

AB 82 (Medina)

Diacritical Marks on Vital Records

Background

Diacritical marks, such as accent marks, umlauts, and tildes are modifications to a letter that can change its sound and even the meaning of a word. Currently, diacritical marks are not permitted on vital records in California. However, this was not always the case.

Prior to 1986, diacritical marks were included on state-issued documents, such as birth certificates. That same year saw the passage of Proposition 63, which declared English as the official language of the State of California. Consequently, diacritical marks were then removed from use in the state's vital records.

Problem

A name is intimately tied to history, family, tradition, and ultimately, identity. Thus it is important that vital documents accurately reflect a person's true name. Further, the current law does not manifest equally. Whereas O'Doyle is properly notated in vital records, names such as Chloë or José are not.

Not all states omit diacritical marks in their records. Alaska, Delaware, Illinois, and Maryland all allow for accurate notation of names. California, as one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse states in the nation, should grant its residents the choice to retain their identity and heritage on vital documents.

Solution

AB 82 will allow the use of diacritical marks on vital documents.

AB 82 facilitates choice – each individual can choose to include or omit diacritical marks as they desire.

AB 82 will allow thousands of Californians to maintain their identity and heritage.

Support

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