



***Next Generation Vital Statistics:  
A Hearing on Current Status, Current  
Issues and Future Possibilities***

September 12, 2017

U.S. Department of State

Bureau of Consular Affairs

Office of Passport Services



Panel 4.

# **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES: FEDERAL LEVEL**



## Day 1 Panel 2 Overview

- The Bureau's Office of Passport Services issues U.S. passports to U.S. citizens and nationals.
- In FY2016, we issued 18 million U.S. passports.
- Vital records are a critically important part of the U.S. passport issuance process and are relied upon to help establish identity, citizenship, and entitlement to a U.S. passport.
- Passport Services greatly values and relies upon our long-standing relationships with Vital Registrars and partner organizations to resolve discrepancies, verify, and confirm the authenticity of vital records.



# What challenges does Passport Services face with vital records?

- Security and efficiency are the highest priorities in our processes. Of course, challenges arise between the two.
  - Counterfeiting and document security
  - Data integrity and the accuracy of documents we review
  - Changing state vital statistic offices and our ability to maintain partnerships and communication
  - Learning the varied processes across state vital statistics offices
  - Timeliness of obtaining vital records for customers with urgent and emergency travel circumstances
  - Limited access to records for customers who do not live in the jurisdiction where their vital event took place
  - Limited electronic access to records to more readily determine identity and citizenship



## How might they be improved?

- Systems or processes that provide streamlined and immediate access to vital records can help the Office of Passport Services meet our commitments to security and efficiency and to our customers.
  - Direct search and retrieval access to vital records for verification purposes
  - Electronic delivery or electronic certificate options for customers needing immediate access to a certified record (far away from the jurisdiction).
  - Increased adoption of the recommended standards for birth certificates
  - Natural phase-out of the circulation of older and less secure certificates and formats no longer in production
  - Faster registration or reporting processes of vital events to federal users



*Thank you to all of the State Vital Registrars and partner organizations that support us in providing quality service to our customers.*