

# SENATE . . . . . No. 2064

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Senate, November 18, 2015 -- Text of the Senate Bill further regulating notaries public (Senate, No. 2064) (being the text of Senate, No. 757, printed as amended)

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## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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In the One Hundred and Eighty-Ninth General Court  
(2015-2016)  
\_\_\_\_\_

An Act regulating notaries public to protect consumers and the validity and effectiveness of recorded instruments.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1           SECTION 1. The introductory paragraph of section 30 of chapter 183 of the General  
2 Laws, as appearing in the 2014 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out the first  
3 sentence and inserting in place thereof the following sentence:- The acknowledgment of the  
4 execution of a deed or other written instrument required to be acknowledged shall be by 1 or  
5 more of the grantors or by any attorneys or representatives executing it on behalf of the grantors.

6           SECTION 2. Said chapter 183 is hereby further amended by striking out section 42, as  
7 so appearing, and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

8           Section 42. The forms set forth in the appendix to this chapter for taking  
9 acknowledgments to deeds and other instruments and for certifying the authority of officers  
10 taking proofs or acknowledgments may be used but the existence of those forms shall not  
11 preclude the use of any other forms lawfully used as required or authorized by any general or  
12 special law or any regulation or executive order regulating notaries public, including forms that

13 acknowledge the voluntary act of an individual executing a document in a representative  
14 capacity but fail to acknowledge the deed or instrument as the voluntary or free act of the  
15 principal or grantor.

16 SECTION 3. Chapter 222 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out section  
17 1, as so appearing, and inserting in place thereof the following 2 sections:-

18 Section 1. For the purposes of this chapter, the following words shall have the following  
19 meanings unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

20 “Acknowledgment”, a notarial act in which an individual, at a single time and place  
21 appears, in person, before a notary public, is identified by the notary public through satisfactory  
22 evidence of identity and presents a document to the notary public and indicates to the notary  
23 public that the signature on the document before the notary was voluntarily affixed by the  
24 individual for the purposes stated within the document or that the signature on the document was  
25 the individual’s free act and deed and, if applicable, that the individual was authorized to sign in  
26 a particular representative capacity.

27 “Affirmation”, a notarial act, or part thereof, that is legally equivalent to an oath and in  
28 which an individual, at a single time and place appears, in person, before a notary public, is  
29 identified by the notary public through satisfactory evidence of identity and the individual makes  
30 a vow of truthfulness or fidelity under the penalties of perjury without invoking a deity.

31 “Copy certification”, a notarial act in which a notary public is presented with a document  
32 which the notary public copies, or supervises the copying of, the document by a photographic or  
33 electronic copying process, compares the original document to the copy and determines that the  
34 copy is accurate and complete.

35 “Credible witness”, an honest, reliable and impartial person who personally knows an  
36 individual appearing before a notary and who takes an oath or affirmation before the notary to  
37 vouch for that individual's identity.

38 “Journal”, a permanently bound book that creates and preserves a chronological record of  
39 notarial acts performed by a notary public.

40 “Jurat”, a notarial act in which an individual, at a single time and place appears, in  
41 person, before a notary public, is identified by the notary public through satisfactory evidence of  
42 identity and: (i) presents a document; (ii) signs the document in the presence of the notary public;  
43 and (iii) takes an oath or affirmation before the notary public vouching for the truthfulness or  
44 accuracy of the contents of the signed document.

45 “Notarial act”, an act that a notary public is empowered to perform; a notarization.

46 “Notarial certificate”, the part of or attachment to a notarized document for completion  
47 by the notary that bears the notary public’s signature and seal and states the venue, date and facts  
48 that are attested by the notary public in a particular notarial act or notarization.

49 “Notary public”, a person commissioned to perform official acts pursuant to Article IV of  
50 the Amendments of the Constitution; a notary.

51 “Oath”, a notarial act, or part thereof, that is legally equivalent to an affirmation and in  
52 which an individual, at a single time and place, appears in person before a notary public, is  
53 identified by the notary public through satisfactory evidence of identity and takes a vow of  
54 truthfulness or fidelity under the penalties of perjury by invoking a deity.

55 “Official misconduct”, a violation of sections 13 to 24, inclusive, or any other general or  
56 special law in connection with a notarial act or a notary public’s performance of an official act in  
57 a manner found to be grossly negligent or against the public interest.

