



State of California

LITTLE HOOVER COMMISSION

December 17, 2015

Pedro Nava
Chairman

Loren Kaye
Vice Chairman

David Beier

Anthony Cannella
Senator

Jack Flanigan

Chad Mayes
Assemblymember

Don Perata

Sebastian Ridley-Thomas
Assemblymember

Richard Roth
Senator

David A. Schwarz

Jonathan Shapiro

Sumi Sousa

Carole D'Elia
Executive Director

The Honorable Eric Linder
Assemblymember, California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 2016
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SUPPORT FOR ASSEMBLY BILL 1238

Dear Assemblymember Linder:

The Little Hoover Commission supports Assembly Bill 1238, the measure you have authored that would authorize the State Registrar, local registrar or county recorder to accept electronic requests for certified copies of vital records without an accompanying notarized statement regarding the requester's identity and allow Californians to complete requests for these records online.

In its 2015 report, *A Customer-Centric Upgrade for California Government*, the Commission urged state leaders to upgrade and improve state government by sharply focusing on customer needs. The Commission found that, for various reasons, the state does not always make it easy or convenient for Californians to get the government services they are entitled to and deserve. Yet, by becoming more customer focused, the Commission suggested the state could dramatically change the nature of its interactions with Californians, begin to better meet their expectations, and ultimately improve the public's trust and confidence in government.

The Commission's report identified opportunities for improved customer experience across state government, including its vital records program. Certified copies of vital records, such as birth, death and marriage certificates, are critical for Californians who want to enroll their children in school or a youth sports program, apply for a driver's license or a passport, update their Social Security card to reflect their new married name, or even those who must help settle the affairs of a deceased loved one and urgently need to provide proof of death to insurance companies, the Social Security Administration or other agencies involved in managing the estate. While the need for copies of these records is often urgent, the Commission found that the process to obtain them can be overly complicated, time consuming and paper-heavy. To make it easier for Californians to apply for and receive copies of these records, the Commission suggested the state move the application and payment processes online and evaluate whether a notary check is necessary.

In its report, the Commission also urged the state to specifically improve services for the most vulnerable, who can least afford to spend time and resources interacting with government. Because Assembly Bill 1238 would help streamline the process to apply for and obtain certified copies of vital records and reduce costs, the Commission supports this measure.

As the bill moves through the legislative process, I will be writing letters on behalf of the Commission to legislators urging aye votes. If you have any questions, or if I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Carole D'Elia
Executive Director

c: Commissioners, Little Hoover Commission