

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 3804
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Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Current law requires a person who is required to file a death certificate or fetal death certificate to fill out a standard vital statistics form; a form that is not always clear or legible once completed by the user. Costs associated with improving the required forms can be absorbed by appropriations already awarded to the Department of State Health Services.

H.B. 3804 requires the department to change the form of death certificates and fetal death certificates to require the person filing the form to insert punctuation, use more legible lettering, and enter dates and times in a manner which improves the readability of the certificate.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 3804 amends the Health and Safety Code to require the Department of State Health Services to ensure that, in prescribing the form and contents of death certificates and fetal death certificates, the form instructs the person required to file the death certificate or fetal death certificate to enter the date in the standard order of "month, day, year;" spell out the name of the month when entering the date; spell out the name of the deceased using both capital and lowercase letters; use parentheses around the abbreviation "aka;" and express the time of death in a 24-hour military time format.

H.B. 3804 requires the department to revise and make available the required forms not later than January 1, 2010. The bill clarifies that a person required to file a death certificate or fetal death certificate is not required to use the revised form before February 1, 2010.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the act does not receive the necessary vote, the act takes effect September 1, 2009.