

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE BILL NO. 1028

BY REPRESENTATIVE SCHEXNAYDER

ADOPTION: Provides relative to certain birth records

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact Children's Code Articles 1271(A), 1272(A), (B), and (C), 1273, and
3 1276 and R.S. 40:41(B)(1), 73(B), 77(B) and (D), and 79(A)(4) and to enact
4 Children's Code Articles 1271(D), 1272(E), and 1272.1 and R.S. 40:80, relative to
5 birth records; to provide procedures for a birth parent to file a contact preference
6 form and updated statement of family history; to authorize birth parents to prohibit
7 the release of certain identifying information; to provide procedures for an adult
8 adoptee to obtain a noncertified copy of his original birth certificate and statement
9 of family history; to authorize the state registrar to promulgate rules for the issuance
10 of a noncertified copy of a birth certificate in certain circumstances; to provide for
11 a public awareness campaign; and to provide for related matters.

12 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

13 Section 1. Children's Code Articles 1271(A), 1272(A), (B), and (C), 1273, and 1276
14 are hereby amended and reenacted and Children's Code Articles 1271(D), 1272(E), and
15 1272.1 are hereby enacted to read as follows:

16 Art. 1271. Registration

17 A. Registration shall be by affidavit filed with the office of ~~community~~
18 children and family services. Upon registration, a registrant may file a contact
19 preference form indicating whether or not they desire to be contacted through the
20 registry if a match is made and may also prohibit the release of any identifying
21 information on a noncertified copy of an original birth certificate obtained pursuant
22 to R.S. 40:80, a contact preference form, or an updated statement of family history.

1 E. If a match is made between a registered adoptee and a registered birth
2 parent and the birth parent has filed a contact preference form indicating "No
3 Contact" and an updated statement of family history, the office of children and
4 family services shall provide a copy of the contact preference form and the updated
5 statement of family history to the registered adoptee. If the birth parent has filed a
6 contact preference form prohibiting the release of identifying information, the office
7 of children and family services shall redact any identifying information from the
8 contact preference form and the updated statement of family history before providing
9 a copy to the registered adoptee.

10 Art. 1272.1. Contact preference form; statement of family history; public awareness
11 campaign

12 A. The office of children and family services shall develop and implement
13 a one-year-long, nationwide campaign to be conducted from September 1, 2014
14 through August 31, 2015, for the express purpose of informing the public of all of
15 the following:

16 (1) That an adoptee twenty-five years of age or older may obtain a
17 noncertified copy of the original certificate of live birth.

18 (2) That a birth parent of an adoptee who registers with the voluntary registry
19 may file a contact preference form with the registry and may prohibit the release of
20 identifying information on the original certificate of live birth, the contact preference
21 form, and the updated statement of family history.

22 (3) That a birth parent of an adoptee who files a contact preference form
23 indicating "No Contact" shall be required to submit an updated statement of family
24 history form.

25 B. The office of children and family services shall furnish a statement of
26 family history form, as provided in Article 1125, to a birth parent who files a contact
27 preference form indicating "No Contact".

28 C. The nationwide campaign required in Paragraph A of this Article shall
29 include but not be limited to the following:

1 children and family services under the provisions of this Chapter, and the registered
2 persons shall then be afforded the option of deciding whether they still desire to avail
3 themselves of the contact opportunity provided through the voluntary registry.

4 Section 2. R.S. 40:41(B)(1), 73(B), 77(B) and (D), and 79(A)(4) are hereby amended
5 and reenacted and R.S. 40:80 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

6 §41. Disclosure of records

7 * * *

8 B.(1) ~~Disclosure~~ Except as provided in R.S. 40:80, disclosure of confidential
9 birth information from which can be determined whether the child was born of or
10 outside of marriage may be made only upon order of the court in any case where that
11 information is necessary for the determination of personal or property rights and then
12 only for that purpose. Upon receiving an order from the court, the vital records
13 registrar shall file a copy of the birth certificate, marked for judicial purposes only,
14 under seal in the records of the clerk of court. The judge presiding over the matter
15 may review the birth certificate in chambers and may use the birth certificate within
16 his discretion during the course of the proceedings. No copies of the birth certificate
17 may be issued by the court to the litigants in the proceeding. The birth certificate
18 must be destroyed at the conclusion of the proceedings after all appeal delays have
19 lapsed. This Section shall not apply in any case where any sheriff, United States
20 attorney, attorney general, or district attorney makes written request to the state
21 registrar. Upon receipt of such written request, such registrar shall make disclosure
22 to any sheriff, United States attorney, attorney general, or district attorney requesting
23 same, of the contents of birth records in the registrar's custody.

