

By: Slawson

H.B. No. 4611

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to certain voluntary registries in relation to the adoption of or the termination of parental rights regarding a child.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 160.422(a), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) The vital statistics unit shall furnish a certificate of the results of a search of the registry not later than the 10th business day after the date of the receipt of a [en] request by an individual, a court, or an agency listed in Section 160.412(b).

SECTION 2. Section 162.405(b), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b) On receiving an inquiry by an adoptee, birth parent, or sibling who has provided satisfactory proof of age and identity ~~[and paid all required inquiry fees]~~, the administrator of the central registry shall review the information on file in the central index and consult with the administrators of other registries in the state to determine the identity of any appropriate registry through which the adoptee, birth parent, or sibling may register.

SECTION 3. Section 162.407, Family Code, is amended by amending Subsections (a) and (d) and adding Subsection (d-1) to read as follows:

(a) The administrator shall require each registration applicant to sign a written application or electronically sign an online application.

(d) The administrator may not accept an application for registration unless the applicant:

(1) provides proof of identity as provided by Section 162.408; and

(2) establishes the applicant's eligibility to register[~~, and~~

~~[(3) pays all required registration fees]~~.

(d-1) The administrator shall ensure that an applicant may submit the application and proof of identity under Subsection (d) through an online submission portal.

SECTION 4. Section 162.409(a), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) An application must contain:

(1) the name, address, ~~[and]~~ telephone number, and e-mail address of the applicant;

(2) any other name or alias by which the applicant has been known;

(3) the age, date of birth, and place of birth of the applicant;

(4) the original name of the adoptee, if known;

(5) the adoptive name of the adoptee, if known;

(6) a statement that the applicant is willing to allow the applicant's identity to be disclosed to a registrant who is eligible to learn the applicant's identity;

1 (7) the name, address, and telephone number of the
2 agency or other entity, organization, or person placing the adoptee
3 for adoption, if known, or, if not known, a statement that the
4 applicant does not know that information;

5 (8) an authorization to the administrator and the
6 administrator's designees to inspect all vital statistics records,
7 court records, and agency records, including confidential records,
8 relating to the birth, adoption, marriage, and divorce of the
9 applicant or to the birth and death of any child or sibling by birth
10 or adoption of the applicant;

11 (9) the specific address to which the applicant wishes
12 notice of a successful match to be mailed;

13 (10) a statement that the applicant either does or
14 does not consent to disclosure of identifying information about the
15 applicant after the applicant's death;

16 (11) a statement that the registration is to be
17 effective for 99 years or for a stated shorter period selected by
18 the applicant; and

19 (12) a statement that the adoptee applicant either
20 does or does not desire to be informed that registry records
21 indicate that the applicant has a biological sibling who has
22 registered under this subchapter.

23 SECTION 5. Section 162.412(b), Family Code, is amended to
24 read as follows:

25 (b) The administrator does not have a duty to search for a
26 registrant who fails to register a change of name or address, except
27 that the administrator shall attempt to contact by e-mail a

1 registrant who has provided an e-mail address if a match has been
2 made but a name or address discrepancy is preventing the
3 administrator from confirming the match.

4 SECTION 6. Section 162.416(a), Family Code, is amended to
5 read as follows:

6 (a) When a match has been made and confirmed to the
7 administrator's satisfaction, the administrator shall mail to each
8 registrant, at the registrant's last known address, by fax or
9 registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, delivery
10 restricted to addressee only, a written notice:

11 (1) informing the registrant that a match has been
12 made and confirmed;

13 (2) reminding the registrant that the registrant may
14 withdraw the registration before disclosures are made, if desired;
15 and

16 (3) notifying the registrant that before any
17 identifying disclosures are made, the registrant must [+

18 [~~(A)~~] sign a written consent to disclosure that
19 allows the disclosure of identifying information about the other
20 registrants to the registrant and allows the disclosure of
21 identifying information about the registrant to other
22 registrants[+]

23 [~~(B)~~ participate in counseling for not less than
24 one hour with a social worker or mental health professional who has
25 expertise in postadoption counseling; and

26 [~~(C)~~ provide the administrator with written
27 certification that the counseling required under Subdivision (B)

1 ~~has been completed~~].

2 SECTION 7. Sections 162.411 and 162.413, Family Code, are
3 repealed.

4 SECTION 8. Section 160.422, Family Code, as amended by this
5 Act, applies only to a request for a search of the state registry of
6 paternity made on or after the effective date of this Act. A
7 request for a search of the state registry of paternity made before
8 the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect on
9 the date the request was made, and the former law is continued in
10 effect for that purpose.

11 SECTION 9. As soon as practicable after the effective date
12 of this Act, the vital statistics unit of the Department of State
13 Health Services shall update as necessary the application as
14 required by Section 162.409(a), Family Code, as amended by this
15 Act.

16 SECTION 10. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.