Testimony for Little Hoover Commission public hearing reviewing the nature and quality of interactions between California state government and the public
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<u>Vital Registration and Certified Copy Processing:</u>
Nearly one million vital events are registered in California each year. Statute requires birth, death, marriage, and fetal death certificates to be registered by the local registrar or clerk/recorder in the county where the event occurred within eight to ten days, then records are transmitted to state vital records (VR) office for state registration and record preservation. Traditional paper registration processes created weeks to months of lag time between county registration and submittal to state VR for registration. VR has focused in recent years on strategies to automate registration and increase efficiency, to decrease customer request processing time.

<u>Processing History and Improvements:</u>
VR has been successfully improving certified copy processing times since 2009 to better serve VR customers. In 2009, VR average processing time for certified copies was about 11 weeks. By contrast, as of March 2015, VR reported average processing time at 1.5 weeks (or 7.7 days).   To accomplish these significant improvements, VR has focused on strategies to cut record registration lag times, and increase certified copy processing efficiency, through:

- Creation of the Center Request Tracking System (CRTS) database-used to efficiently track incoming certified copy requests and processing.
- Automation of registration for births, deaths, fetal deaths, including:
    - The imaging of records (birth, death, and marriage). This exponentially speeds up the location and issuance of certified copies.
    - California Electronic Death Registration System (CA-EDRS) - over 99% of death certificates are now registered fully electronically, cutting out weeks to months from the traditional paper local and state registration process.
    - California Fetal Death Registration System (CA-FDRS) - similar to CA-EDRS, this electronic system was implemented in 2013.
    - Automated Vital Statistics System (AVSS) - utilized by birth clerks and health departments to collect data and register over half a million birth certificates on an annual basis. VR is currently developing an electronic birth registration system that will allow for a paperless registration system with electronic signatures, to be implemented within the next couple years.
- Vital Records Image Redaction and Statewide Access (VRIRSA) system - electronic repository of vital record documents; each year, large quantities of older records are scanned and added to make issuance of copies more efficient.
- Increased and ongoing training offered to county registration staff to improve document quality and registration efficiency.

<u>Continued Customer Focused Goals:</u>
VR continues with efforts to improve processing times and efficiency. This is apparent in Goal 5 of Center for Health Statistics and Informatics (CHSI) current strategic plan; that by January 2016, customers that request certified copies will receive a response within ten days or less from the date the request is received. VR is currently meeting this goal. VR is also currently developing an automated database to electronically register birth certificates, as well as continuing to scan older vital records into the VRIRSA system to make issuance of certified copies more efficient.

Figures:

Counties process more than 90% of certified copy requests every year; counties may issue certified copies of vital events as soon as they are registered locally.

Number of County Certified Copies

	Birth	Death	Fetal Death	Marriage	Confidential Marriage	TOTAL
FY 13-14	1,406,325	1,570,665	1,863	440,004	83,499	3,502,356
FY 12-13	1,444,628	1,652,752	1,875	380,587	74,565	3,554,407
FY 11-12	1,477,377	1,670,880	2,157	357,763	82,595	3,590,772
FY 10-11	1,548,190	1,660,119	1,934	353,988	76,587	3,640,818

Number of State Certified Copies

	Birth	Death	Fetal Death**	Marriage	Confidential Marriage**	TOTAL
FY 13-14	66,785	19,684	-	953	-	87,422
FY 12-13	78,968	22,957	-	1,049	-	102,974
FY 11-12	85,678	21,597	-	883	-	108,158
FY 10-11	92,477	27,436	-	832	-	120,745

** Minimal copies fetal death and no confidential marriages are issued at the state level

The below chart shows all certified copy requests processed by type.

Certified Copy Requests Processed (VRIPB)

2014	Birth	Death	Marriages	Dissolutions
January	4714	1314	242	116
February	5600	1835	251	109
March	6248	1480	236	102
April	6674	1489	244	120
May	5794	1635	263	139
June	5313	1506	255	152
July	5940	1449	277	110
August	5450	1443	213	109
September	5326	1558	219	103
October	4703	1266	232	84
November	3783	1232	198	69
December	4270	1252	205	80
Total	63815	17459	2835	1293
% of Total	74.7%	20.4%	3.3%	1.5%

Vital Records Issuance and Preservation Branch
Average Time to Complete Requests for Certified Copies (in calendar days)

2014												2015		
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
27.3	23.9	22.2	23.1	19.6	14.2	12.9	14.0	13.7	6.7	8.7	8.3	8.7	12.0	7.7

Source: CRTS raw data pull for 2014