



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

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House Bill 5241- An Act Concerning Delayed Birth Registration

The Department of Public Health is in favor of House Bill No. 5241. The Department thanks the Public Health Committee for raising the Department's Bill.

A delayed birth certificate is one that is filed one year or more after a birth occurs. Under existing Connecticut law, the requirements for applying for a delayed birth certificate are very weak. An applicant merely needs to provide three affidavits to the vital records registrar of the town where the birth is claimed to have taken place. Unlike other states, Connecticut statute does not require the applicant to submit documentary evidence to support the delayed birth event. Under this proposal, an applicant will need to submit such evidence.

The reasons to strengthen the requirements for filing a delayed birth certificate are many. Delayed birth certificates have been used as a mechanism to commit many serious crimes such as identity theft, imposter fraud, passport scams and others. The Department is aware of several incidents in which it issued a delayed birth certificate, later to find out that it had been used for fraudulent or nefarious activities. Many of the cases involved persons who were in the United States illegally, and created false identities by obtaining a delayed birth certificate. The Department had also issued a delayed birth certificate for Carlina White, the woman who was kidnapped from a New York City hospital as an infant, and raised in Connecticut.

Identity theft, imposter fraud, passport scams, and kidnapping are extremely serious crimes, yet they are also related to even larger issues such as national security and human trafficking. The US Department of Health and Human Services as well as the Department of State's Passport Services perceive delayed birth registration as a loophole waiting to be exploited.

Given the importance of these issues, there is a need to revise Connecticut's delayed birth registration law to enable the Department to scrutinize applicants more stringently, and possibly prevent potential crimes. The measures contained in this proposal will tighten control over the belated birth registration process, while at the same time, accommodate those persons, who through no fault of their own, do not have an official birth certificate, and are therefore unable to obtain benefits and services.

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