58 “Personal knowledge of identity”, familiarity with an individual resulting from  
59 interactions with that individual over a period of time sufficient to ensure beyond doubt that the  
60 individual is the person whose identity is claimed.

61 “Principal”, a person whose signature is notarized or a person taking an oath or  
62 affirmation before a notary public.

63 “Regular place of work or business”, a place where an individual spends a substantial  
64 portion of their working or business hours.

65 “Satisfactory evidence of identity”, identification of an individual based on: (i) at least 1  
66 current document issued by a federal or state government agency bearing the photographic image  
67 of the individual’s face and signature; (ii) the oath or affirmation of a credible witness unaffected  
68 by the document or transaction who is personally known to the notary public and who personally  
69 knows the individual; or (iii) identification of an individual based on the notary public's personal  
70 knowledge of the identity of the principal; provided, however, that for a person who is not a  
71 United States citizen, "satisfactory evidence of identity" shall mean identification of an  
72 individual based on a valid passport or other government-issued document evidencing the  
73 individual's nationality or residence and which bears a photographic image of the individual's  
74 face and signature.

75 “Signature witnessing”, a notarial act in which an individual, at a single time and place,  
76 appears, in person, before a notary public, is identified by the notary public through satisfactory

77 evidence of identity and presents a document and signs the document in the presence of the  
78 notary public.

79           Section 1A. Justices of the peace and notaries public shall be appointed and their  
80 commissions shall be issued for the commonwealth. Justices of the peace and notaries public  
81 shall have jurisdiction throughout the commonwealth when acting under the sole authority of  
82 such a commission and shall perform their duties subject to sections 8 to 26, inclusive. Unless  
83 otherwise expressly provided, justices of the peace and notaries public may administer oaths or  
84 affirmations in all cases in which an oath or affirmation is required and take acknowledgments of  
85 deeds and other instruments.

86           SECTION 4. Said chapter 222 is hereby further amended by striking out sections 8 and  
87 8A, as so appearing, and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

88           Section 8. (a) When taking an acknowledgment of an instrument or administering an  
89 oath for an instrument filed in court, a justice of the peace, notary public or other person duly  
90 authorized shall print or type such justice of the peace, notary public or other person's name  
91 directly below such person's signature and affix thereto the date of the expiration of such  
92 person's commission in the following language: "My commission expires \_\_\_\_\_."

93           (b) A notary public shall keep an official notarial seal or stamp that shall be the exclusive  
94 property of the notary public. A notary public shall not permit another to use such notarial seal  
95 or stamp. A notary public shall obtain a new seal or stamp upon renewal of the commission,  
96 upon receipt of a new commission or if the name of the notary public has changed. The notarial  
97 seal or stamp shall include: (i) the notary public's name exactly as indicated on the commission;  
98 (ii) the words "notary public" and "Commonwealth of Massachusetts" or "Massachusetts"; (iii)

99 the expiration date of the commission in the following words: “My commission expires \_\_\_\_”;  
100 and (iv) a facsimile of the seal of the commonwealth. If a notarial seal that requires ink is  
101 employed, black ink shall be used. The requirements of this subsection shall be satisfied by  
102 using a stamp and a seal that, together, include all of the information required by this section.  
103 Failure to comply with this section shall not affect the validity of any instrument or the record  
104 thereof.

105 SECTION 5. Section 11 of said chapter 222, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
106 striking out the first paragraph and inserting in place thereof the following paragraph:-

107 Persons serving in or with the armed forces of the commonwealth or other reserve  
108 component commands when conducting mobilization exercises and soldier readiness processing  
109 or the armed forces of the United States or their dependents, wherever located, may acknowledge  
110 any instrument in the manner and form required by law before a commissioned officer in the  
111 active service of the armed forces of the commonwealth or the United States with the rank of  
112 second lieutenant or higher in the army, air force or marine corps or ensign or higher in the navy  
113 or United States Coast Guard. Any such instrument shall contain a statement that the person  
114 executing the instrument is serving in or with the armed forces of the commonwealth or other  
115 reserve component command when conducting mobilization exercises and soldier readiness  
116 processing or the armed forces of the United States or is a dependent of any such person. No  
117 such instrument shall be rendered invalid by the failure to state in the instrument the place of  
118 execution or acknowledgment.

