

AMENDED IN SENATE AUGUST 22, 2014

AMENDED IN SENATE AUGUST 19, 2014

AMENDED IN SENATE JUNE 3, 2014

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 19, 2014

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2013–14 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1577

Introduced by Assembly Member Atkins
(Coauthor: Assembly Member Ammiano)
(Coauthor: Senator Leno)

January 30, 2014

An act to amend Section 102875 of the Health and Safety Code, relating to certificates of death.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1577, as amended, Atkins. Certificates of death: gender identity.

Existing law establishes the State Department of Public Health under the direction of the State Public Health Officer. Existing law sets forth its powers and duties of the State Public Health Officer, including, but not limited to, designation as the State Registrar of Vital Statistics, having supervisory powers over local registrars and responsible for the uniform and thorough enforcement of provisions relating to the registration of certain vital statistics.

Existing law requires that each death be registered with the local registrar of births and deaths in the district in which the death was officially pronounced or the body was found. Existing law sets forth the persons responsible for completing the certificate of death and the required contents of the certificate, including, but not limited to, the

decedent's name, sex, and birthplace. Certain violations of these requirements are a crime.

This bill would, *commencing July 1, 2015*, require a person completing the certificate of death to record the decedent's sex to reflect the decedent's gender identity. The bill would require the decedent's gender identity to be reported by the informant, unless the person completing the certificate is presented with a specified ~~document or documents memorializing the decedent's gender transition, as specified,~~ *document*, in which case the person completing the certificate would be required to record the decedent's sex as that which corresponds to the decedent's gender identity as indicated in that ~~document, as provided.~~ *document*. The bill would provide that if none of the specified documents are presented and the person with the right, or a majority of persons who have equal rights, to control the disposition of the remains is in disagreement with the gender identity reported by the informant, the gender identity of the decedent recorded on the death certificate is to be as reported by that person or majority of persons. The bill would also provide that if none of the specified documents are presented and a majority of persons who have equal rights to control the disposition of the remains do not agree on the gender identity of the decedent as reported by the informant, any one of those persons may petition the court to determine who among those persons will determine the gender identity of the decedent, as specified.

This bill would, *commencing July 1, 2015*, grant immunity from liability for costs or damages arising from any claims based upon a person entering a decedent's gender as required by this bill. The bill would also require a person completing the death certificate to satisfy certain data and certification requirements, as specified, using the information available to him or her prior to the deadlines for completion.

By changing the definition of existing crimes, and by increasing the responsibility of local officials, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that with regard to certain mandates no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

With regard to any other mandates, this bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs

so mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to the statutory provisions noted above.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. This act shall be known, and may be cited, as the
2 Respect After Death Act.

3 SEC. 2. Section 102875 of the Health and Safety Code is
4 amended to read:

5 102875. The certificate of death shall be divided into two
6 sections.

7 (a) The first section shall contain those items necessary to
8 establish the fact of the death, including all of the following and
9 those other items as the State Registrar may designate:

10 (1) (A) Personal data concerning decedent including full name,
11 sex, color or race, marital status, name of spouse, date of birth and
12 age at death, birthplace, usual residence, and occupation and
13 industry or business.

14 (B) ~~A—Commencing July 1, 2015, a person completing the~~
15 ~~certificate shall record the decedent’s sex to reflect the decedent’s~~
16 ~~gender identity. The decedent’s gender identity shall be reported~~
17 ~~by the informant, unless the person completing the certificate is~~
18 ~~presented with a document that memorializes the decedent’s gender~~
19 ~~transition, including, but not limited to, a birth certificate, a driver’s~~
20 ~~license, a social security record, a court order approving a name~~
21 ~~or gender change, a passport, an advanced health care directive,~~
22 ~~or proof of clinical treatment for gender transition, in which case~~
23 ~~the person completing the certificate shall record the decedent’s~~
24 ~~sex as that which corresponds to the decedent’s gender identity as~~
25 ~~indicated in that document. If the documents provided are in~~
26 ~~conflict regarding the decedent’s gender and are issued on the~~
27 ~~same date, the document evidencing the transition shall prevail.~~
28 ~~If the documents provided are in conflict regarding the decedent’s~~
29 ~~gender and issued on different dates, the most recent document~~
30 ~~shall prevail. If none of these documents are presented and the~~
31 ~~person with the right, or a majority of persons who have equal~~
32 ~~rights, to control the disposition of the remains pursuant to Section~~
33 ~~7100 is in disagreement with the gender identity reported by the~~

