



HOUSE BILL 537: Alena's Law & Office of Vital Records Changes.

2025-2026 General Assembly

Analysis of: S.L. 2025-44

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S.L. 2025-44 (House Bill 537) made changes to laws pertaining to receivership proceedings to administer the property of missing persons, specifically to:

- Provide that a federal written finding of presumed death is considered prima facie evidence of death by a judge or is considered sufficient evidence of death to be submitted to a jury, as applicable.
- Provide that the disappearance and continued absence, for at least 90 days, of a person that coincides with a State or federally declared disaster declaration creates a rebuttable presumption of death.
- Require that the complaint filed in superior court to initiate a receivership proceeding includes, as applicable, the existence of a federal written finding of presumed death or an averment of disappearance and continued absence for at least 90 days coincident to a State or federally declared disaster.

The act also requires the Office of Vital Records and local register of deeds offices to process birth and death certificate amendments within 30 days after receipt of the completed application, required proof, and payment of the applicable fee. It also prohibits telework by employees of the Office of Vital Records, except in certain circumstances.

This act became effective July 1, 2025. The provisions that relate to receivership proceedings apply to complaints for actions for receiver filed on or after that date.

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