

August 10, 2015

SENATE BILL NO. 1195

To the Senate:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Senate Bill No. 1195 without my approval.

This bill provides for the issuance of an amended birth certificate to a person who submits a form to the State registrar indicating that the person has undergone gender transition treatment. In addition, the bill permits a minor to apply for an amended birth certificate under these circumstances if the application is submitted by a parent or guardian on behalf of the minor. Finally, the bill provides that the amended certificate of birth shall be of the same general type as the original certificate and "shall not be marked as amended."

Last year, I vetoed identical legislation noting that a birth certificate is one of the most important legal documents that a person possesses and that proposed measures to revise the standards for the issuance of amended birth certificates must be accompanied by appropriate safeguards to mitigate security-related risks. Birth certificates unlock access to many of our nation and State's critical and protected benefits such as passports, driver's licenses, and social services, as well as other important security-dependent allowances. Accordingly, I remain committed to the principle that efforts to significantly alter State law concerning the issuance of vital records that have the potential to create legal uncertainties should be closely scrutinized and sparingly approved.

Unlike many other states that require court intervention, which can be prolonged and expensive, New Jersey already affords

applicants an expedited administrative route to process requests for changes to birth certificates based on gender. To appropriately balance that streamlined practice, further changes to current standards must also include safeguards to prevent against fraud, deception, and abuse.

When I vetoed this same bill last session, I asked the Legislature to consider incorporating appropriate measures to alleviate the security concerns and legal uncertainties that would be created by this legislation. Once again, I ask the Legislature to reconsider this proposal and to bring forth legislation that addresses these legitimate and significant concerns.

Accordingly, I am returning Senate Bill No. 1195 without my approval.

Respectfully,

/s/ Chris Christie

Governor

[seal]

Attest:

/s/ Thomas P. Scrivo

Chief Counsel to the Governor