WHY ARE THESE GENEALOGISTS CRYING?
ARCHIVES ARE CLOSING AND REDUCING
ACCESS TO RECORDS!
Genealogists with out records can’t do genealogy
We are facing crises worldwide on access to vital records
Due to misunderstandings by those in power about Identity Theft & Budget Cuts
PRAMC IS CRITICAL TO KEEPING RECORDS ACCESS OPEN
UPDATE on PRAMC

Jan Meisels Allen, Chairperson, IAJGS Public Records Access Monitoring Committee

JAN@IAJGS.ORG
Committee Members

Jan Meisels Allen  Agoura Hills, CA
Teven Laxer, Sacramento, CA
Jeff Miller, Brookville, MD
Paul Silverstone, NYC, NY
Joel Spector, Cherry Hill, NJ
Stephanie Weiner, San Diego, CA
Catherine Youngren, British Columbia,
Michael Goldstein, Jerusalem, ex officio
PRAMC was created to address denial of access to vital records by government action worldwide
IAJGS Full member and “managing partner” with FGS and NGS of RPAC
Maximizes IAJGS effectiveness
Conserving our limited resources
Explosion of legislation on access to vital records

WHY

Identity Theft Fears by Legislators
REASON FOR IDENTITY THEFT

Hacking into databases—of financial services companies, data collectors, government agencies (VA, Social Security, etc.)
Budget crisis affecting access by states reducing staff, hours, closing libraries, archives:

Georgia State Archives
Michigan State Library
North Carolina State Libraries and more worldwide
Budget Crisis Reduced—Not Eliminated Amount of Legislative Bills Affecting Access to Records
ACHIEVEMENTS
ACTIVITIES
MONITORING
&
REPORTING ISSUES

Reported 162 times on two forums access and webinars
Countries Monitored and Reported Upon Since Last Annual Session

- Australia
- Canada
- France
- Hungary
- Ireland
- New Zealand
- Scotland
- United Kingdom
United States Monitoring and Reporting

- HIPAA
- Library of Congress
- National Archives
- National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC)
- Social Security Death Index
- California
- Illinois
- Maine
- Nevada
- New Jersey
- Pennsylvania
- Vermont
Your Role In Preserving Access to Vital Records and Census
Write a Letter to the Committee(s) Which Will Hear the Bill

Who do you include?
Committee Chairperson
Committee Members
Author of Bill (may or may not be on the committee hearing the bill)
Committee Staff

If bill is going to governor for signature
Write to governor and legislative aide
On the IAJGS website there is a listing of Canadian and US federal and province/state legislative URL’s.

The list can be found under legislation http://iajgs.org/legislation.html

If other countries believe they will use this information we can add their legislative sites to the website

IAJGS Legislative Alerts – Model Letters also on website
Government Legislative Websites

This is a list of websites for United States state and federal governments and the Canadian federal and provincial governments. Members of Jewish Genealogical Societies can use this list to watch for legislation affecting access to records and make their voices heard regarding their value to genealogists. See also our Alerts page.

**Canadian Government Website**
http://canada.gc.ca/ Canadian government website

To find out names of Ministers and Members of Parliament and to find out what is happening that day in Senate and House of Commons use:
http://canada.gc.ca/directories/direct_e.html

**Canadian Provincial Websites**

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<tr>
<th>Province</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
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<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nb.ca/">http://www.nb.ca/</a></td>
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Model Letter

Your name, address and phone number/e-mail address at the top
If writing on behalf of your society, and the society has letterhead, use the letterhead.

The Honorable XXXXXX
State Senator, State Representative
State of XX
State Capital
Room Number
Capital City, State, zip code

Re: bill number

Dear Senator/Representative/Assemblyperson:

I am writing (if on behalf of your genealogy society, state it here) regarding (bill number) on (what is bill about- for example: access to vital records-below is extracted from letter sent to Maine on access bill.)

The genealogical community is supportive of the intent to protect the residents of (NAME STATE) from improper usage of their personal information, and protect them from identity theft. However, rarely has it been documented that an individual’s identity is violated by access to vital records but rather the violations occur due to computer breaches from government and private enterprises. A 2009 study stated ”in the last five years, approximately 500 million records containing personal identifying information of United States residents stored in government and corporate databases was either lost or stolen”. Many of these computer breaches have been well documented in the press.
Genealogy is not only a hobby of millions of people—it assists in tracing family medical problems that are passed on from generation to generation. Information included in birth, marriage and death records is critical to reconstructing families and tracing genetically inherited attributes in current family members.

Therefore, we urge you to XXXXX (pertinent to the specific bill). If this is pertinent: Genealogists do not require certified copies of birth, marriage, divorce or death records. To address the committee’s concern of identity theft we would encourage the committee to provide informational copies of these records, without a state seal, and marked as “informational, not to be used for identification”.

I/We (depends if writing for self or genealogy society) are ready to discuss any issues on the bill with you or your staff at your convenience.

Thank you.
Sincerely,

Your name and if writing for genealogy their name too—and how to contact you if that is different than the address/phone number/a-mail at top of letter
KISS

Keep It Short and Simple
Bills move fast
Get To Know Your Local Representatives
All politics are local!

Board member and general members in your society should get to know:

Your local State, Provincial Representative
Your local State/Provincial Senator
Your Local Congressperson/MOP
Your U.S., Federal Senators
Analagous legislators in your country!
And their staffs!
We need you to be the eyes and ears for early alerts about the bills.

Your local presence and involvement is key to success!
If you know of denial of access problem
Contact IAJGS – PRAMC

JAN@IAJGS.ORG