

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2026 REGULAR SESSION**

**Introduced**

### **Senate Bill 947**

By Senator Deeds

[Introduced February 16, 2026; referred  
to the Committee on Government Organization]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §16-5-29 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to  
2 providing birth certificates to homeless individuals under the age of 18.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

**ARTICLE 5. VITAL STATISTICS.**

**§16-5-29. Fees for copies and searches.**

1 (a) The commissioner shall prescribe the fees to be charged and collected by the state  
2 Registrar for certified copies of certificates or records, not to exceed \$10 per copy, or for a search  
3 of the files or records when no copy is made: *Provided*, That the fee may be increased to a  
4 maximum of \$12 per copy, at the discretion of the commissioner, after July 1, 2008.

5 (b) The commissioner may prescribe additional fees for the priority production or express  
6 delivery of certified copies.

7 (c) The State Registrar may furnish certified copies of birth and death records to state  
8 agencies and to organized charities free of charge when the certificates are needed in presenting  
9 claims to the federal government or to a state for public assistance. Further, the State Registrar  
10 must provide, at no cost, a certified copy of an individual's West Virginia birth certificate: *Provided*,  
11 That the individual is under the age of 18 years, upon application and proof of that individual's  
12 homelessness. The State Registrar will keep a record of all certificates furnished pursuant to this  
13 subsection.

14 (d) Subject to the provisions set forth in section two, article two, chapter twelve of this code,  
15 there is hereby continued in the state Treasury a separate account which shall be designated "the  
16 vital statistics account."

17 (e) After July 1, 2006, and subject to the provisions set forth in section two, article two,  
18 chapter twelve of this code, there is established in the state Treasury a separate account which  
19 shall be designated "the vital statistics improvement fund." Funds deposited in this account will be  
20 used to modernize and automate the system of vital statistics in this state and may not be used to  
21 supplant existing funding necessary for the daily operation of the system of vital statistics. Funds in

22 this account will be retained in a nonlapsing fund for the improvement of the system of vital  
23 statistics.

24 (f) The commissioner shall deposit \$1 received under the provisions of this section for each  
25 certified copy to the "vital statistics improvement fund" and shall deposit \$4 received under the  
26 provisions of this section for each certified copy to the General Revenue Fund account. The  
27 commissioner shall deposit the remainder of all fees received under the provisions of this section  
28 for certified copies and for priority production and express delivery to the vital statistics account.

29 (g) The commissioner is authorized to expend the moneys deposited in the vital statistics  
30 account in accordance with the laws of this state as necessary to implement this article. The  
31 Legislature shall appropriate all moneys in the vital statistics account as part of the annual state  
32 budget.

33 (h) The commissioner shall make an annual report to the Legislature on the vital statistics  
34 account, including the previous fiscal year's expenditures and projected expenditures for the next  
35 fiscal year.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to provide birth certificates to homeless individuals under the age of 18.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.