

26:8-63

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY CHECKLIST

Compiled by the NJ State Law Library

LAWS OF: 2014 **CHAPTER:** 87

NJSA: 26:8-63 (Requires issuance of one free copy of a veteran's death certificate to certain authorized persons upon request)

BILL NO: A2184 (Substituted for S1752)

SPONSOR(S) Singleton and others

DATE INTRODUCED: January 16, 2014

COMMITTEE: **ASSEMBLY:** Military and Veterans' Affairs

SENATE: Military and Veterans' Affairs
Budget and Appropriations

AMENDED DURING PASSAGE: Yes

DATE OF PASSAGE: **ASSEMBLY:** June 23, 2014

SENATE: December 1, 2014

DATE OF APPROVAL: January 6, 2015

FOLLOWING ARE ATTACHED IF AVAILABLE:

FINAL TEXT OF BILL (First reprint enacted)

A2184

SPONSOR'S STATEMENT: (Begins on page 2 of introduced bill) Yes

COMMITTEE STATEMENT: **ASSEMBLY:** Yes

SENATE: Yes Military
Budget

(Audio archived recordings of the committee meetings, corresponding to the date of the committee statement, *may possibly* be found at www.njleg.state.nj.us)

FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT: Yes

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE: Yes

S1752

SPONSOR'S STATEMENT: (Begins on page 2 of introduced bill) Yes

COMMITTEE STATEMENT: **ASSEMBLY:** No

SENATE: Yes Military
Budget

(continued)

FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT: No

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE: Yes

VETO MESSAGE: No

GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE ON SIGNING: Yes

FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:

To check for circulating copies, contact New Jersey State Government Publications at the State Library (609) 278-2640 ext.103 or <mailto:refdesk@njstatelib.org>

REPORTS: No

HEARINGS: No

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES: Yes

"Guadagno signs 3 bills to honor, aid vets," Burlington County Times, 1-7-15

LAW/KR

P.L.2014, CHAPTER 87, *approved January 6, 2015*
Assembly, No. 2184 (*First Reprint*)

1 AN ACT concerning veteran death certificates and amending
2 R.S.26:8-63.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

6
7 1. R.S.26:8-63 is amended to read as follows:

8 26:8-63. The State registrar shall:

9 a. Furnish a certification or certified copy of a birth, marriage,
10 civil union, domestic partnership, fetal death or death certificate
11 without fee in the prosecution of any claim for public pension or for
12 military or naval enlistment purposes; and

13 b. Furnish the United States Public Health Service without
14 expense to the State, microfilm or photocopy images of birth,
15 marriage, civil union, domestic partnership, fetal death and death
16 certificates without payment of the fees prescribed in this article;
17 and

18 c. Furnish a certified transcript of any entry in the records of
19 the New Jersey State census without fee for certification in the
20 prosecution of any claim for public pension, for military or naval
21 enlistment purposes; and

22 d. Furnish without fee upon request for administrative use by
23 any city, State or federal agency a certified transcript of any New
24 Jersey State census entry, or a certification or certified copy of a
25 birth, death, fetal death, marriage, civil union or domestic
26 partnership certificate; and

27 e. Furnish without fee upon request a certified copy of a
28 veteran's death certificate to the veteran's legal representative, the
29 executor or administrator of the veteran's estate, or to a family
30 member authorized to obtain a copy of the death certificate pursuant
31 to subsection a. of R.S.26:8-62. No more than one copy of a
32 veteran's death certificate may be provided without fee pursuant to
33 this **[section]** subsection¹; all other copies of the death certificate
34 shall be subject to the statutory fee.

35 ¹As used in this subsection, "fee" includes, but is not limited to,
36 any search, certification, processing, authentication, standard
37 shipping, or other fees that would ordinarily be assessed to furnish a
38 certified copy of a death certificate.¹

39 (cf: P.L.2006, c.103, s.58)

40
41 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Assembly floor amendments adopted June 16, 2014.

A2184 [1R]

2

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4

Requires issuance of one free copy of a veteran's death certificate to certain authorized persons upon request.