1 informant, the gender identity of the decedent recorded on the
 2 death certificate shall be as reported by that person or majority of
 3 persons.

4 (C) ~~If~~ *Commencing July 1, 2015, if* a document specified in
 5 subparagraph (B) is not presented and a majority of persons who
 6 have equal rights to control the disposition of the remains pursuant
 7 to Section 7100 do not agree with the gender identity of the
 8 decedent as reported by the informant, any one of those persons
 9 may file a petition, in the superior court in the county in which the
 10 decedent resided at the time of his or her death, or in which the
 11 remains are located, naming as a party to the action those persons
 12 who otherwise have equal rights to control the disposition and
 13 seeking an order of the court determining, as appropriate, who
 14 among those parties shall determine the gender identity of the
 15 decedent.

16 (D) ~~A~~ *Commencing July 1, 2015, a* person completing the death
 17 certificate in compliance with subparagraph (B) is not liable for
 18 any damages or costs arising from claims related to the sex of the
 19 decedent as entered on the certificate of death.

20 (E) ~~A~~ *Commencing July 1, 2015, a* person completing the death
 21 certificate shall comply with the data and certification requirements
 22 described in Section 102800 by using the information available to
 23 him or her prior to the deadlines for completion specified in that
 24 section.

25 (2) Date of death, including month, day, and year.

26 (3) Place of death.

27 (4) Full name of father and birthplace of father, and full maiden
 28 name of mother and birthplace of mother.

29 (5) Informant.

30 (6) Disposition of body information including signature and
 31 license number of embalmer if body embalmed or name of
 32 embalmer if affixed by attorney-in-fact; name of funeral director,
 33 or person acting as such; and date and place of interment or
 34 removal. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the
 35 contrary, an electronic signature substitute, or some other indicator
 36 of authenticity, approved by the State Registrar may be used in
 37 lieu of the actual signature of the embalmer.

38 (7) Certification and signature of attending physician and
 39 surgeon or certification and signature of coroner when required to
 40 act by law. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the

1 contrary, the person completing the portion of the certificate setting
2 forth the cause of death may attest to its accuracy by use of an
3 electronic signature substitute, or some other indicator of
4 authenticity, approved by the State Registrar in lieu of a signature.

5 (8) Date accepted for registration and signature of local registrar.
6 Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the
7 local registrar may elect to use an electronic signature substitute,
8 or some other indicator of authenticity, approved by the State
9 Registrar in lieu of a signature.

10 (b) The second section shall contain those items relating to
11 medical and health data, including all of the following and other
12 items as the State Registrar may designate:

13 (1) Disease or conditions leading directly to death and
14 antecedent causes.

15 (2) Operations and major findings thereof.

16 (3) Accident and injury information.

17 (4) Information indicating whether the decedent was pregnant
18 at the time of death, or within the year prior to the death, if known,
19 as determined by observation, autopsy, or review of the medical
20 record. This paragraph shall not be interpreted to require the
21 performance of a pregnancy test on a decedent, or to require a
22 review of medical records in order to determine pregnancy.

23 SEC. 3. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to
24 Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution for certain
25 costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district
26 because, in that regard, this act creates a new crime or infraction,
27 eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime
28 or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the
29 Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the
30 meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California
31 Constitution.

32 However, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that
33 this act contains other costs mandated by the state, reimbursement
34 to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made
35 pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division
36 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

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