



THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW JERSEY

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24 April 2005

The Honorable Joan M. Quigley
Deputy Speaker
New Jersey Assembly
The Hamilton Park Foundry
242 Tenth St., Suite 101
Jersey City, NJ 07302

Re: Assembly Bill 3806

Dear Assemblywoman Quigley:

This letter is to express the concerns of the Genealogical Society of New Jersey (“GSNJ”) regarding Assembly Bill 3806, of which you are a primary sponsor. GSNJ is a non-profit organization with nearly 800 members. Our goals are to discover, preserve, and publish whatever may pertain to genealogies of families and individuals associated or identified with the State of New Jersey.

While we recognize the need to protect the privacy of individuals, we are seeking a balanced solution that will allow appropriate access to the family history information that the genealogical community desires while still providing the security for records you support. We respectfully suggest a small, but important, amendment to accommodate the legitimate interests of family historians.

Vital records are an important source of information to historians and genealogists, providing such information as names, birth dates and places, marriage dates, death dates, and other valuable information. GSNJ strongly supports the intent of Assembly Bill 3806 to protect individual privacy and to prevent terrorism. However, GSNJ believes the bill can still meet these important objectives and allow genealogical, historical and medical family research, by amending Assembly Bill 3806 slightly to include the following suggested language in section 3.b as a new subsection (5):

“(5) informational or non-certified copies of records to anyone after 80 years have elapsed with birth records, 50 years with marriage records and 40 years with death records.”

The passage of time (80, 50 or 40 years, as the case may be) ensures the vital records cannot be used for identity theft. The non-certified nature of the copies ensures the records cannot be used by terrorists to obtain fraudulent identification documents. Further, these restrictions meet with current Department of Vital Records regulations and restrictions authorized under NJAC 8:2, NJAC 8:2A and NJAC 8:2B.

Thank you for considering this proposed amendment. I can be available to discuss this matter with you at your request. I would be happy to meet with you at your local office or in Trenton. I can be reached at 201-896-9699 or 201-306-0598 and my email address is: jml-gsnj@earthlink.net. Again, we express our sincere support for your desire to prevent identity theft and terrorism by securing vital records.

Sincerely,

Joan M. Lowry
President