



TOWN OF NEWTOWN

House Bill 5421

An Act Exempting Death Certificates of Minors from Public Disclosure

Good Morning Senators Musto and Representative Jutila and to the rest of the distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. My name is Debbie Aurelia and I serve as the Town Clerk and the Registrar of Vital Statistics for the Town of Newtown.

I am testifying today in support of the *concept* of House Bill 5421, but ask that it be amended to *permanently* restrict access to *all* death certificates, not just for minors and to take a closer look at House Bill 6157, An Act Concerning Personally Identifying information on Certifications of Marriage and Death.

From the horrific tragedy in Newtown, *awareness* has come that we need to protect the personal information of *all* residents in our Towns. The media has repeatedly contacted my office requesting copies of all the death records. They want to know where the victims are buried and how they died. This is an *extreme* invasion of personal privacy.

In the 8 years I have been in office I have seen only relatives, authorized agencies such as funeral home, social security administration and attorneys requesting these documents and urge that we officially change the law to reflect the *only apparent* need for full access.

What we want to accomplish is this:

- Restrict access of the complete Death *and* Marriage Certificates to only immediate family/authorized agency/attorney.
- Offer a certified registration of event to those who do not fall under the same or similar guidelines already established for issuing birth certificates.

Death and Marriage certificates are official State documents and are only "Vital" to the parties named on them, used for Probate, the funeral home; apply for a name change on a driver's license, passports, social security cards, and health insurance enrollment. Providing entire certificates will open the door to identity theft. Submitted testimony from the former Town Clerk of Newtown states she had personal knowledge that a death certificate was used to assume someone's identity. Also threats and intimidation that the families have already suffered.

I am a lifelong resident of Newtown, my family has been here for 60 years, my son was married here and my granddaughter is being raised here. I'm a member of the Sandy Hook Ladies Auxiliary who aided the families of Sandy Hook Elementary School on December 14th. My fiancé is the Chief of the Sandy Hook Volunteer Fire Department his daughter is the EMS Captain for SHVFD. who both were among the first responders.

I am personally and professionally invested in my Town. And I believe the potential risks of disclosing these documents to the general public are far greater than any possible benefit.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I welcome any questions you have at this time.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie A Aurelia, CMC, CCTC
Town of Newtown

Unshaded Area to be completed by the Medical Certifier.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

STATE FILE NUMBER (For State Use only. Do not write in this box)

Boxes 36-40 to be completed for funeral pronouncements.

Main form containing 55 numbered sections for death certification, including personal information, cause of death, and administrative details.

For use by Physician or Institution

ADMINISTRATIVE PURPOSES

To Whom It May Concern:

The Connecticut Department of Public Health has requested that we not record death certificates on the Land Records.

Reasons why it is inappropriate are:

- ❖ There is information on the certificate that should not be available to all, e.g. Social Security Number.
- ❖ The death certificate does not show ownership of any property.
- ❖ Vital Records are already filed with all the Vital Statistics Offices, which is the appropriate place for them. Therefore, there is no need to re-file them on the land records.

If you have questions regarding this decision, you may contact:

Beth Frugale, State Registrar of Vital Statistics
860-509-7897 or elizabeth.frugale@ct.gov

OR

Dianne Gustafson, State Department of Public Health
860-509-7950