

REVISED

Long title: Concerning a reduction in barriers to obtaining identity-related documents.

Legislative declaration: (1) The General Assembly hereby finds that:

(a) It is in the public interest to eliminate or reduce barriers to individuals who need primary identification documents in order to achieve self-sufficiency and financial security.

(b) In many instances, citizens and legal residents need both a certified birth certificate and a valid state identification card in order to access public benefits, secure affordable housing, obtain employment, register for school, and receive health care.

(c) The cost of these documents may present a substantial barrier to indigent and low-income persons and their children.

(d) Because the lack of valid identification is an impediment to successful re-entry, adult and juvenile offenders who cannot afford these documents upon release from the Department of Corrections, the Division of Youth Corrections, and county jails should have the opportunity to have the fee for the state identification card waived. The research shows that employment is linked to lower recidivism and desistance from crime.

(e) Eligibility for a state identification card generally requires an exact match between the name on the birth certificate and other documents. Individuals without a criminal conviction may petition the court for a statutory name change to resolve any discrepancy. However, those convicted of a felony and certain adjudicated juveniles are barred by statute from changing their name through the courts. In certain circumstances and if the court is satisfied that the name change is appropriate, the court should have the discretion to authorize such name changes with proper notice to affected agencies and individuals.

(2) Therefore, it is necessary and appropriate for the General Assembly to eliminate or reduce barriers to obtain identity-related documents and thereby promote economic opportunity and reduce poverty in the State of Colorado.