ASSEMBLY, No. 2184

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 216th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JANUARY 16, 2014

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman TROY SINGLETON

District 7 (Burlington)

Assemblywoman CLEOPATRA G. TUCKER

District 28 (Essex)

Assemblyman ANTHONY M. BUCCO

District 25 (Morris and Somerset)

Assemblyman JAY WEBBER

District 26 (Essex, Morris and Passaic)

Assemblyman CARMELO G. GARCIA

District 33 (Hudson)

Assemblyman GORDON M. JOHNSON

District 37 (Bergen)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Andrzejczak, Assemblywomen Lampitt, Riley, Assemblymen Mukherji, Moriarty, Assemblywoman Mosquera, Assemblyman DeAngelo, Assemblywomen B.DeCroce, Quijano, Assemblyman C.A.Brown, Assemblywoman Schepisi, Assemblymen Wilson, Ribble, Lagana, Assemblywoman Gove, Assemblymen McKeon and Diegnan

SYNOPSIS

Requires issuance of one free copy of a veteran's death certificate to certain authorized persons upon request.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/17/2014)

A2184 SINGLETON, TUCKER

2

1 AN ACT concerning veteran death certificates and amending
2 R.S.26:8-63.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. R.S.26:8-63 is amended to read as follows:

8 26:8-63. The State registrar shall:

9 a. Furnish a certification or certified copy of a birth, marriage,
10 civil union, domestic partnership, fetal death or death certificate
11 without fee in the prosecution of any claim for public pension or for
12 military or naval enlistment purposes; and

13 b. Furnish the United States Public Health Service without
14 expense to the State, microfilm or photocopy images of birth,
15 marriage, civil union, domestic partnership, fetal death and death
16 certificates without payment of the fees prescribed in this article;
17 and

18 c. Furnish a certified transcript of any entry in the records of
19 the New Jersey State census without fee for certification in the
20 prosecution of any claim for public pension, for military or naval
21 enlistment purposes; and

22 d. Furnish without fee upon request for administrative use by
23 any city, State or federal agency a certified transcript of any New
24 Jersey State census entry, or a certification or certified copy of a
25 birth, death, fetal death, marriage, civil union or domestic
26 partnership certificate; and

27 e. Furnish without fee upon request a certified copy of a
28 veteran's death certificate to the veteran's legal representative, the
29 executor or administrator of the veteran's estate, or to a family
30 member authorized to obtain a copy of the death certificate pursuant
31 to subsection a. of R.S.26:8-62. No more than one copy of a
32 veteran's death certificate may be provided without fee pursuant to
33 this section; all other copies of the death certificate shall be subject
34 to the statutory fee.

35 (cf: P.L.2006, c.103, s.58)

36

37 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

38

39

40 STATEMENT

41

42 This bill would require the State registrar of vital statistics to
43 issue, upon request, one free copy of a deceased veteran's death
44 certificate to the veteran's legal representative, the executor or
45 administrator of the veteran's estate, or to a family member

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

A2184 SINGLETON, TUCKER

3

1 authorized to obtain a copy of the certificate which, under current
2 law, includes a parent or legal guardian, spouse, civil union partner,
3 and any sibling, child, or grandchild of legal age. All additional
4 copies of the veteran's death certificate would be subject to the
5 normal statutory fee.

ASSEMBLY MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2184

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 24, 2014

This bill would require the State registrar of vital statistics to issue, upon request, one free copy of a deceased veteran's death certificate to the veteran's legal representative, the executor or administrator of the veteran's estate, or to a family member authorized to obtain a copy of the certificate which, under current law, includes a parent or legal guardian, spouse, civil union partner, and any sibling, child, or grandchild of legal age. All additional copies of the veteran's death certificate would be subject to the normal statutory fee.

STATEMENT TO
ASSEMBLY, No. 2184

with Assembly Floor Amendments
(Proposed by Assemblyman SINGLETON)

ADOPTED: JUNE 16, 2014

This floor amendment clarifies the types of fees that may not be assessed when providing a free copy of a veteran's death certificate under the bill. These fees include, but are not limited to, search, certification, processing, authentication, standard shipping, or any other fees that would ordinarily be assessed to furnish a certified copy of a death certificate.