119 SECTION 6. Said chapter 222 is hereby further amended by striking out section 12, as  
120 so appearing, and inserting in place thereof the following 15 sections:-

121 Section 12. Notwithstanding section 22 or any other general or special law to the  
122 contrary, a notary public who is an attorney or who is employed by an attorney and by virtue of  
123 such employment performs notary public duties shall not be required to maintain a journal.

124 Section 13. (a) A person qualified for a notary public commission shall be at least 18  
125 years of age and reside or have a regular place of work or business within the commonwealth.

126 (b) In the governor's discretion, an application for appointment, reappointment or  
127 renewal of a commission may be denied based on:

128 (i) submission of an official application containing a material misstatement or  
129 omission of fact;

130 (ii) the applicant's conviction of an offense that resulted in a prison sentence;

131 (iii) the applicant's conviction of a misdemeanor offense that resulted in a sentence to  
132 probation or a fine or a conviction for a violation of paragraph (a) of subdivision (1) of section  
133 24 of chapter 90 or subsection (a) of section 8 of chapter 90B;

134 (iv) the applicant's admission to sufficient facts to warrant a finding of guilt of any  
135 offense;

136 (v) a finding or admission of responsibility or liability against the applicant in a civil  
137 action based on the applicant's fraud or deceit;

138 (vi) revocation, suspension, restriction or denial of a notary public commission or  
139 professional licensure by the commonwealth or any other jurisdiction; or

140 (vii) any other reason, including official misconduct, that in the governor's discretion,  
141 would render the applicant unsuitable to hold a notary public commission.

142 Section 14. A person commissioned as a notary public may perform notarial acts in any  
143 part of the commonwealth for a term of 7 years unless the commission is earlier revoked or the  
144 notary public resigns.

145 Section 15. (a) A notary public may perform the following notarial acts: (i)  
146 acknowledgments; (ii) oaths and affirmations; (iii) jurats; (iv) signature witnessings; (v) copy  
147 certifications; (vi) issuing summonses for witnesses pursuant to section 1 of chapter 233; (vii)  
148 issuing subpoenas; and (viii) witnessing the opening of a bank safe, vault or box pursuant to  
149 section 32 of chapter 167.

150 (b) A notary public shall take the acknowledgment of the signature or mark of persons  
151 acknowledging for themselves or in any representative capacity by using substantially the  
152 following form:

153 "On this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_, before me, the undersigned notary public,  
154 \_\_\_\_\_ (name of document signer) personally appeared, proved to me  
155 through satisfactory evidence of identification, which were \_\_\_\_\_, to be  
156 the person whose name is signed on the preceding or attached document, and acknowledged to  
157 me that (he) (she) signed it voluntarily for its stated purpose.

158 (as partner for \_\_\_\_\_, a partnership)

159 (as \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_, a corporation or other entity)

160 (as attorney in fact for \_\_\_\_\_, the principal)



161 (as \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_, (a) (the) \_\_\_\_\_)

162 \_\_\_\_\_ (official signature and seal of notary public)”.

163 (c) A notary public shall use a jurat certificate in substantially the following form in  
164 notarizing a signature or mark on an affidavit or other sworn or affirmed written declaration:

165 “On this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_, before me, the undersigned notary public,  
166 \_\_\_\_\_ (name of document signer) personally appeared, proved to me  
167 through satisfactory evidence of identification, which were \_\_\_\_\_, to be  
168 the person who signed the preceding or attached document in my presence and who swore or  
169 affirmed to me that the contents of the document are truthful and accurate to the best of (his)  
170 (her) knowledge and belief.

171 \_\_\_\_\_ (official signature and seal of notary public)”

172 (d) A notary public shall witness a signature in substantially the following form in  
173 notarizing a signature or mark to confirm that it was affixed in the notary public's presence  
174 without administration of an oath or affirmation:

175 “On this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_, before me, the undersigned notary public,  
176 \_\_\_\_\_ (name of document signer) personally appeared, proved to me  
177 through satisfactory evidence of identification, which were \_\_\_\_\_, to be  
178 the person whose name is signed on the preceding or attached document in my presence.

179 \_\_\_\_\_ (official signature and seal of notary public)”.

