

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 297 Session of 2015

INTRODUCED BY EVANKOVICH, COHEN, KNOWLES, READSHAW, DAVIS, WATSON, TOPPER, A. HARRIS, DEASY, MCGINNIS, MILLARD, GRELL, SAYLOR, O'NEILL, MURT, GABLER, ROEBUCK AND RAVENSTAHL, FEBRUARY 2, 2015

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, FEBRUARY 10, 2015

AN ACT

1 Providing for release of information by coroners and medical
2 examiners.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Short title.

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Release of
7 Coroner and Medical Examiner Information Act.

8 Section 2. Definitions.

9 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
10 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
11 context clearly indicates otherwise:

12 "County." A county of ~~this Commonwealth~~ THE FIRST CLASS, <--
13 SECOND CLASS, SECOND CLASS A, THIRD CLASS, FOURTH CLASS, FIFTH
14 CLASS, SIXTH CLASS, SEVENTH CLASS OR EIGHTH CLASS, including a
15 county within which is located a city of the first class or with
16 which a city of the first class is coextensive.

1 Section 3. Investigation information.

2 (a) General rule.--~~Except~~ NOTWITHSTANDING THE ACT OF <--
3 FEBRUARY 14, 2008 (P.L.6, NO.3), KNOWN AS THE RIGHT-TO-KNOW LAW,
4 AND EXCEPT as provided in subsection (b), the following apply to
5 public release of information by a coroner or medical examiner:

6 (1) Following an investigation by a coroner or medical
7 examiner to determine the cause of any death in this
8 Commonwealth, the coroner or medical examiner shall not
9 release to the public the name of the deceased ~~and~~ OR the <--
10 cause and manner of death unless the release is in accordance
11 with the requirements under paragraph (2).

12 (2) Release of the information under paragraph (1) may
13 not occur until either notification of the next of kin of the
14 deceased individual is confirmed or 72 hours have elapsed
15 following the determination of the identity of the deceased
16 individual ~~and~~ OR the cause and manner of the death, <--
17 whichever occurs first.

18 ~~(b) Exception. This section shall not apply in cases of a <--~~
19 ~~public health emergency as determined by the coroner or medical~~
20 ~~examiner.~~

21 (B) PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES.--NOTWITHSTANDING THE <--
22 PROVISIONS OF SUBSECTION (A), A CORONER OR MEDICAL EXAMINER MAY
23 RELEASE TO THE PUBLIC THE NAME OF THE DECEASED AND THE CAUSE AND
24 MANNER OF DEATH AT ANY TIME IF THE CORONER OR MEDICAL EXAMINER
25 DETERMINES THAT THE RELEASE IS NECESSARY TO AVERT A PUBLIC
26 HEALTH EMERGENCY.

27 Section 4. Applicability.

28 This act shall apply in each county of this Commonwealth.

29 Section 5. Effective date.

30 This act shall take effect in 60 days.