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 2184

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 216th LEGISLATURE

DATED: JUNE 26, 2014

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Requires issuance of one free copy of a veteran's death certificate to certain authorized persons upon request.
- Type of Impact:** Potential State and local revenue loss.
- Agencies Affected:** State Registrar of Vital Statistics in the Department of Health.
Local registrars of vital statistics.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Years 1-3</u>
State Revenue	Indeterminate revenue loss, potentially minimal – See comments below
Local Revenue	Minimal or no impact – See comments below

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) finds that the bill may result in an indeterminate reduction in State revenue collected by the State Registrar of Vital Statistics, due to the waiving of fees for copies of veterans' death certificates, but the OLS has insufficient information with which to estimate the revenue impact with reasonable certainty.
- The OLS also finds that the bill may result in an indeterminate reduction in aggregate revenues collected by local registrars of vital statistics. However, the bill may have minimal or no impact on any single local registrar.

BILL DESCRIPTION

Assembly Bill No. 2184 (1R) of 2014 would require the State Registrar of Vital Statistics (State Registrar) in the Department of Health (DOH) to furnish without fee, upon request, one certified copy of a deceased veteran's death certificate to certain authorized persons. Persons authorized to request a free certified copy of the veteran's death certificate include: the veteran's legal representative; the executor or administrator of the veteran's estate; or a family member

authorized to obtain a copy of the certificate which, under current law, includes a parent or legal guardian, spouse, civil union partner, and any sibling, child, or grandchild of legal age.

The bill defines the “fee” to be waived for the free certified copy of a veteran’s death certificate as including, but not limited to, any search, certification, processing, authentication, standard shipping, or other fee that would ordinarily be assessed to furnish a certified copy of a death certificate. The bill provides that all additional copies of the veteran’s death certificate would be subject to the normal statutory fee.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS finds that the bill may result in an indeterminate, potentially minimal, reduction in State revenue collected by the State Registrar of Vital Statistics, but the OLS has insufficient information with which to estimate the revenue impact with reasonable certainty. The bill may also result in an indeterminate reduction in aggregate revenues collected by local registrars of vital statistics. However, the bill may have minimal or no impact on any single local registrar.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that there were approximately 434,000 living veterans in New Jersey in 2012, representing an estimated 6.4 percent of the State’s civilian population age 18 and over. According to the most recently available mortality data from the Center for Health Statistics in the DOH, there are approximately 68,000 deaths in New Jersey each year among individuals age 18 and over, on average. Assuming that the proportion of veterans represented among those deaths is similar to the proportion of veterans in the State’s overall population, one might expect about 4,400 veteran deaths each year. If each of those deaths resulted in at least one request to the State Registrar for a certified copy of a death certificate, and assuming that the State Registrar’s current base fee of \$25.00 for a copy of a death certificate was waived in each of those cases, the fees foregone from those requests would be approximately \$110,000. (Available information from the funeral home industry suggests that multiple certified copies of death certificates are typically requested for each decedent, as they are used for estate settlement, life insurance and other benefit claims, and other activities.) Thus, providing the 4,400 death certificates without collecting a fee might reduce the fee revenue received by the State Registrar by at least \$110,000, annually.

However, this Census-based estimate greatly simplifies the factors affecting the bill’s potential revenue impact. For example, the calculation excludes searches related to veterans whose deaths occurred in previous years, which the OLS has no data to quantify. The OLS also does not have information regarding the actual, unduplicated number of veterans for whom the State Registrar issues at least one certified copy of a death certificate in a given year. Further, the Census-based estimate above cannot account for: the number of certified copies of veterans’ death certificates issued by local registrars, rather than the State registrar; or the number of veterans for whom no certified copies of death certificates are requested. An additional limitation is that the Census data may somewhat understate the proportion of veterans among New Jersey residents, as the Census data exclude individuals in the active-duty military.

Further, the State Registrar currently accepts requests for death certificates via three methods: walk-in orders at the Office of Vital Statistics and Registry; mail orders; or Internet

orders. Internet orders are currently charged the \$25.00 base fee for a single copy of a death certificate plus additional standard fees totaling \$10.00 (an online processing fee of \$5.00 and an online authentication fee of \$5.00; the State Registrar charges a fee of \$12.00 for expedited shipping via United Parcel Service carrier, but does not charge a fee for standard shipping). The OLS has no information regarding the proportion of death certificate requests typically received via Internet orders versus other methods, and cannot estimate the magnitude of any additional revenue losses resulting from waiving the online ordering fees for the free certified copies of veterans' death certificates.

