesting the outstanding required documentation. Once

the required documents are received, it takes 8 to 10 weeks for the request to be completed and mailed out.

This bill requires the SR to establish a new birth certificate within 11 weeks of receiving either a report of adoption or a readoption order, for children born in California. Further, if the SR determines that a report of adoption or readoption order is complete, this bill requires the SR to notify the court that issued the report or order to request missing required documentation within 14 weeks. This bill requires the SR to establish a new birth certificate within 11 weeks of receipt of the required documentation.

- 3) **SUPPORT.** The Alliance for Children’s Rights (ACR) writes in support of this bill, stating that finalizing an adoption is a profound milestone that gives a child the permanence, stability, and sense of belonging they deserve. ACR continues that many adoptive families encounter unexpected delays when seeking an updated birth certificate for their newly adopted child, undermining what should be a seamless transition into family life. ACR states that after the adoption is legally finalized, the SR issues a new birth certificate for the child. ACR contends that California law does not specify how quickly this must occur, leading to inconsistent processing times across the state. ACR notes that without timely access to this essential document, parents may struggle to enroll their child in school, obtain health care, secure identification, or arrange travel. ACR continues that families are forced to navigate months of avoidable stress and uncertainty simply to access this critical document. ACR concludes that establishing clear timelines for birth certificate issuance under this bill ensures families have timely access to services as they transition to permanency.
- 4) **RELATED LEGISLATION.** SB 381 (Wahab) would permit an adopted person aged 18 years or older, or, if the adopted person is deceased, their descendant, to obtain their original birth certificate upon request, beginning on July 1, 2028; would require the SR to establish and publicize the availability of a nonbinding contact preference form, which birth parents may submit to indicate whether they wish to be contacted when an original birth certificate is released; and would delete certain categories of information which currently may be omitted from a new birth certificate established after a child is adopted. SB 381 is pending a hearing in the Assembly Health Committee.
- 5) **PREVIOUS LEGISLATION.** AB 1332 (Evans) of 2007, among other provisions, would have required the SR 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) **AMENDMENTS.** According to information provided by DPH, the SR generally works directly with the applicant for a new birth certificate, not the court. Requiring the SR to notify the court that issued the report of adoption or readoption order to request the missing documentation could result in delays. The Committee may wish to amend this bill to require the SR to notify the court or applicant as the SR deems necessary to request the missing required documentation.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Alliance for Children's Rights

Aspiranet

California Alliance of Child and Family Services

Opposition

None on file

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