

May 17, 2025

RE: **Memorandum of Support for S7782/A8314** – Vital Records Digitization

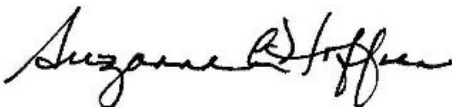
The Association of Professional Genealogists (APG) strongly supports S7782/A8314, a bill that will modernize and improve access to New York State’s historical birth, marriage, divorce, and death records, delivering on promises that previous legislative proposals failed to meet. This legislation represents a modern approach that aligns with the needs of researchers, government, *and* the public by mandating the publication of digitized vital records and enshrining public access to indices along with their underlying certificates. This bill will substantially improve and possibly eliminate the Department of Health’s (DOH) long-standing backlog of genealogy requests, which is currently five years long.

The proposed law directly supports APG’s mission to promote the accessibility of historical records for genealogical research. Our membership includes more than 120 New York-based professional genealogists, with hundreds more who research New York families daily. APG’s more than 2,000 members worldwide understand the critical value of public access to historic records —not only for professional genealogists but also for the public they serve. Access to records such as historical births, marriages, and deaths is a key component in historical research, medical history tracing, and estate settlement. By enabling public access to these digitized historic records, New York can join the ranks of dozens of states and countries that have built accessible systems for vital records management.

APG applauds the components of the bill: the requirement to digitize and publish records, the publishing of public indices, and the careful consideration of the appropriate privacy needs of the data. The Association of Professional Genealogists urges the New York State Legislature to swiftly pass S07782/A8314.

Modernizing the state's approach to vital records ensures access to the state’s history and reduces government inefficiency. We stand ready to work with stakeholders and agencies to implement these reforms in a manner that benefits all New Yorkers—past, present, and future.

Respectfully,



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