The bill may also result in an indeterminate reduction in aggregate revenues collected by local registrars of vital statistics, as the availability of free copies of death certificates from the State Registrar of Vital Statistics may reduce the volume of veterans' death certificate copies requested from local registrars, for which fees could still be assessed. However, the bill may have minimal or no impact on any single local registrar, assuming that local registrars only process a portion of requests for copies of veterans' death certificates and that the bill's impact would be distributed across all of the State's local registrars.

Finally, information from the funeral home industry suggests that, under certain circumstances, funeral homes ordering certified copies of a veteran's death certificate (typically on behalf of a veteran's family) from the State Registrar or from local registrars currently receive one certified copy at no cost if the copies are ordered through the New Jersey Electronic Death Registration System. Available information does not indicate the precise circumstances under which such free certified copies are currently provided. However, to the extent that free certified copies of veterans' death certificates are already provided, the bill's potential impact on State and local revenues may be significantly reduced or eliminated.

Section: Human Services

*Analyst: Nathan E. Myers
Senior Fiscal Analyst*

*Approved: David J. Rosen
Legislative Budget and Finance Officer*

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).

SENATE MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]
ASSEMBLY, No. 2184

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: SEPTEMBER 18, 2014

The Senate Military and Veterans Affairs Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2184 (1R).

This bill would require the State registrar of vital statistics to issue, upon request, one free copy of a deceased veteran's death certificate to the veteran's legal representative, the executor or administrator of the veteran's estate, or to a family member authorized to obtain a copy of the certificate which, under current law, includes a parent or legal guardian, spouse, civil union partner, and any sibling, child, or grandchild of legal age. All additional copies of the veteran's death certificate would be subject to the normal statutory fee.

This bill is identical to Senate Bill No. 1752 (1R) of 2014-2015 session

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 2184

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 9, 2014

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2184 (1R).

This bill would require the State Registrar of Vital Statistics (State Registrar) in the Department of Health (DOH) to furnish without fee, upon request, one certified copy of a deceased veteran's death certificate to certain authorized persons. Persons authorized to request a free certified copy of the veteran's death certificate include: the veteran's legal representative; the executor or administrator of the veteran's estate; or a family member authorized to obtain a copy of the certificate which, under current law, includes a parent or legal guardian, spouse, civil union partner, and any sibling, child, or grandchild of legal age.

The bill defines the "fee" to be waived for the free certified copy of a veteran's death certificate as including, but not limited to, any search, certification, processing, authentication, standard shipping, or other fee that would ordinarily be assessed to furnish a certified copy of a death certificate. The bill provides that all additional copies of the veteran's death certificate would be subject to the normal statutory fee.

This bill is identical to Senate Bill No. 1752 (1R), as also reported by the committee.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The OLS finds that the bill may result in an indeterminate, potentially minimal, reduction in State revenue collected by the State Registrar of Vital Statistics, but the OLS has insufficient information with which to estimate the revenue impact with reasonable certainty. The bill may also result in an indeterminate reduction in aggregate revenues collected by local registrars of vital statistics. However, the bill may have minimal or no impact on any single local registrar.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that there were approximately 434,000 living veterans in New Jersey in 2012, representing an estimated 6.4 percent of the State's civilian population age 18 and over. According to the most recently available mortality data from the Center for Health Statistics in the DOH, there are approximately 68,000 deaths in New Jersey each year among individuals age 18 and

over, on average. Assuming that the proportion of veterans represented among those deaths is similar to the proportion of veterans in the State's overall population, one might expect about 4,400 veteran deaths each year. If each of those deaths resulted in at least one request to the State Registrar for a certified copy of a death certificate, and assuming that the State Registrar's current base fee of \$25.00 for a copy of a death certificate was waived in each of those cases, the fees foregone from those requests would be approximately \$110,000. Thus, providing the 4,400 death certificates without collecting a fee might reduce the fee revenue received by the State Registrar by at least \$110,000, annually.

