



JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF OREGON

April 9, 2013

Mitch Greenlick, Ph.D.
Chair, Oregon House Health Care Committee
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE H-493
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 2093

Dear Chairman Greenlick, Vice-Chairs Keny-Guyer, Thompson and Members of the OR House Health Care Committee:

I am the current President of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Oregon and am writing on behalf of our membership. We became aware of HB 2093 as vital records are extremely valuable to genealogists. Without access to these records, we are severely hampered in our efforts to research personal family history.

Some states, such as Maine, have access processes that are more open than Oregon's current practices. For instance, Maine allows genealogists immediate access to records via a researcher card (registration) rather than waiting the newly established 100-50-25 years wait periods. It is my understanding that HB 2093 is a result of an anticipated change in the records standards nationally which have not yet been finalized. Please do not impose even more restrictive access than may be necessary. We understand the committee may also amend the bill to remove cause of death from death records. Many researchers are endeavoring to learn about the genetic legacy of their families and how it may impact their life choices. We would ask that the cause of death be retained on the death records. Such information has added to the knowledge of certain congenital disorders that concentrate in different ethnic groups. That family medical history is critically important to us all.

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Oregon is also a member of the International Society of Jewish Genealogical Societies. As such we have been kept apprised of various potential changes in records access. I know my colleague Jan Meisels Allen has also been in correspondence with you; she is truly an authority on similar legislation and the policies involved and is an excellent resource.

I hope that at your hearing on Wednesday, April 10, the Oregon House Health Care Committee will not recommend the extension of the wait periods for access.

Please contact Ms. Meisels Allen (vicepresident@iajgs.org) for more information or you are most welcome to contact me. Thank you for the work you do on behalf of all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

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