

Bill No. 1797

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Referred to Committee on *January*

LCO No. 4518

Introduced by SEN. JACKSON - 5th District

SEN. ROME - 8th District

REP. BINGHAM - 157th District

REP. GILLIES - 75th District

General Assembly,

January Session, A.D., 1971

AN ACT CONCERNING AMENDMENTS TO THE MEDICOLEGAL INVESTIGATIONS

ACT.

CONNECTICUT  
STATE LIBRARY  
LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE  
SECTION

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in

General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 19-527 of the 1969 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof: The office of [medicolegal investigations] THE MEDICAL EXAMINER is established to be operated under the control and supervision of the commission. The expenses of the commission and of operation of [the] SAID office [of medicolegal investigations] shall be paid by the state out of funds appropriated for the purpose. The office shall be directed by a chief medical examiner who shall be appointed by the commission. His office shall be located at a medical school in this state.

Sec. 2. Section 19-530 of said supplement is amended by adding subsection (c) as follows: If the investigation of the circumstances and examination of the body enable the chief medical examiner, the deputy medical examiner or an authorized assistant medical examiner to conclude with reasonable certainty that death occurred from natural causes or obvious traumatic injury, and there are no other circumstances which would appear to require an autopsy, the medical examiner in charge shall certify the cause of death and file a report of his findings in

the office of the medical examiner. If, in the opinion of such 40  
 medical examiner, an autopsy is necessary, the same shall be 41  
 performed by the chief medical examiner, the deputy medical  
 examiner or a designated pathologist. Where indicated, the 43  
 autopsy shall include toxicologic, histologic, microbiologic and 44  
 serologic examinations. If a medical examiner has reason to 45  
 suspect that a homicide has been committed, the autopsy shall be 46  
 performed by the chief medical examiner, or the deputy medical 47  
 examiner, or by a designated pathologist in the presence of at 48  
 least one other designated pathologist. A detailed description 49  
 of the findings of all autopsies shall be written or dictated 50  
 during their progress. The findings of the investigation at the 51  
 scene of death, the autopsy and any toxicologic, histologic, 52  
 serologic and microbiologic examinations, and the conclusions 53  
 drawn therefrom shall be filed in the office of the medical  
 examiner.

Sec. 3. Section 19-531 of said supplement is repealed and 54  
 the following is substituted in lieu thereof: (a) All law 55  
 enforcement officers, state's attorneys, prosecuting attorneys, 56  
 coroners, deputy coroners, other officials, physicians, funeral 57  
 directors, embalmers and other persons shall promptly notify the 58  
 office of [medicolegal investigations] THE MEDICAL EXAMINER of 59  
 any death coming to their attention which, under this chapter, is 59  
 subject to investigation by the chief medical examiner and shall 60  
 assist in making dead bodies and related evidence available to 61  
 that office for investigations and postmortem examinations, 62  
 including autopsies, and shall cooperate fully with [the] SUCH 63  
 office [of medicolegal investigations] in making the  
 investigations and examinations herein provided for. (b) In 65  
 cases of apparent homicide or suicide, or of accidental death, 66  
 the cause of which is obscure, the scene of the event shall not 67  
 be disturbed until authorized by the chief medical examiner, or 67  
 an authorized assistant medical examiner. Upon receipt of 69  
 notification of a death as provided herein, the chief medical  
 examiner or an authorized assistant medical examiner, without 70

delay, shall view and take charge of the body. (c) In conducting 72  
his investigation, except as may be otherwise directed by the 73  
state's attorney or an assistant state's attorney, the chief  
medical examiner or his authorized representative shall take 74  
possession of any objects, writings or other articles of property 75  
which in his opinion may be useful in establishing the cause or 76  
manner of death and HOLD, ANALYZE OR deliver them to the 77  
appropriate law enforcement officials. When such articles are no 78  
longer required to be kept for the purposes of justice, they 79  
shall be delivered to the person or persons entitled to their  
custody or, if they are not claimed by such person or persons 80  
entitled thereto within one year after the date of death, such 81  
articles may be disposed of by the law enforcement officials as 82  
provided in section 54-36. (d) Any person who wilfully fails to 83  
comply with any provision of this section shall be fined not more 84  
than five hundred dollars or imprisoned not more than one year, 85  
or both.