However, this Census-based estimate greatly simplifies the factors affecting the bill's potential revenue impact. For example, the calculation excludes searches related to veterans whose deaths occurred in previous years, which the OLS has no data to quantify. The OLS also does not have information regarding the actual, unduplicated number of veterans for whom the State Registrar issues at least one certified copy of a death certificate in a given year. Further, the Census-based estimate above cannot account for: the number of certified copies of veterans' death certificates issued by local registrars, rather than the State registrar; or the number of veterans for whom no certified copies of death certificates are requested. An additional limitation is that the Census data may somewhat understate the proportion of veterans among New Jersey residents, as the Census data exclude individuals in the active-duty military.

Further, the State Registrar currently accepts requests for death certificates via three methods: walk-in orders at the Office of Vital Statistics and Registry; mail orders; or Internet orders. Internet orders are currently charged the \$25.00 base fee for a single copy of a death certificate plus additional standard fees totaling \$10.00 (an online processing fee of \$5.00 and an online authentication fee of \$5.00; the State Registrar charges a fee of \$12.00 for expedited shipping via United Parcel Service carrier, but does not charge a fee for standard shipping). The OLS has no information regarding the proportion of death certificate requests typically received via Internet orders versus other methods, and cannot estimate the magnitude of any additional revenue losses resulting from waiving the online ordering fees for the free certified copies of veterans' death certificates.

The bill may also result in an indeterminate reduction in aggregate revenues collected by local registrars of vital statistics, as the availability of free copies of death certificates from the State Registrar of Vital Statistics may reduce the volume of veterans' death certificate copies requested from local registrars, for which fees could still be assessed. However, the bill may have minimal or no impact on any single local registrar, assuming that local registrars only process a portion of requests for copies of veterans' death certificates and that

the bill's impact would be distributed across all of the State's local registrars.

Finally, information from the funeral home industry suggests that, under certain circumstances, funeral homes ordering certified copies of a veteran's death certificate (typically on behalf of a veteran's family) from the State Registrar or from local registrars currently receive one certified copy at no cost if the copies are ordered through the New Jersey Electronic Death Registration System. Available information does not indicate the precise circumstances under which such free certified copies are currently provided. However, to the extent that free certified copies of veterans' death certificates are already provided, the bill's potential impact on State and local revenues may be significantly reduced or eliminated.

SENATE, No. 1752

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
216th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 17, 2014

Sponsored by:

Senator DIANE B. ALLEN

District 7 (Burlington)

SYNOPSIS

Requires issuance of one free copy of a veteran's death certificate to certain authorized persons upon request.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



S1752 ALLEN

2

1 AN ACT concerning veteran death certificates and amending
2 R.S.26:8-63.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. R.S.26:8-63 is amended to read as follows:

8 26:8-63. The State registrar shall:

9 a. Furnish a certification or certified copy of a birth, marriage,
10 civil union, domestic partnership, fetal death or death certificate
11 without fee in the prosecution of any claim for public pension or for
12 military or naval enlistment purposes; and

13 b. Furnish the United States Public Health Service without
14 expense to the State, microfilm or photocopy images of birth,
15 marriage, civil union, domestic partnership, fetal death and death
16 certificates without payment of the fees prescribed in this article;
17 and

18 c. Furnish a certified transcript of any entry in the records of
19 the New Jersey State census without fee for certification in the
20 prosecution of any claim for public pension, for military or naval
21 enlistment purposes; and

22 d. Furnish without fee upon request for administrative use by
23 any city, State or federal agency a certified transcript of any New
24 Jersey State census entry, or a certification or certified copy of a
25 birth, death, fetal death, marriage, civil union or domestic
26 partnership certificate; and

27 e. Furnish without fee upon request a certified copy of a
28 veteran's death certificate to the veteran's legal representative, the
29 executor or administrator of the veteran's estate, or to a family
30 member authorized to obtain a copy of the death certificate pursuant
31 to subsection a. of R.S.26:8-62. No more than one copy of a
32 veteran's death certificate may be provided without fee pursuant to
33 this section; all other copies of the death certificate shall be subject
34 to the statutory fee.