180 (e) A notary public shall certify a copy by using substantially the following form:

181           “On this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20 \_\_, I certify that the (preceding) (following)  
182 (attached) document is a true, exact, complete and unaltered copy made by me of  
183 \_\_\_\_\_ (description of the document), presented to me by  
184 \_\_\_\_\_.  
185           \_\_\_\_\_ (official signature and seal of notary public)”

186           (f) A notary public may certify the affixation of a signature by mark on a document  
187 presented for notarization if:

188           (i) the principal affixes the mark in the presence of the notary public and 2 witnesses  
189 unaffected by the document;

190           (ii) both witnesses sign their own names beside the mark; and

191           (iii) the notary public notarizes the signature by mark through an acknowledgment,  
192 jurat or signature witnessing.

193           (g) A notary public may sign the name of a principal who is physically unable to sign or  
194 make a mark on a document presented for notarization if:

195           (i) the principal directs the notary public to do so in the presence of 2 witnesses who  
196 are unaffected by the document;

197           (ii) the principal does not have a demeanor that causes the notary public to have a  
198 compelling doubt about whether the principal knows the consequences of the transaction or  
199 document requiring the notarial act;

200 (iii) in the notary public’s judgment, the principal is acting of the principal’s own free  
201 will;

202 (iv) the notary public signs the principal’s name in the presence of the principal and  
203 the witnesses;

204 (v) both witnesses sign their own names beside the signature;

205 (vi) the notary public writes below the signature: “Signature affixed by notary public  
206 in the presence of (names and addresses of principal and 2 witnesses)”;

207 (vii) the notary public notarizes the signature through an acknowledgment, jurat or  
208 signature witnessing.

209 (h) This section shall not require a notary public to use the forms in this section if  
210 another form of acknowledgment, jurat, signature witnessing or copy certification is required or  
211 allowed by any court rule or court form or is required by any general or special law including,  
212 but not limited to, section 2-504 of chapter 190B, any federal law or any regulation adopted  
213 pursuant to any such law; provided, however, that the forms in this section may be used in lieu of  
214 any equivalent form authorized or promulgated by any such law or regulation including, but not  
215 limited to, section 42 of chapter 183 and the forms in the appendix to said chapter 183 if any  
216 such law or regulation does not expressly prohibit the use of other forms.

217 (i) This section shall not require a notary public to use the forms in this section if the  
218 form of acknowledgment, jurat, signature witnessing or copy certification of a document  
219 contains an alternative form from another state if the document is to be filed or recorded in or  
220 governed by the laws of the other state.

221 (j) This section shall not require a notary public to use the forms in this section if the  
222 form of acknowledgment, jurat, signature witnessing or copy certification appears on a printed  
223 form that contains an express prohibition against altering such form.

224 Section 16. (a) A notary public shall not perform a notarial act if:

225 (i) the principal is not in the notary public's presence at the time of notarization;

226 (ii) the principal is not identified by the notary public through satisfactory evidence of  
227 identity;

228 (iii) the principal has a demeanor that causes the notary public to have a compelling  
229 doubt about whether the principal knows the consequences of the transaction or document  
230 requiring the notarial act;

231 (iv) in the notary public's judgment, the principal is not acting of the principal's own  
232 free will;

233 (v) the notary public is a party to or is named in the document that is to be notarized  
234 unless: (1) the notary public is named in the document for the sole purpose of receiving notices  
235 relating to the document; or (2) the notary public is licensed as an attorney in the commonwealth  
236 or is employed by an attorney so licensed and is named as an executor, trustee or any other  
237 fiduciary capacity in a document;

238 (vi) the notary public will receive as a direct result of the notarial act any commission,  
239 fee, advantage, right, title, interest, cash, property or other consideration exceeding the maximum  
240 fees provided in section 41 of chapter 262 or any other general or special law or executive order,  
241 or has any financial interest in the subject matter of the document; provided, however, that this

242 clause shall not preclude a notary public who is licensed as an attorney in the commonwealth or  
243 who is employed by an attorney so licensed from performing notarial acts relative to any  
244 document in connection with which the attorney receives a legal fee for professional legal  
245 services; or

246 (vii) the notary public is a spouse, domestic partner, parent, guardian, child or sibling  
247 of the principal, including in-law, step or half relatives, except if a principal witnesses a will or  
248 other legal document prepared by the notary public who is an attorney licensed in the  
249 commonwealth.

250 (b) A notary public shall not refuse to perform a notarial act solely based on the  
251 principal's race, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, health,  
252 disability or status as a nonclient or noncustomer of the notary public or the notary public's  
253 employer.

