

1 By Supervisor Bowen

2 File No. 14-

3 **A RESOLUTION**

4 Expanding the criteria for the existing Free Birth Certificate Program to include
5 individuals between the ages of 15-21 who are in need of birth certificates to assist in
6 securing employment opportunities

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8 WHEREAS, in 2011 a resolution (File No. 11-488) was adopted by the
9 Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors to urge the Wisconsin State Legislature to
10 waive the statutorily required fees for individuals to obtain a birth certificate in order to
11 secure a photo identification to vote; and

12 WHEREAS, by state statute, the Register of Deeds must charge \$20 for the first
13 copy (\$3 for additional copies of the same record) of a certified birth certificate; and

14 WHEREAS, the 2012 Adopted Budget established the Free Birth Certificate
15 Program in the Register of Deeds' department in order to assist individuals in obtaining
16 birth certificates for the purpose of securing photo identification in lieu of proposed
17 "Voter ID" legislation restrictions; and

18 WHEREAS, the Free Birth Certificate Program appropriated \$100,000 to give
19 away 5,000 birth certificates to individuals that provide a written statement affirming that
20 the birth certificate is being obtained for the purpose of obtaining a photo identification
21 for voting purposes; and

22 WHEREAS, the program has remained active in both the 2013 and 2014
23 Adopted Budgets due to the remaining free birth certificates that have not yet been
24 issued, which as of March 2014 consisted of 3,373 birth certificates; and

25 WHEREAS, younger individuals who are seeking employment also require birth
26 certificates during the hiring process to take advantage of job opportunities; and

27 WHEREAS, agencies such as the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment
28 Board's youth program offers employment opportunities and training to individuals
29 between the ages of 16-24; and

30 WHEREAS, an expansion of the existing Free Birth Certificate Program to allow
31 individuals of age 21 and under to obtain a free birth certificate for the purpose of
32 seeking employment would be a benefit to young residents by assisting them in
33 securing job opportunities as well a benefit to Milwaukee County's overall economy;
34 now, therefore,

35 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors authorizes
36 and directs the Register of Deeds to include individuals between the ages of 15-21 in
37 the existing Free Birth Certificate Program for the purpose of seeking employment with
38 its existing resources in place; and

39 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that one-third of the remaining free birth
40 certificates under the existing program shall be earmarked for young residents between
41 ages 15-21 who are able to provide written proof at the time of application submission
42 that said birth certificate is necessary for employment verification and securing
43 purposes; and

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45 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Register of Deeds, in conjunction with
46 Corporation Counsel, shall develop a form that job seeking individuals must sign to
47 verify that they qualify with the prescribed age criteria and that they are obtaining said
48 birth certificate for employment purposes; and

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50 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that expansion of this program will not require any
51 additional funding, and will conclude when all remaining birth certificates have been
52 issued, unless authorized and funded by the County Board; and

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54 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if pending litigation regarding "Voter ID" in
55 either Federal or Wisconsin State Supreme Court results in the elimination of photo
56 identification requirements, the Register of Deeds shall request action by the County
57 Board to either discontinue the Free Birth Certificate Program, or to reprogram
58 remaining birth certificates to be utilized for youth seeking employment opportunities.
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