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An Act To Increase Access to Vital Records

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §2706, sub-§5, as amended by PL 2009, c. 601, §12, is further amended to read:

5. Records disclosed. Vital records of a person must be made available at any reasonable time upon that person's request or the request of that person's spouse, registered domestic partner, descendants, parents or guardians or other interested party who has a legitimate purpose to obtain the record or that person's duly designated attorney or agent or attorney for an agent designated by that person or by a court having jurisdiction over that person whether the request be made in person, by mail, by telephone or otherwise, if the state registrar is satisfied as to the identity of the requester and, if an attorney or agent, if the state registrar is satisfied as to the attorney or agent's authority to act as that person's agent or attorney. If the agent or attorney has been appointed by a court of competent jurisdiction, or the attorney or agent's appearance for the person is entered therein, the state registrar shall upon request so ascertain by telephone call to the register, clerk or recorder of the court, and this must be deemed sufficient justification to compel compliance with the request for the record. The state registrar shall, as soon as possible, designate persons in the Office of Data, Research and Vital Statistics who may act in the state registrar's absence or, in case of the state registrar's disqualification, to carry out the intent of this subsection. A record of birth, death, fetal death, marriage, divorce or domestic partner registration may be disclosed as necessary for the department to carry out its responsibilities. For purposes of this subsection, "interested party" includes, but is not limited to, a beneficiary of a decedent, a beneficiary of an asset or a beneficiary of a life insurance policy.

SUMMARY

This bill allows a person who is an interested party and has a legitimate purpose to obtain a copy of vital records without a court order. The bill also defines "interested party" as a beneficiary of a decedent, a beneficiary of an asset or a beneficiary of a life insurance policy.