Sec. 4. Section 19-533 of said supplement is repealed and 86  
the following is substituted in lieu thereof: The office of 87  
[medicolegal investigations] THE MEDICAL EXAMINER shall complete 88  
its investigation [as soon as] WHERE reasonably possible, [but 89  
in any event] within thirty days. Upon completion of the 90  
investigation, the chief medical examiner or an authorized 91  
assistant medical examiner shall file a death certificate, or a  
certificate supplementing that already filed, with the registrar 92  
of vital statistics for the town in which the death occurred, if 93  
known, or, if not known, for the town where the body was found. 94  
If the deceased is unidentified, fingerprints of both hands and 95  
a photograph of the body, provided mortification has not 96  
proceeded so far or the nature of the cause of death was not such 97  
as to make identification impossible, shall be sent by said 98  
office to such registrar of vital statistics and copies shall be  
sent to the state department of health and to the state police 99  
department.

Sec. 5. Section 19-534 of said supplement is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof: The office of [medicolegal investigations] THE MEDICAL EXAMINER shall maintain a laboratory or laboratories suitably equipped with medical, scientific and other facilities for performance of the duties imposed by this chapter. Laboratories may be maintained in collaboration with The University of Connecticut or any other medical school or hospital and any other agencies in the state which have facilities that can be utilized in performing the duties of the office. The manner of compliance with this section shall be in the discretion of the commission.

Sec. 6. Section 19-535 of said supplement is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof: The office of [medicolegal investigations] THE MEDICAL EXAMINER shall keep full and complete records properly indexed, giving the name, if known, of every person whose death is investigated, the place where the body was found, the date, cause and manner of death, and all other relevant information concerning the death, and a copy of the death certificate. The full report and detailed findings of the autopsy and toxicological and other scientific investigation, if any, shall be a part of the record in each case. The office shall promptly notify of such death and deliver to the state's attorney and the coroner having jurisdiction over the case copies of all pertinent records relating to every death as to which further investigation may be advisable. Any state's attorney, coroner, chief of police or other law enforcement official may, upon request, secure copies of such records or other information deemed necessary by him to the performance of his official duties. THE REPORT OF EXAMINATIONS CONDUCTED BY THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER, DEPUTY MEDICAL EXAMINER OR AN AUTHORIZED ASSISTANT MEDICAL EXAMINER, AND OF THE AUTOPSY AND OTHER SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS MAY BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC ONLY THROUGH THE OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS OF THE COMMISSION AND OF SECTION 1-19 OF THE 1969 SUPPLEMENT TO THE GENERAL STATUTES. Any person may obtain copies

of such records upon such conditions and payment of such fees as 134  
may be prescribed by the commission, provided no person with a 135  
legitimate interest therein shall be denied access to such 136  
records. Upon application by the chief medical examiner or 137  
state's attorney to the superior court for the county in which 138  
the death occurred, or to any judge of the superior court in such 139  
county when said court is not then sitting, said court or such 140  
judge may limit such disclosure to the extent that there is a 141  
showing by the chief medical examiner or state's attorney of 142  
compelling public interest against disclosure of any particular 143  
document or documents. In the discretion of the commission, 144  
public authorities, professional, medical, legal or scientific 145  
bodies or universities or similar research bodies may have access 146  
to all records upon such conditions and payment of such fees as 147  
may be prescribed by the commission. Where such information is 148  
made available for scientific or research purposes, such 149  
conditions shall include a requirement that the identity of the 150  
deceased persons shall remain confidential and shall not be 151  
published. 152

Sec. 7. Section 19-536 of said supplement is repealed and 151  
the following is substituted in lieu thereof: The records of the 153  
office of [medicolegal investigations] THE MEDICAL EXAMINER, or 154  
transcripts thereof certified by the chief medical examiner or 155  
his authorized representative, shall be subject to subpoena and 156  
shall be admissible in evidence in any court in the state in the 157  
same manner and subject to the same conditions as hospital 158  
records as provided in section 4-104, except that the findings or 159  
conclusions of the chief medical examiner, his deputy or an 160  
assistant medical examiner as to the cause or circumstances of 161  
death, other than those set forth in the death certificate or the 162  
autopsy report, and statements by witnesses or other persons and 163  
conclusions upon extraneous matters shall not be admissible. 164