35 (cf: P.L.2006, c.103, s.58)

36

37 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

38

39

40 STATEMENT

41

42 This bill would require the State registrar of vital statistics to
43 issue, upon request, one free copy of a deceased veteran's death
44 certificate to the veteran's legal representative, the executor or
45 administrator of the veteran's estate, or to a family member

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

S1752 ALLEN

3

1 authorized to obtain a copy of the certificate which, under current
2 law, includes a parent or legal guardian, spouse, civil union partner,
3 and any sibling, child, or grandchild of legal age. All additional
4 copies of the veteran's death certificate would be subject to the
5 normal statutory fee.

SENATE MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO
SENATE, No. 1752

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: SEPTEMBER 18, 2014

The Senate Military and Veterans Affairs Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate, No. 1752.

As amended, this bill would require the State registrar of vital statistics to issue, upon request, one free copy of a deceased veteran's death certificate to the veteran's legal representative, the executor or administrator of the veteran's estate, or to a family member authorized to obtain a copy of the certificate which, under current law, includes a parent or legal guardian, spouse, civil union partner, and any sibling, child, or grandchild of legal age. All additional copies of the veteran's death certificate would be subject to the normal statutory fee.

As amended, this bill is identical to Assembly Bill No. 2184 (1R) of 2014-2015 session.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The committee amended the bill to clarify the types of fees that may not be assessed when providing a free copy of a veteran's death certificate under the bill. The fees include, but are not limited to, search, certification, processing, authentication, standard shipping, or any other fees that would ordinarily be assessed to furnish a certified copy of a death certificate.

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 1752

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 9, 2014

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 1752 (1R).

This bill would require the State Registrar of Vital Statistics (State Registrar) in the Department of Health (DOH) to furnish without fee, upon request, one certified copy of a deceased veteran's death certificate to certain authorized persons. Persons authorized to request a free certified copy of the veteran's death certificate include: the veteran's legal representative; the executor or administrator of the veteran's estate; or a family member authorized to obtain a copy of the certificate which, under current law, includes a parent or legal guardian, spouse, civil union partner, and any sibling, child, or grandchild of legal age.

The bill defines the "fee" to be waived for the free certified copy of a veteran's death certificate as including, but not limited to, any search, certification, processing, authentication, standard shipping, or other fee that would ordinarily be assessed to furnish a certified copy of a death certificate. The bill provides that all additional copies of the veteran's death certificate would be subject to the normal statutory fee.

This bill is identical to Assembly Bill No. 2184 (1R), as also reported by the committee.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The OLS finds that the bill may result in an indeterminate, potentially minimal, reduction in State revenue collected by the State Registrar of Vital Statistics, but the OLS has insufficient information with which to estimate the revenue impact with reasonable certainty. The bill may also result in an indeterminate reduction in aggregate revenues collected by local registrars of vital statistics. However, the bill may have minimal or no impact on any single local registrar.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that there were approximately 434,000 living veterans in New Jersey in 2012, representing an estimated 6.4 percent of the State's civilian population age 18 and over. According to the most recently available mortality data from the Center for Health Statistics in the DOH, there are approximately 68,000 deaths in New Jersey each year among individuals age 18 and

over, on average. Assuming that the proportion of veterans represented among those deaths is similar to the proportion of veterans in the State's overall population, one might expect about 4,400 veteran deaths each year. If each of those deaths resulted in at least one request to the State Registrar for a certified copy of a death certificate, and assuming that the State Registrar's current base fee of \$25.00 for a copy of a death certificate was waived in each of those cases, the fees foregone from those requests would be approximately \$110,000. Thus, providing the 4,400 death certificates without collecting a fee might reduce the fee revenue received by the State Registrar by at least \$110,000, annually.

However, this Census-based estimate greatly simplifies the factors affecting the bill's potential revenue impact. For example, the calculation excludes searches related to veterans whose deaths occurred in previous years, which the OLS has no data to quantify. The OLS also does not have information regarding the actual, unduplicated number of veterans for whom the State Registrar issues at least one certified copy of a death certificate in a given year. Further, the Census-based estimate above cannot account for: the number of certified copies of veterans' death certificates issued by local registrars, rather than the State registrar; or the number of veterans for whom no certified copies of death certificates are requested. An additional limitation is that the Census data may somewhat understate the proportion of veterans among New Jersey residents, as the Census data exclude individuals in the active-duty military.