254 (c) A nonattorney notary public shall not influence a person to enter into or avoid a  
255 transaction involving a notarial act by the notary public; provided, however, that the notary  
256 public may provide assistance relating to that transaction if the notary public is duly qualified,  
257 trained or acting pursuant to a standard or practice recognized in a particular industry or  
258 professional field in selecting, drafting or completing a certificate or other document related to a  
259 matter within such industry or field.

260 (d) A notary public shall not execute a certificate containing information which the  
261 notary public knows or believes to be false.

262 (e) A notary public shall not affix an official signature or seal on a notarial certificate  
263 that is incomplete.

264 (f) A notary public shall not provide or send a signed or sealed notarial certificate to  
265 another person with the understanding that it will be completed or attached to a document  
266 outside of the notary public's presence; provided, however, that in connection with a  
267 commercial, nonconsumer transaction, a notary public may deliver a signed, sealed or signed and  
268 sealed notarial certificate to an attorney with the understanding that: (i) the attorney shall attach  
269 the certificate to a document outside of the notary public's presence; (ii) the attorney shall hold  
270 such notarial certificate in escrow; and (iii) the attorney shall obtain the approval of any  
271 principals involved before attaching the certificate to the document.

272 (g) A notary public shall not notarize a signature on a blank or incomplete document,  
273 except as provided in subsection (f).

274 (h) A notary public shall not perform any official notarial act with the intent to deceive  
275 or defraud.

276 (i) A notary public shall not use the term "notario" or "notario publico" or any equivalent  
277 non-English term in a business card, advertisement, notice or sign.

278 (j) A notary public shall not claim to have powers, qualifications, rights or privileges that  
279 the office of notary public does not provide.

280 Section 17. (a) A notary public shall not advise clients, offer legal advice or represent or  
281 advertise the notary public as a legal specialist or consultant unless the notary public is an  
282 attorney licensed to practice law in the commonwealth. A notary public shall not state or imply  
283 in any communication that the notary public can or will obtain special favors from or has special  
284 influence with a government agency. A notary public who is not licensed to practice law in the  
285 commonwealth shall not make a literal translation of the notary public's status as "licensed" or

286 as a “notary public” into a language other than English without regard to the true meaning of the  
287 word or phrase in that language or use any other term that implies that the notary public is an  
288 attorney so licensed, in any document, including an advertisement, stationery, letterhead,  
289 business card or other written or broadcast material describing the notary public or the notary  
290 public’s services.

291 (b) A notary public who is not an attorney licensed to practice law in the commonwealth:

292 (i) shall not offer legal advice or advise a client as to the immigration status of a client,  
293 secure or attempt to secure supporting documents including, but not limited to, birth certificates,  
294 necessary to complete a client’s immigration forms or submit completed immigration forms on a  
295 client’s behalf to any governmental agency;

296 (ii) may translate questions presented on an immigration form for another person and  
297 may complete those forms at the explicit direction of such other person only if the translation of  
298 such other person’s answers is necessary; and

299 (iii) prior to providing services of any kind related to an immigration matter or any  
300 matter that could influence or affect a person’s immigration status, shall provide a client with a  
301 written statement that states “I am not an attorney licensed to practice law. I may not give you  
302 legal advice or advise you about immigration policies or procedures. You should seek the advice  
303 of a qualified attorney to assist you with any legal questions or with questions about legal status  
304 under immigration law.”

305 (c) Subsection (b) shall not apply to:

306 (i) an attorney licensed to practice law in any state or territory of the United States or in a  
307 foreign country when authorized by the supreme judicial court, to the extent the attorney renders  
308 immigration assistance service in the course of the attorney's practice as an attorney;

309 (ii) a paralegal, legal intern or law student employed by an attorney so licensed and  
310 rendering immigration assistance in the course of the intern's or student's employment; and

311 (iii) an organization employing or desiring to employ a person who is not a citizen of  
312 the United States if the organization, its employees or agents provide advice or assistance in  
313 immigration-related matters to noncitizen employees or potential employees without  
314 compensation from the individuals to whom such advice or assistance is provided.

315 (d) A notary public who is not an attorney shall not engage in the practice of law. This  
316 subsection shall not preclude a notary public who is duly qualified, trained or experienced in a  
317 particular industry or professional field from selecting, drafting or completing a certificate or  
318 other document related to a matter within that industry or field.

