

Hoff bill to create short form death certificate unanimously approved by House

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A bill sponsored by **Rep. Larry Hoff** to create a short form death certificate in Washington state has been unanimously approved by the state House.

Substitute House Bill 1799 would allow state and local registrars to issue a short form death certificate that does not list a decedent's Social Security number, the names of their parents, or information about the cause and manner of their death. Those who would be able to request a short form include:

- specified family members, guardians and representatives;
- funeral directors or establishments;
- a title insurer or title insurance agent handling a transaction involving property in which the decedent held a right, title or interest; and
- a person who demonstrates that the certified copy is necessary for a determination related to the death, or for the protection of a personal or property right related to the death.

According to Lifelock, nearly 800,000 decedents are intentionally targeted in the United States every year by identity thieves. **Hoff** says a short form death certificate would ensure sensitive personal information is kept out of the public domain, which would help thwart their efforts.

“Unfortunately, identity theft is a lucrative business,” said **Hoff, R-Vancouver**. “Cybercriminals have no hesitation whatsoever about stealing the personal information of decedents and profiting from it, so we have to fight back. This bill would help us do that by protecting decedents and their loved ones from being targeted. The creation of a short form is the right path forward for our state, and I was glad to see the bill receive unanimous support from my colleagues.”

Substitute House Bill 1799 now moves to the Senate for further consideration.