Further, the State Registrar currently accepts requests for death certificates via three methods: walk-in orders at the Office of Vital Statistics and Registry; mail orders; or Internet orders. Internet orders are currently charged the \$25.00 base fee for a single copy of a death certificate plus additional standard fees totaling \$10.00 (an online processing fee of \$5.00 and an online authentication fee of \$5.00; the State Registrar charges a fee of \$12.00 for expedited shipping via United Parcel Service carrier, but does not charge a fee for standard shipping). The OLS has no information regarding the proportion of death certificate requests typically received via Internet orders versus other methods, and cannot estimate the magnitude of any additional revenue losses resulting from waiving the online ordering fees for the free certified copies of veterans' death certificates.

The bill may also result in an indeterminate reduction in aggregate revenues collected by local registrars of vital statistics, as the availability of free copies of death certificates from the State Registrar of Vital Statistics may reduce the volume of veterans' death certificate copies requested from local registrars, for which fees could still be assessed. However, the bill may have minimal or no impact on any single local registrar, assuming that local registrars only process a portion of requests for copies of veterans' death certificates and that

the bill's impact would be distributed across all of the State's local registrars.

Finally, information from the funeral home industry suggests that, under certain circumstances, funeral homes ordering certified copies of a veteran's death certificate (typically on behalf of a veteran's family) from the State Registrar or from local registrars currently receive one certified copy at no cost if the copies are ordered through the New Jersey Electronic Death Registration System. Available information does not indicate the precise circumstances under which such free certified copies are currently provided. However, to the extent that free certified copies of veterans' death certificates are already provided, the bill's potential impact on State and local revenues may be significantly reduced or eliminated.

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Acting Governor Guadagno Continues Administration's Support for Veterans With Bill Signing

Tuesday, January 6, 2015

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State of New Jersey
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Bipartisan, Unanimous Legislation Honors Veterans, Underscores New Jersey's Position as a Military-Friendly State

Trenton, NJ – Demonstrating the Christie Administration's ongoing commitment to New Jersey's service members, veterans, and their families, Acting Governor Kim Guadagno today signed three bills honoring and supporting veterans and members of the armed forces at American Legion Post 348 in Brick.

"We take comfort knowing that our men and women in uniform are skilled, committed and willing to confront whatever is necessary, wherever its necessary, whenever its necessary, to preserve our way of life," said Acting Governor Guadagno. "There will never be an adequate way to recognize and reward our veterans. Today's bills are just a few steps – important ones – to show New Jersey's continuing commitment to honoring our service members."

New Jersey is home to more than 400,000 veterans, with approximately 73,000 combined armed services and civilian personnel currently employed across the state's military bases and U.S. Coast Guard installations.

"From defeating tyranny during World War II to defending our country against terrorists and providing humanitarian relief in the wake of Superstorm Sandy, New Jersey veterans have helped safeguard our state and nation home and abroad," said Brigadier General Michael L. Cunniff, who attended today's ceremony. "These bills reinforce the important roles of our veterans and their families serving our country."

The bills signed by the Acting Governor during today's event include:

S-1027 (Holzapfel/Tucker, DeAngelo, Mukherji, McGuckin, Wolfe) – Designates the Route 35 bridge between the Borough of Brielle and the Borough of Point Pleasant Beach as the "Veterans of All Wars Memorial Bridge."

A-2184 (Singleton, Tucker, Bucco, Webber, Garcia, Johnson/Allen, Beach) – Provides a free death certificate for deceased veterans.

SJR-41 (Beach, Whelan/Tucker, McHose, Coughlin, Wilson, Angelini) – Designates the second full week in November of each year as "Veterans' Education Awareness Week" in order to raise public awareness of federal educational benefits available to veterans to attend college.

Acting Governor Guadagno was joined by, among others, Assemblyman Anthony M. Bucco (R-Morris, Somerset), Assemblyman Gregory P. McGuckin (R-Ocean), Assemblyman Raj Mukherji (D-Hudson), and Assemblywoman Cleopatra G. Tucker (D-Essex), Ocean County Freeholder Gerry Little and Brick Mayor John Ducey.

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