



# Van H. Wanggaard

Wisconsin State Senator

January 28, 2016

## Senate Bill 507 Testimony

Thank you Chair Vukmir and committee members for hearing Senate Bill 507 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 The implementation of this system has rendered current law and its subsequent practice outdated.

Senate Bill 507 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.

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January 28, 2016

RE: 2016 Assembly bill SB507

Dear Committee on Health and Human Services:

The Wisconsin Register of Deeds Association (WRDA) would like to go on record supporting SB507 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.

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"Few things have to last as long as county records."