24 * * *

25 §73. Certified copy of the new record; sealing and confidentiality of the original
26 birth record

27 * * *

28 B. This sealed package shall be opened only upon the demand of the adopted
29 person, or if deceased, by his or her descendants, or upon the demand of the adoptive

1 parent, or the state registrar, or the recognized public or private social agency which
2 was a party to the adoption, and then ~~only~~ by order of a Louisiana court of competent
3 jurisdiction at the domicile of the vital records registry, which order shall issue only
4 after a showing of compelling reasons. Information shall be revealed only to the
5 extent necessary to satisfy such compelling necessity.

6 * * *

7 §77. Certified copy for adoptive parents

8 * * *

9 B. Except as provided in R.S. 40:74, this sealed package shall be opened
10 only upon the demand of the adopted person, or if deceased, by his or her
11 descendants, or upon the demand of the adoptive parent, or the state registrar, or the
12 recognized public or private social agency which was a party to the adoption, and
13 then ~~only~~ by order of a Louisiana court of competent jurisdiction at the domicile of
14 the vital records registry which court order shall issue only after a showing of
15 compelling reasons, and opened only to the extent necessary to satisfy such
16 compelling necessity.

17 * * *

18 D. All motions for records under this Section shall be in accordance with and
19 subject to; the provisions of ~~R.S. 9:437~~ the Louisiana Children's Code and, if an
20 adoption agency is involved, the agency shall be served with a copy of the motion
21 as provided in Article 1313 of the Louisiana Code of Civil Procedure.

22 * * *

23 §79. Record of adoption decree

24 A.

25 * * *

26 (4) The state registrar shall seal and file the original certificate of birth with
27 the certificate of the decree. This sealed package may be opened ~~only~~ on the order

1 of a competent court or upon the application of an adoptee twenty-five years of age
2 or older, requesting a noncertified certificate of live birth.

3 * * *

4 §80. Adoptee request for a noncertified copy of an original birth certificate

5 A. Beginning on September 1, 2015, upon written application of an adoptee
6 twenty-five years of age or older, the state registrar shall issue to that adoptee a
7 noncertified copy of the original certificate of live birth of the adoptee. A
8 noncertified copy of an original certificate of live birth shall be subject to the same
9 fees as a certified photocopy or certified record of an original birth record as
10 provided in R.S. 40:40(2).

11 B. Each noncertified copy of certificate of birth shall display the words
12 "Noncertified - Not to be used for identification purposes".

13 C. Prior to the issuance of a noncertified copy of an original certificate of
14 live birth pursuant to Subsection A of this Section, the state registrar shall determine
15 whether a birth parent has filed a contact preference form with the voluntary registry
16 prohibiting the release of identifying information on a noncertified copy of an
17 original certificate of live birth. If a birth parent has filed a contact preference form
18 prohibiting the release of any identifying information, the state registrar shall redact
19 any identifying information from the noncertified copy of the original certificate of
20 live birth prior to issuance of the noncertified copy to the adoptee.

21 D. Noncertified copies of an original certificate of live birth issued pursuant
22 to this Section shall only be issued by the Vital Records Registry. The state registrar
23 shall promulgate the rules necessary for the implementation of the issuance of
24 noncertified copies of certificates of live birth pursuant to this Section on or before
25 September 1, 2014, in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act.

26 Section 3. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
27 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
28 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If

- 1 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
2 effective on the day following such approval.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

Schexnayder

HB No. 1028

Abstract: Provides an adoptee, age 25 and older, access to a noncertified copy of his original birth certificate, authorizes a birth parent to file a contact preference form with the voluntary registry, and provides for a nationwide, public awareness campaign.

