

The Senate Special Judiciary Committee offered the following substitute to SB 192:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 8 of Title 19 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 adoption, so as to change the provisions relating to access to records; to correct the name of
3 the Office of Adoptions; to amend Chapter 10 of Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia
4 Annotated, relating to vital records, so as to change the provisions relating to the contents of
5 certificates and to reports and records; to change provisions relating to practices and
6 procedures; to provide for receipt of a copy of his or her original birth certificate by an
7 adopted person in certain circumstances; to provide for applicability; to provide an effective
8 date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

10 Chapter 8 of Title 19 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to adoption, is
11 amended by striking subsection (a) of Code Section 19-8-23, relating to records of adoption,
12 examination of such records by parties and attorneys, and use of such information, and
13 inserting in its place the following:
14

15 "(a) The original petition, all amendments and exhibits thereto, all motions, documents,
16 affidavits, records, and testimony filed in connection therewith, and all decrees or orders
17 of any kind whatsoever, except the original investigation report and background
18 information referred to in Code Section 19-8-20, shall be recorded in a book kept for that
19 purpose and properly indexed; and the book shall be part of the records of the court in each
20 county which has jurisdiction over matters of adoption in that county. ~~All~~ Except as
21 otherwise provided for birth certificates by Code Section 31-10-14, all of the records,
22 including the docket book, of the court granting the adoption, of the department, and of the
23 child-placing agency that relate in any manner to the adoption shall be kept sealed and
24 locked. This subsection shall not supersede or affect the availability of birth certificates
25 pursuant to the procedure contained in Code Section 31-10-14. The records may be
26 examined by the parties at interest in the adoption and their attorneys when, after written
27 petition has been presented to the court having jurisdiction and after the department and the

1 appropriate child-placing agency have received at least 30 days' prior written notice of the
 2 filing of such petition, the matter has come on before the court in chambers and, good
 3 cause having been shown to the court, the court has entered an order permitting such
 4 examination. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the adoptee who is the subject of the
 5 records sought to be examined is less than 18 years of age at the time the petition is filed
 6 and the petitioner is someone other than one of the adoptive parents of the adoptee, then
 7 the department shall provide written notice of such proceedings to the adoptive parents by
 8 certified mail or statutory overnight delivery, return receipt requested, at the last address
 9 the department has for such adoptive parents and the court shall continue any hearing on
 10 the petition until not less than 60 days after the date the notice was sent. Each such
 11 adoptive parent shall have the right to appear in person or through counsel and show cause
 12 why such records should not be examined. Adoptive parents may provide the department
 13 with their current address for purposes of receiving notice under this subsection by mailing
 14 that address to:

15 ~~Adoption Unit~~ Office of Adoptions
 16 Department of Human Resources
 17 Atlanta, Georgia"

18 SECTION 2.

19 Chapter 10 of Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to vital records,
 20 is amended by striking Code Section 31-10-14, relating to issuance of a new certificate of
 21 birth following adoption and legitimation or paternity determination, and inserting in its
 22 place the following:

23 "31-10-14.

24 (a) The state registrar shall establish a new certificate of birth for a person born in this state
 25 when the state registrar receives the following:

26 (1) A report of adoption as provided in Code Section 31-10-13 or a report of adoption
 27 prepared and filed in accordance with the laws of another state or foreign country, or a
 28 certified copy of the decree of adoption, together with the information necessary to
 29 identify the original certificate of birth and to establish a new certificate of birth. A new
 30 certificate of birth shall not be established if the court decreeing the adoption directs that
 31 a new birth certificate not be issued; or

32 (2) A request that a new certificate be established as prescribed by regulation and such
 33 evidence as required by regulation proving that such person has been legitimated, or that
 34 a court of competent jurisdiction has determined the paternity of such a person, or that
 35 both parents married to each other have acknowledged the paternity of such person and
 36 request that the surname be changed to that of the father.

1 (b) When a new certificate of birth is established pursuant to this Code section for a person
2 born in this state, the ~~exact date of birth~~ contained on the original certificate shall be
3 shown. The true place of birth shall be shown if the adoptee is the natural child of the
4 spouse of the adoptive parent in the case of step-parent adoptions. The true place of birth
5 shall be shown for all legitimations. For full adoptions, where neither parent is the natural
6 parent of the adoptee, the place of birth shall be, at the election of the adoptive parents,
7 either the true place of birth of the adoptee or the residence of the adoptive parents at the
8 time of the adoptee's birth. The place of birth indicated must be located in Georgia. ~~The~~
9 ~~new certificate shall be substituted for the original certificate of birth and the evidence of~~
10 ~~adoption, legitimation, paternity determination, or paternity acknowledgment shall be~~
11 ~~sealed and shall not be subject to inspection except upon order of a court of competent~~
12 ~~jurisdiction or as provided by regulation.~~

13 (c) Upon receipt of a report of an amended decree of adoption, the certificate of birth shall
14 be amended as provided by regulation.

15 (d) Upon receipt of a report or decree of annulment of adoption, the original certificate of
16 birth shall be restored to its place in the files and the new certificate and evidence shall not
17 be subject to inspection except upon order of a court of competent jurisdiction or as
18 provided by regulation.

19 (e) If no certificate of birth is on file for the person for whom a new birth certificate is to
20 be established under this Code section and the date and place of birth have not been
21 determined in the adoption, legitimation, or paternity proceedings, a delayed certificate of
22 birth shall be filed with the state registrar as provided in Code Section 31-10-11 or
23 31-10-12 before a new certificate of birth is established. The new birth certificate shall be
24 prepared on the delayed birth certificate form.

25 (f) When a new certificate of birth is established by the state registrar, the original birth
26 certificate shall not be subject to inspection except as provided in subsection (g) of this
27 Code section. ~~at~~ All copies of the original certificate of birth in the custody of any other
28 custodian of vital records in this state shall be sealed from inspection, destroyed, or
29 forwarded to the state registrar, as the state registrar shall direct.

30 (g) The new certificate shall be substituted for the original certificate of birth in the files
31 and the original certificate of birth and the evidence of adoption, legitimation, or paternity
32 determination shall not be subject to inspection except upon order of a court of competent
33 jurisdiction or as provided by statute.

34 (h) Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this Code section or any other provision
35 of law, any person who is 21 years of age or older, who was born in this state, and who has
36 had an original birth certificate removed from the files due to an adoption may receive a
37 copy of that original birth certificate by complying with the provisions of this subsection.

1 The state registrar shall require a person seeking an original birth certificate to pay the fee
2 for a birth certificate and observe the appropriate waiting period. The copy of the original
3 birth certificate shall be in a form that clearly indicates it is not a certified copy and that it
4 may not be used for legal purposes. This subsection shall apply to all applications for
5 original birth certificates for adopted persons presented to the state registrar on or after July
6 1, 2003."

7 **SECTION 3.**

8 This Act shall become effective July 1, 2003.

9 **SECTION 4.**

10 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.