319 (e) A notary public who is not an attorney licensed to practice law in the commonwealth  
320 shall not conduct a real estate closing and shall not act as a real estate closing agent; provided,  
321 however, that a notary public who is employed by an attorney so licensed may notarize a  
322 document in conjunction with a real estate closing conducted by the attorney and a notary public  
323 who is employed by a lender may notarize a document in conjunction with the closing of such  
324 lender's real estate loans.

325 (f) This section shall apply to a notary public and to any person who employs, contracts  
326 with or otherwise uses the services of a notary public with knowledge or reason to know of  
327 conduct that is in violation of this section.



328           Section 18. (a) The attorney general or district attorney may prosecute any person  
329 committing a violation of this chapter. A person convicted of committing a violation of this  
330 chapter shall be punished for a first offense by a fine of not more than \$1,000 or by  
331 imprisonment in a jail or house of correction for not more than 6 months, or by both such fine  
332 and imprisonment, and, for a second or subsequent offense, by a fine of not more than \$5,000 or  
333 by imprisonment in a jail or house of correction for not more than 1 year, or by both such fine  
334 and imprisonment. The attorney general or district attorney may file a petition for injunctive  
335 relief against any person who violates this chapter. If the attorney general, district attorney or the  
336 state secretary has cause to believe that, as a result of official misconduct, a person holding the  
337 office of notary public is unsuitable to hold that office, the attorney general, district attorney or  
338 state secretary shall provide notice to the governor of such official misconduct. Any conviction  
339 based on a violation of this chapter shall be grounds for the revocation of a notary public's  
340 appointment. If the court finds that a person so convicted either knew or should have known that  
341 the conduct would be in violation of this chapter, the court may require such person to pay a  
342 civil penalty of not more than \$5,000 for each such violation and may also require the person to  
343 pay the reasonable costs of investigation and litigation of the violation, including reasonable  
344 attorneys' fees.

345           (b) A person having an interest or right that is or may be adversely affected by a  
346 violation of section 17 may initiate an action for private remedies and, if the attorney general or  
347 district attorney has not done so, for injunctive relief. Such person may be awarded actual  
348 damages and, if the court finds that the person against whom the action is brought either knew or  
349 should have known the conduct would be in violation of said section 17, punitive damages of not  
350 more than \$5,000 per violation, attorneys' fees and court costs.

351 (c) A violation of section 17 shall constitute an unfair or deceptive act or practice  
352 pursuant to chapter 93A.

353 (d) It shall not be a defense in an action pursuant to this section that the conduct that is  
354 the subject of the action, in whole or in part, occurred primarily or substantially outside the  
355 commonwealth.

356 Section 19. A notary public shall perform a notarial act for any person requesting such  
357 act who tenders the fee provided for in section 41 of chapter 262 or any other general or special  
358 law or executive order, unless:

359 (i) the notary public knows or has reason to believe that the notarial act or the associated  
360 transaction is unlawful;

361 (ii) the principal has a demeanor that causes the notary public to have a compelling  
362 doubt about whether the principal knows the consequences of the transaction or document  
363 requiring the notarial act;

364 (iii) the act is prohibited by this chapter or any other applicable law; or

365 (iv) the number of notarial acts requested practicably precludes completion of all acts  
366 at once, in which case, the notary public shall arrange for later completion of the remaining acts.

367 Section 20. (a) A notary public shall not be authorized or required to investigate,  
368 ascertain or attest to the lawfulness, propriety, accuracy or truthfulness of a document or  
369 transaction involving a notarial act.

370 (b) Except as may be required by the office of the state secretary for the issuance of an  
371 apostille:

372 (i) failure of a document to contain the forms of acknowledgment, jurat, signature  
373 witnessing or copy certification set forth in section 15 or otherwise to comply with the  
374 requirements set forth in sections 8 to 23, inclusive, shall not have any effect on the validity of  
375 the underlying document or the recording of the underlying document;

376 (ii) failure of a document to contain the forms of acknowledgment, jurat, signature  
377 witnessing or copy certification set forth in said section 15 shall not be the basis of a refusal to  
378 accept the document for filing, recordation, registration or acceptance by a third party; and

379 (iii) failure of a document executed in a representative capacity to contain an  
380 acknowledgment that the instrument was also the voluntary or free act and deed of the principal  
381 or grantor shall not affect the validity of the underlying document or the recording of the  
382 document.