Present law (Ch.C. Art. 1271) provides procedures for registration with the voluntary adoption registry.

Proposed law retains present law and requires the office of children and family services to develop and furnish a contact preference form. Further requires a birth parent who files a preference form indicating "No Contact" to submit an updated statement of family history form to the registry. Allows a birth parent to prohibit the release of identifying information on a birth certificate, contact preference form, and updated statement of family history.

Present law (Ch.C. Art. 1272) provides procedures for matching registrants, including notice and mandatory counseling.

Proposed law retains present law and requires the office of children and family services to provide a copy of a contact preference form and updated statement of family history, if available, to the adoptee when an adoptee and birth parent have been matched.

Proposed law (Ch.C. Art. 1272.1) requires the office of children and family services to conduct a one-year-long, nationwide campaign to inform the public that an adoptee who is 25 years old or older may obtain a noncertified copy of his original birth certificate, that the birth parent of an adoptee may file a contact preference form with the registry, that a birth parent may prohibit the release of identifying information, and that a birth parent electing "No Contact" is required to submit an updated statement of family history.

Proposed law further requires the nationwide campaign to include the following:

- (1) Public service announcements and press releases to radio stations and newspapers.
- (2) Announcements posted on DCFS's website and adoption agencies licensed by the state.
- (3) Notices distributed throughout the state to physician's offices, social welfare organizations, and other like entities.
- (4) Notices enclosed with every motor vehicle registration renewal and every driver's license renewal application issued by the office of motor vehicles.

Present law (R.S. 40:41) restricts disclosure of certain records in the custody of the state registrar, including confidential birth information that may disclose whether a child was born of or outside of marriage.

Proposed law retains present law but creates an exception for original birth certificates provided pursuant to R.S. 40:80.

Present law (R.S. 40:73) provides procedures for providing adoptive parents with a new record and requires the original birth certificate to be sealed with other documents related to the adoption. Further restricts opening the sealed package only upon order of a competent court after a showing of compelling reasons.

Proposed law retains present law except it deletes the requirement that an order of the court is the only method by which a sealed package can be opened.

Present law (R.S. 40:77) provides procedures for providing adoptive parents with a new record and requires the original birth certificate to be sealed with other documents related to the adoption. Further restricts opening the sealed package only upon order of a competent court after a showing of compelling reasons.

Proposed law retains present law except it deletes the requirement that an order of the court is the only method by which a sealed package can be opened.

Present law (R.S. 40:79) provides for records of adoption decrees and requires the original birth certificate to be sealed by the state registrar with the certificate of the adoption decree. Further restricts opening the sealed package only upon order of a competent court.

Proposed law retains present law but expands restriction to allow a sealed package to be opened upon the application of an adoptee 25 years old or older who has requested a noncertified original birth certificate.

Proposed law (R.S. 40:80) requires the state registrar to issue a noncertified copy of an original birth certificate and statement of family history to an adoptee who is 25 years old or older upon the adoptee's written application and requires the state registrar to redact any identifying information from the noncertified copy if a birth parent has prohibited the release of any identifying information. Restricts release of the noncertified copy of the birth certificate through the Vital Records Registry and directs the state registrar to promulgate rules for the issuance of the noncertified copy of the birth certificate.

Effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends Ch.C. Arts. 1271(A), 1272(A), (B), and (C), 1273, and 1276 and R.S. 40:41(B)(1), 73(B), 77(B) and (D), and 79(A)(4); Adds Ch.C. Arts. 1271(D), 1272(E), and 1272.1 and R.S. 40:80)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Civil Law and Procedure to the original bill.

1. Required the office of children and family services to conduct a one-year-long, nationwide public awareness campaign to inform the public of proposed law.
2. Changed the effective date of release of the noncertified copy of the original birth certificate from Jan. 1, 2015, to Sept. 1, 2015.
3. Changed the entity authorized to release the noncertified copy of the original birth certificate from the clerk of court to the Vital Records Registry.