

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS BRIAN WORRELL, GABRIELA COLETTA, RUTHZEE LOUIJEUNE, DURKAN, FLYNN, MEJIA, MURPHY, SANTANA AND WEBER



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER TO AMEND CITY OF BOSTON CODE CH. 18, SEC. 1.2B TO MAKE CERTIFICATES OF BIRTH AND DEATH FREE

WHEREAS, The City of Boston currently charges \$12 to obtain a certificate of birth, or death, and \$14 to obtain a certificate of birth, or death through the mail; *and*

WHEREAS, Birth certificates are needed for many things, including enrolling in a free, public education, starting a youth job, re-entering the workforce after incarceration, and obtaining a marriage certificate; *and*

WHEREAS, Death certificates are necessary for next-of-kin to access accounts, benefits, and more; *and*

WHEREAS, There was an annual average of 20,548 births and 8,420 deaths in Boston during 2020-23; *and*

WHEREAS, The Boston Finance Commission issued an advisory in December 2024 that these fees can be an obstacle to employment and thus should be removed; *and*

WHEREAS, Constituents have reported being charged more than \$50 through online services to obtain their birth, and death certificates, and making it free would make residents more cognizant that it's free and thus less likely to fall for these online services; *and*

WHEREAS, The City of Boston waived all library late fees in 2022 in a similar vein of the public good and reducing financial barriers; *and*

WHEREAS, It would be best to waive all fees to obtain a birth, or death certificate; **NOW, THEREFORE**

Be it ordained by the City Council of Boston as follows:

Section 1.

The City of Boston Code, Ordinances, Chapter 18, Section 1.2B clause 13 is hereby amended by striking "birth," " or death" and "and in the case of a certificate as to the record of a birth an additional fee of forty (\$40.00) dollars if the request is made on a weekend or a holiday." from the first sentence. This section shall be further amended by adding the following sentence after

the first sentence, “The fee of the City Registrar for furnishing a certificate as to the record of a birth, or death shall be free.”

Section 2.

The City of Boston Code, Ordinances, Chapter 18, Section 1.2B clause 14 is hereby amended by striking “birth,” and “, or death”. This section shall be further amended by adding the following sentence after the first sentence, “The fee of the City Registrar for furnishing a certified copy of a record or paper relating to a birth, or death shall be free.”

Section 3.

The City of Boston Code, Ordinances, Chapter 18, Section 1.2B clause 14A is hereby amended by striking “birth,” and “, or death”. This section shall be further amended by adding the following sentence after the first sentence, “The fee of the City Registrar for furnishing a certified copy of a record or paper relating to a birth, or death by mail shall be free.”

Section 4.

The provisions of this ordinance are severable and if any provision, or portion thereof, should be held to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, such unconstitutionality or invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions, which remain in full force and effect.

Section 5.

The provisions of this ordinance shall be effective immediately upon passage.

Filed on: January 13, 2025