Sec. 8. Section 6-65 of said supplement is repealed and the 163  
following is substituted in lieu thereof: Each coroner shall 164  
preserve in a temporary binder in chronological order all 165

findings made by him and also a record of all sudden and 166  
suspicious deaths which have been brought to his attention. All 167  
such [certificates and] records shall be public records and open  
to inspection at all reasonable times; PROVIDED COPIES OF RECORDS 168  
RECEIVED FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER SHALL BE 169  
AVAILABLE ONLY THROUGH THAT OFFICE AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 170  
6 OF THIS ACT. When any coroner has accumulated [a] sufficient 171  
[number of certificates and] records to fill a temporary binder, 172  
such [certificates and] records shall be arranged chronologically 173  
with an alphabetical index preceding and the same shall be at 174  
once permanently bound in book form and transmitted to the clerk 175  
of the superior court who shall place it among the records of the  
clerk's office. 176

Sec. 9. This act shall take effect July 1, 1971. 177

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: To change the name of the office of 180  
medicolegal investigations to the office of the medical examiner, 181  
to incorporate a standard for authorizing autopsies by a medical 182  
examiner, and to provide that records in cases investigated by a 183  
medical examiner be made available to the public only through 184  
such office.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets and proposed 186  
additions are all capitalized, or underlined where appropriate.] 188



Senate, May 3, 1971. The Committee on Judiciary reported through Senator Jackson of the 5th District, Chairman of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING AMENDMENTS TO THE MEDICOLEGAL INVESTIGATIONS ACT.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 19-527 of the 1969  
2 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and  
3 the following is substituted in lieu thereof: The  
4 office of [medicolegal investigations] THE MEDICAL  
5 EXAMINER is established to be operated under the  
6 control and supervision of the commission. The  
7 expenses of the commission and of operation of  
8 [the] SAID office [of medicolegal investigations]  
9 shall be paid by the state out of funds  
10 appropriated for the purpose. The office shall be  
11 directed by a chief medical examiner who shall be  
12 appointed by the commission. His office shall be  
13 located at a medical school in this state.

14 Sec. 2. Section 19-530 of said supplement is  
15 amended by adding subsection (c) as follows: If  
16 the investigation of the circumstances and  
17 examination of the body enable the chief medical  
18 examiner, the deputy medical examiner or an  
19 authorized assistant medical examiner to conclude  
20 with reasonable certainty that death occurred from  
21 natural causes or obvious traumatic injury, and  
22 there are no other circumstances which would

23 appear to require an autopsy, the medical examiner  
24 in charge shall certify the cause of death and  
25 file a report of his findings in the office of the  
26 medical examiner. If, in the opinion of such  
27 medical examiner, an autopsy is necessary, the  
28 same shall be performed by the chief medical  
29 examiner, the deputy medical examiner or a  
30 designated pathologist. Where indicated, the  
31 autopsy shall include toxicologic, histologic,  
32 microbiologic and serologic examinations. If a  
33 medical examiner has reason to suspect that a  
34 homicide has been committed, the autopsy shall be  
35 performed by the chief medical examiner, or the  
36 deputy medical examiner, or by a designated  
37 pathologist in the presence of at least one other  
38 designated pathologist. A detailed description of  
39 the findings of all autopsies shall be written or  
40 dictated during their progress. The findings of  
41 the investigation at the scene of death, the  
42 autopsy and any toxicologic, histologic, serologic  
43 and microbiologic examinations, and the  
44 conclusions drawn therefrom shall be filed in the  
45 office of the medical examiner.

46 Sec. 3. Section 19-531 of said supplement is  
47 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
48 thereof: (a) All law enforcement officers,  
49 state's attorneys, prosecuting attorneys,  
50 coroners, deputy coroners, other officials,  
51 physicians, funeral directors, embalmers and other  
52 persons shall promptly notify the office of  
53 [medicolegal investigations] THE MEDICAL EXAMINER  
54 of any death coming to their attention which,  
55 under this chapter, is subject to investigation by  
56 the chief medical examiner and shall assist in  
57 making dead bodies and related evidence available  
58 to that office for investigations and postmortem  
59 examinations, including autopsies, and shall  
60 cooperate fully with [the] SAID office [of  
61 medicolegal investigations] in making the  
62 investigations and examinations herein provided  
63 for. (b) In cases of apparent homicide or  
64 suicide, or of accidental death, the cause of  
65 which is obscure, the scene of the event shall not  
66 be disturbed until authorized by the chief medical  
67 examiner, or an authorized assistant medical  
68 examiner. Upon receipt of notification of a death  
69 as provided herein, the chief medical examiner or  
70 an authorized assistant medical examiner, without



