



*Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Secretary*

March 26, 2026

The Honorable Pamela Beidle  
Chair, Finance Committee  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: House Bill 939 – Certificates of Birth - Filing - Time Period – Letter of Support with Amendments**

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (the Department) respectfully submits this letter of support with amendments on House Bill (HB) 939 – Certificates of Birth - Filing - Time Period. HB 939 modifies the statutory period for registering a child’s name, allowing for naming more than five days after birth. Specifically, HB 939 as amended would maintain the time to register all births in Maryland as within 5 days, unless a parent notifies the Division of Vital Records within 5 days of the birth, in which case the certificate may be filed within 10 days.

The current five-day birth registration requirement is in as many as 20 other states in the US, and Vital Statistics Administration (VSA) data shows that as recently as December 2025, 99.12% of birth certificates in Maryland were filed within five days or less. This significant extension could impact VSA weekly reporting to the National Center for Health Statistics and the Social Security Administration, delay linkages for infant deaths, delay the surrogacy process or delay finalizing adoptions for families, among other impacts across different Maryland communities.

VSA currently allows for birth certificates to be filed without a name and has a process in place for parents to add their child’s name to the birth certificate at no charge with a notarized affidavit at any point after the child’s birth. While VSA understands there are instances when a certificate may need to be registered outside of the current five-day time period, this requirement ensures the timely availability of birth certificates for the majority of constituents.

The Department is committed to serving all Maryland communities. Therefore, in line with the intent of SB 939, the Department proposes a targeted amendment to ensure that the process for delaying a birth registration, when requested by the parent(s), is in line with effective processes

while also meeting the needs of constituents. See attached for an amendment that would allow a birth certificant registrant to delay registering a birth, up to 10 days, upon a parent's request.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Meghan Lynch, Director of Governmental Affairs at [meghan.lynch@maryland.gov](mailto:meghan.lynch@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Meena Seshamani', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D  
Secretary of Health

AMENDMENT TO HOUSE BILL 939, AS AMENDED  
(Third Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT No.1

On page 3, in line 4, strike "**A CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH MAY BE FILED WITHIN 10 DAYS AFTER THE BIRTH OCCURRED IF A PARENT OF THE CHILD NOTIFIES THE DIVISION OF VITAL RECORDS IN A MANNER REQUIRED BY THE SECRETARY AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE AFTER BIRTH, BUT NOT LATER THAN 5 DAYS AFTER THE BIRTH OCCURS.**" and substitute "**WITHIN 5 CALENDAR DAYS AFTER A BIRTH OCCURS, AT THE REQUEST OF THE PARENT(S), THE PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR FILING A BIRTH CERTIFICATE MAY DELAY THE FILING OF THE CERTIFICATE. THE DELAYED CERTIFICATE SHALL BE FILED WITHIN 10 CALENDAR DAYS AFTER THE BIRTH OCCURS.**"

**(i) THE PARENT'S REQUEST SHALL BE ON THE FORM THAT THE SECRETARY PROVIDES.**"

*Rationale:* The rationale for the amendment is to clarify the process for requesting the delayed filing.