

## Department of Planning and Budget

### 2023 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. **Bill Number:** HB1969

**House of Origin**    ☒ Introduced    ☐ Substitute    ☐ Engrossed  
**Second House**    ☐ In Committee    ☐ Substitute    ☐ Enrolled

2. **Patron:** Walker

3. **Committee:** Health, Welfare, and Institutions

4. **Title:** Adult adoptee access to original birth certificate.

5. **Summary:** Grants adoptees 18 years of age or older access to their original birth certificate.

6. **Budget Amendment Necessary:** Yes. Item 340 – DSS, Item 290 - VDH

7. **Fiscal Impact Estimates:**

**7a. Expenditure Impact:**

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Positions</i>	<i>Fund</i>
2024	\$80,055	1	Undetermined, see Item 8
2025	\$101,510	1	Undetermined, see Item 8
2026	\$101,510	1	Undetermined, see Item 8
2027	\$101,510	1	Undetermined, see Item 8
2028	\$101,510	1	Undetermined, see Item 8
2029	\$101,510	1	Undetermined, see Item 8
2030	\$101,510	1	Undetermined, see Item 8

**7b. Revenue Impact:**

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Fund</i>
2024	\$4,200	02601 -VDH
	\$75,855	Undetermined, see Item 8 - DSS
2025	\$4,200	02601 -VDH
	\$97,310	Undetermined, see Item 8 - DSS
2026	\$4,200	02601 -VDH
	\$97,310	Undetermined, see Item 8 - DSS
2027	\$4,200	02601 -VDH
	\$97,310	Undetermined, see Item 8 - DSS
2028	\$4,200	02601 -VDH
	\$97,310	Undetermined, see Item 8 - DSS
2029	\$4,200	02601 -VDH
	\$97,310	Undetermined, see Item 8 - DSS

2030

\$4,200  
\$97,310

02601 -VDH  
Undetermined, see Item 8 - DSS

- 8. Fiscal Implications:** This legislation would shift the responsibility for mailing the birth certificate to the adult adoptee from the State Registrar to the Commissioner of Social Services. Additionally, the bill adds language to Section 63.2-1246, Code of Virginia, to require the Commissioner of Social Services to provide the adult adoptee access to view and obtain copies of their original birth certificate when they request to do so in writing and show proof of their identification, which is currently the responsibility of the State Registrar. The bill also allows the Commissioner to charge a reasonable fee to cover the associated cost and allows the Commissioner 30 days to complete the request.

Virginia currently has over 185,000 closed adoption records. As a result of this legislation, the Department of Social Services (DSS) estimates that approximately 75 percent of adult adoptees would become eligible simultaneously to request and have access to their original birth certificates. This legislation will create an initial and ongoing influx of applications and system backlog for both DSS and the State Registrar. DSS currently receives approximately 350 birth certificate requests annually. Currently, DSS only processes requests for birth certificates when the birth parents cannot be identified from the adoption file to assist in conducting a search, and only if good cause was shown by the adoptee.

The proposed legislation would eliminate the need for good cause and the completion of a search for the birth parents to obtain permission to release identifying information about them. At present, the local departments of social services only use the birth certificate to assist in their own search and do not release it to the adoptee. Under this legislation, the agency anticipates doubling the current workload to 700, with 350 new searches resulting from this bill. It takes approximately six hours to process a request and will require one additional home office staff to sustain the increase, manage and provide related technical assistance and training. Assuming a partial year of employment in the first year, the cost of this position is \$76,855 (\$102,473 x .75) in FY 2024 and \$97,310 in FY 2025 and each year thereafter. Staffing costs include salary, benefits, non-personal position costs, and a one-time on-boarding charge in the first year. These amounts are also shown in the table in Item 7 as revenue to DSS, assuming DSS is able to implement a fee for this process, as allowed in the bill.

The State Registrar is responsible for unsealing a birth certificate, so the Department of Health (VDH) and DSS will need to develop a process facilitating the release of the birth certificate. The cost to receive a birth certificate in Virginia is \$12. With an additional 350 new searches it will cost DSS \$4,200 (350 x \$12 annually to receive birth certificates from the State Registrar. This amount is also shown in the table in Item 7 as revenue to VDH. The bill allows the DSS to charge a fee to provide access to or copies of original birth certificates. It is assumed that DSS can institute a fee that will cover the cost of the position

hired to do this work, along with the cost of obtaining the birth certificate from the State Registrar. If not, the costs will need to be funded by general fund dollars.

According to the Department of Health, administration of this legislation does not have a fiscal impact on the agency. However, the agency will have revenue increases of \$4,200 annually as a result of the increase in adoptees requesting their birth certificates through DSS.

**9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected:** Department of Social Services,  
Department of Health

**10. Technical Amendment Necessary:** No.

**11. Other Comments:** None.