383 Section 21. A notary public who is not an attorney who advertises notarial services in a  
384 language other than English shall include in the advertisement, notice, letterhead or sign the  
385 following statement prominently displayed in the same language: "I am not an attorney and I  
386 have no authority to give advice on immigration or other legal matters."

387 Section 22. (a) Except as provided in subsection (f), a notary public shall keep,  
388 maintain, protect and provide for lawful inspection a chronological official journal of notarial  
389 acts performed by the notary public. The journal shall be a permanently bound book with  
390 numbered pages, except as otherwise provided in this section.

391 (b) A notary public shall keep not more than 1 active journal at the same time.

392 (c) For every notarial act, except for the issuance of a summons or subpoena or the  
393 administration of an oral oath, the notary public shall record in the journal at the time of the  
394 notarization:

395 (i) the date and time of the notarial act, proceeding or transaction;

396 (ii) the type of notarial act;

397 (iii) the type, title or a description of the document, transaction or proceeding; provided,  
398 however, that if multiple documents are signed by the same principal in the course of a  
399 transaction or during a single date, a single journal entry shall be sufficient;

400 (iv) the signature and printed name and address of each principal and witness, except  
401 that if a principal or witness informs the notary public that the principal or witness is a battered  
402 person, the notary public shall make a note in the journal that the person's address shall not be  
403 subject to public inspection; and

404 (v) a description of the satisfactory evidence of identity of each person, including:

405 (1) a notation of the type of identification document, the issuing agency, its serial or  
406 identification number and its date of issuance or expiration; provided, however, that if the  
407 identification number on the document is the person's social security number then, instead of  
408 including the number, the notary public shall write in the words "Social Security number" or the  
409 acronym "SSN";

410 (2) a notation if the notary public identified the individual on the oath or affirmation of a  
411 credible witness or based on the notary public's personal knowledge of the individual;

412 (3) the fee, if any, charged for the notarial act; and

413 (4) the address where the notarization was performed.

414 (d) A notary public shall not record a social security or credit card number in the journal.

415 (e) A notary public shall record in the journal the reason for not completing a notarial act  
416 requested by a principal.

417 (f) A journal shall not be required for a notary public who is an attorney admitted to  
418 practice law in any jurisdiction or who is employed by any such attorney. If an attorney or  
419 person employed by an attorney elects to maintain a journal, this section shall not be construed to  
420 impair or infringe on the attorney-client privilege or the attorney work product doctrine.

421 A notary public who works for a government entity shall not be required to maintain a  
422 journal for the notarial acts performed in the course of that employment.

423 (g) Except as provided in subsection (f), a journal may be examined without restriction  
424 by a law enforcement officer in the course of an official investigation, subpoenaed by court order  
425 or surrendered at the direction of the state secretary. Nothing in this section shall prevent a  
426 notary public from seeking appropriate judicial protective orders.

427 (h) A notary public shall maintain and safeguard a journal and all other notarial records  
428 and shall surrender or destroy such records only as directed by law, court order or regulation or  
429 at the direction of the state secretary.

430 (i) If not in use, a journal shall be kept in a secure area under the exclusive control of the  
431 notary public and shall not be used by any other notary public or surrendered to an employer  
432 upon termination of employment.

433           Section 23. Notwithstanding section 41 of chapter 262, no fee shall be charged by a  
434 notary public to notarize a signature on an absentee ballot identification envelope or other voting  
435 materials or on any application or claim by a United States military veteran for a pension,  
436 allotment, allowance, compensation, insurance or other veterans' benefit.

437           Section 24. If a notary public's commission expires, is resigned or revoked, the notary  
438 public shall, as soon as reasonably practicable, destroy or deface all notary seals and stamps so  
439 that they shall not be used and shall retain the journal and records for 7 years after the date of  
440 expiration, resignation or revocation.

441           Section 25. Within 10 days after the change of a notary public's name, residence,  
442 business address or mailing address, the notary public shall send to the state secretary a signed  
443 notice of the change, providing both the old and new information.

444           Section 26. A notary public's commission may be revoked for official misconduct as  
445 defined in section 1 or for other good cause as determined by the governor with the consent of  
446 the governor's council.

447           SECTION 7. This act shall apply to all commissions of notaries public and justices of  
448 the peace authorized by chapter 222 of the General Laws, including commissions received or  
449 renewed before the effective date of this act.