



# JOAN BALLWEG

WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE

PO Box 8952, State Capitol  
Madison, Wisconsin 53708-8952  
Toll-free: (888) 534-0041  
Fax: (608) 282-3641  
Rep.Ballweg@legis.wi.gov

41<sup>ST</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AB 633: Statewide Record Issuance  
Testimony of State Representative Joan Ballweg  
Assembly Committee on State Affairs and Government Operations  
January 20, 2016

Thank you, Chair Swearingen, and members of the Committee on State Affairs and Government Operations for holding this public hearing.

Under current law, you may obtain a copy of your vital record only from the county in which the event took place. That is, the county in which the birth, marriage, or death happened. Also under current law, you may only obtain a copy of the divorce certificate from the state vital records office. The state registrar has implemented a statewide vital records master file (SVRIS), all birth, marriage, death and divorce records are now created electronically and printed from this master file.

Assembly Bill 633 would allow county register of deeds, our local vital records offices, to issue any applicable record available in SVRIS statewide regardless of the place of occurrence or place of residence. It will also allow for issuance of divorce certificates at the local register of deeds office.

This bill provides more convenience for our state residents. I was born and married in Milwaukee County. My husband was born in Dane County. I can't get copies of those records in my home county of Green Lake. Under current law, I would be required to go to Milwaukee and Dane Counties to purchase these records.

SVRIS doesn't have all the records online yet, the state vital records office needs to complete back scanning and indexing of older vital records as time and budgetary conditions permit.

Currently all applicable birth records from 1994 through today will be available to issue statewide, all death records from September 1, 2013 to current will be available statewide, all marriage records from May 18, 2015 to current will be available statewide and all divorce records from January 1, 2016 to current will be available to issue statewide at the local register of deeds office.

Some confidential records will continue to be only available through the state vital records office, but the most requested records like birth, marriage, divorce, and death will be available through the new statewide issuance system.

Thank you and I'm happy to answer any questions.



# Van H. Wanggaard

Wisconsin State Senator

January 20, 2016

## Assembly Bill 633 Testimony

Thank you Chairman Swearingen and committee members for hearing Assembly Bill 633 today. This bill is a simple update to current statute that will greatly benefit all Wisconsin citizens. If this measure is passed, anyone who has available records on file in any county in Wisconsin would be able to obtain them from any county Register of Deeds or local vital records office.

Under current law, a person may obtain a copy of a birth, marriage or death record only from the county in which the respective event occurred, or the residence county of the birth or descendant. Marriage records are available only in the county the marriage took place. A copy of a divorce certificate may only be acquired from the state vital records office. The inconsistent process as it currently stands is quite burdensome.

In order to keep up with ever-changing technology, the state registrar recently began creating and printing electronic birth, marriage, death, and divorce records through the statewide vital records master file (SVRIS). The implementation of this system has rendered current law and its subsequent practice outdated.

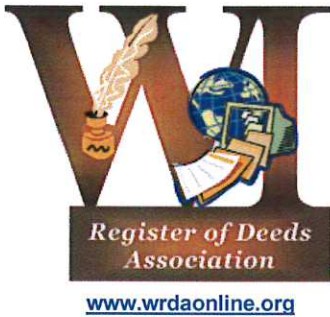
Assembly Bill 633 would allow an individual to obtain their available vital records from any Register of Deeds or vital records office in which they reside, regardless of where the initial record was issued. This bill eliminates unnecessary hurdles and makes government more modern and efficient, which in turn improves service to Wisconsin citizens.

This bill is supported by the Wisconsin Counties Association, the Wisconsin Funeral Directors Association, the Wisconsin Land Title Association, and several Register of Deeds from around the state. I urge you to support this bill as well.

---

Serving Racine and Kenosha Counties - Senate District 21

State Capitol, P.O. Box 7882, Madison, WI 53707-7882 • (608) 266-1832 • Toll-free (866) 615-7510  
Sen.Wanggaard@legis.wi.gov • SenatorWanggaard.com



**Staci Hoffman**

President  
311 S Center Ave, Room 102  
Jefferson, WI 53549  
☎ (920)674-7236

**Carey Petersilka**

1st Vice President  
☎ (920)746-2271  
[cpetersilka@co.door.wi.us](mailto:cpetersilka@co.door.wi.us)

**Beth Pabst**

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
☎ (715)386-4652  
[beth.pabst@co.saint-croix.wi.us](mailto:beth.pabst@co.saint-croix.wi.us)

**Tyson Fettes**

3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President  
☎ (262)636-3709  
[tyson.fettes@goracine.org](mailto:tyson.fettes@goracine.org)

**Christine Planasch**

Secretary  
☎ (920) 386-3720  
[cplanasch@co.dodge.wi.us](mailto:cplanasch@co.dodge.wi.us)

**Sharon Martin**

Treasurer  
☎ (262) 306-2225  
[sharon.martin@co.washington.wi.us](mailto:sharon.martin@co.washington.wi.us)

**Julie Pagel**

Past President  
☎ (920) 236-4487  
[jpagel@co.winnebago.wi.us](mailto:jpagel@co.winnebago.wi.us)

January 18, 2016

RE: 2016 Assembly bill AB633

Dear Committee on State Affairs & Government Operations:

The Wisconsin Register of Deeds Association (WRDA) would like to go on record supporting AB633 requiring a state and local registrar to issue a vital record if the requested record is available for statewide issuance in the state registrar's electronic system for vital record issuance.

Register of Deeds Comments

- **Access and Ease of Distribution of Records to Public.** No longer would residents have to travel to other counties or wait for the mail to arrive to get records like birth and marriage certificates. The vital record data would be able to be accessed and utilized by all registers in the state. It would be a "one stop shop" and would eliminate the chance a customer would be turned away when arriving for a vital record at an incorrect county.
- **Improved Timeliness.** The advancements in technology will now make it possible for our citizens to get the services they need. This is possible because of data collection and sharing between the state and local registrars.
- **Collaboration with State and Local Registrars.** The State and Local Registrars have formed a Charter to facilitate the goal of creating a statewide issuance Masterfile. This will provide for integrity, safety and accuracy of the vital records provided to the public. Some specialized transactions will still only be available through the State Vital Record Office, but divorce records will now be available statewide with this bill's passage.

As elected officials we are constantly seeking ways to improve the amenities we provide. Statewide issuance of vital records is a common-sense way to utilize the current system in a manner that will immediately improve services to our constituents.

Granting citizen's access to their vital records from anywhere in the state is good government and provides numerous advantages to the public. This is also true for local businesses like title companies, attorneys, funeral homes, and banks, obtaining records on behalf of their customers.

*Carey Petersilka, WRDA Co Legislative Chair/ 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, Door County Register*

*Tyson Fettes WRDA 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President and Racine County Register*

*Sarah Van Camp, WRDA Vitals Chair, Outagamie County Register*