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**House of Representatives**  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Harrisburg

**MEMORANDUM**


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**DATE:** March 24, 2011

**FROM:** Representative Gordon R. Denlinger 

**TO:** All House Members

**SUBJECT:** Online Public Access to Birth and Death Records

In the near future, I plan to introduce legislation providing for online public access to certain birth and death records in Pennsylvania for genealogical research.

The Division of Vital Records in the Department of Health maintains records of births and deaths that occurred in Pennsylvania from 1906 to the present. The Division of Vital Records issues only certified copies of birth and death certificates to certain eligible individuals, such as family members. Due to confidentiality, the general public does not have access to search records. The search must be conducted by employees of the Division of Vital Records.

Many individuals have expressed concern with the difficulty of accessing older records needed for the purpose of genealogical research. In order to address this concern, I am introducing legislation that will amend the Vital Statistics law, directing the Department of Health to establish an electronic death registration system for the creation, storage and transfer of death registration information. In addition, this legislation provides that 100 years after the date of birth and 50 years after the date of death, birth and death records are to be made available to the public. The Department is directed to establish an online data base of birth and death certificates to be accessible by the public for genealogical research.

This legislation was introduced as HB 931 in the previous legislative session.

If you wish to co-sponsor this resolution, please contact Jesica Murphy at [jlmurphy@pahousegop.com](mailto:jlmurphy@pahousegop.com).