

Testimony of Representative Ezequiel Santiago
Public Health Committee
Wednesday, March 04, 2015

House Bill #6280, AN ACT CONCERNING FEES FOR GENEALOGY
SEARCHES.

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and members of the Public Health Committee; I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am here in support of House Bill#6280, An Act Concerning Fees for Genealogy Searches.

Genealogy searches allow people to learn invaluable history about themselves, their families, and personal ancestry. Through searches into vital records, we can uncover valuable documents such as birth, death, and immigration records.

Professional genealogist searches typically cost eighty to one-hundred twenty-five dollars per hour. Although it sometimes becomes necessary to have a search done, many individuals and families cannot afford this cost.

The city of Bridgeport regularly receives requests for genealogy searches of its records—up to ten per month. The staff often spends numerous hours searching for the requested documents. This is an invaluable service for those that would otherwise not be able obtain the information.

A fee would allow the recouping of some of the time and resource costs. However, municipalities are currently not allowed to charge a fee for a service that takes up to seven hours for each request. Allowing cities to charge a fee would allow local health departments to deliver a public service at a fraction of the typical cost.

I respectfully ask the committee to pass this bill. It's the right thing to do.