

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 444
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Health & Human Services
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As Filed

DIGEST

Currently, copies of vital statistics are permanently preserved in local registrar offices as local records. However, this paper file requirement is a major cost for each of the 600 local registrars and many of the 254 county clerks across the state, as well as being inefficient and cumbersome. Conversely, the electronic reporting of births presently saves the Texas Department of Health more than \$100,000 per year in date entry costs alone. This legislation allows for the destruction of permanent records after a certain period, provided that the registrar has access to electronic records maintained by the bureau of vital statistics, in an effort to achieve greater efficiency, cut costs, reduce duplication, and provide better services.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 444 establishes the administration of vital statistics records.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 191.025(d), Health and Safety Code, to provide that information required on a certificate must be written legibly in durable blue or black ink, or may be filed and registered by photographic, electronic, or other means as prescribed by the state registrar.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 191.026, Health and Safety Code, by amending Subsection (c) and adding Subsection (e), to authorize the local registrar, after the first anniversary of the date of registration of a birth, death, or fetal death, to destroy the permanent record of those vital statistics maintained by the local registrar if the local registrar has access to electronic records maintained by the bureau of vital statistics; and before destroying the records, the local registrar certifies that each record maintained by the local office that is to be destroyed has been verified against the records contained in the bureau's database and that each record is included in the database or otherwise accounted for. Makes conforming changes.

SECTION 3. Repealer: Section 191.035, Health and Safety Code (Compensation of Local Registrar and County Clerk).

SECTION 4. Emergency clause.
Effective date: upon passage.