

Connecticut Town Clerks Association, Inc.

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2013/14 Legislative Committee

TESTIMONY MARCH 14, 2014 Public Health Committee

SUPPORT:

SB 414 *An Act Concerning The Department Of Public Health's Recommendations Concerning Genealogists' Access to Vital Records.*

Good morning Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and the distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Antoinette Spinelli and I am a member of the Connecticut Town Clerks Association - Legislative Committee and the Town Clerk and Registrar of Vital Statistics in Waterbury.

The Connecticut Town Clerks Association fully supports the recommendations from the Department of Public Health which would allow the Registrar of Vital Statistics to schedule appointments, within a reasonable timeframe, so that a genealogist can conduct research of vital records.

Currently, a genealogist visits the Office of Vital Statistics without an appointment and requests access to multiple books and records. A staff member has to assist the genealogist in retrieving these records as well as making the requested copies for them. On many occasions there are staff shortages due to sickness, vacation time, and daily lunch schedules that cause delays for both the genealogist and for other customers who are there requesting copies of vital records, applying for a marriage licenses or requesting a change to a vital record. Most of the Clerk's Offices in our state do not have a separate "Vital Records" Department, so the staff is also assisting customers with land recordings, licenses and absentee ballots during election season.

Allowing the Registrar to schedule an appointment at a time when the office staff could provide better service to the genealogist should cut down on the number of hours the genealogist would have to spend in that office.

We feel that the recommendations in this bill are reasonable and would help us to provide better service to all of our customers. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Respectfully submitted,
Antoinette C. Spinelli, Waterbury Town Clerk and Registrar of Vital Statistics
Member, CTCA Legislative Committee