71 delay, shall view and take charge of the body.  
72 (c) In conducting his investigation, except as may  
73 be otherwise directed by the state's attorney or  
74 an assistant state's attorney, the chief medical  
75 examiner or his authorized representative shall  
76 take possession of any objects, writings or other  
77 articles of property which in his opinion may be  
78 useful in establishing the cause or manner of  
79 death and HOLD, ANALYZE OR deliver them to the  
80 appropriate law enforcement officials. When such  
81 articles are no longer required to be kept for the  
82 purposes of justice, they shall be delivered to  
83 the person or persons entitled to their custody  
84 or, if they are not claimed by such person or  
85 persons entitled thereto within one year after the  
86 date of death, such articles may be disposed of by  
87 the law enforcement official as provided in  
88 section 54-36. (d) Any person who wilfully fails  
89 to comply with any provision of this section shall  
90 be fined not more than five hundred dollars or  
91 imprisoned not more than one year, or both.

92 Sec. 4. Section 19-533 of said supplement is  
93 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
94 thereof: The office of [medicolegal  
95 investigations] THE MEDICAL EXAMINER shall  
96 complete its investigation [as soon as], WHERE  
97 reasonably possible, [but in any event] within  
98 thirty days. Upon completion of the  
99 investigation, the chief medical examiner or an  
100 authorized assistant medical examiner shall file  
101 a death certificate, or a certificate  
102 supplementing that already filed, with the  
103 registrar of vital statistics for the town in  
104 which the death occurred, if known, or, if not  
105 known, for the town where the body was found. If  
106 the deceased is unidentified, fingerprints of both  
107 hands and a photograph of the body, provided  
108 mortification has not proceeded so far or the  
109 nature of the cause of death was not such as to  
110 make identification impossible, shall be sent by  
111 said office to such registrar of vital statistics  
112 and copies shall be sent to the state department  
113 of health and to the state police department.

114 Sec. 5. Section 19-534 of said supplement is  
115 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
116 thereof: The office of [medicolegal  
117 investigations] THE MEDICAL EXAMINER shall  
118 maintain a laboratory or laboratories suitably

119 equipped with medical, scientific and other  
120 facilities for performance of the duties imposed  
121 by this chapter. Laboratories may be maintained  
122 in collaboration with The University of  
123 Connecticut or any other medical school or  
124 hospital and any other agencies in the state which  
125 have facilities that can be utilized in performing  
126 the duties of the office. The manner of  
127 compliance with this section shall be in the  
128 discretion of the commission.

129 Sec. 6. Section 19-535 of said supplement is  
130 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
131 thereof: The office of [medicolegal  
132 investigations] THE MEDICAL EXAMINER shall keep  
133 full and complete records properly indexed, giving  
134 the name, if known, of every person whose death is  
135 investigated, the place where the body was found,  
136 the date, cause and manner of death, and all other  
137 relevant information concerning the death, and a  
138 copy of the death certificate. The full report  
139 and detailed findings of the autopsy and  
140 toxicological and other scientific investigation,  
141 if any, shall be a part of the record in each  
142 case. The office shall promptly notify of such  
143 death and deliver to the state's attorney and the  
144 coroner having jurisdiction over the case copies  
145 of all pertinent records relating to every death  
146 as to which further investigation may be  
147 advisable. Any state's attorney, coroner, chief  
148 of police or other law enforcement official may,  
149 upon request, secure copies of such records or  
150 other information deemed necessary by him to the  
151 performance of his official duties. THE REPORT OF  
152 EXAMINATIONS CONDUCTED BY THE CHIEF MEDICAL  
153 EXAMINER, DEPUTY MEDICAL EXAMINER OR AN AUTHORIZED  
154 ASSISTANT MEDICAL EXAMINER, AND OF THE AUTOPSY AND  
155 OTHER SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS MAY BE MADE AVAILABLE TO  
156 THE PUBLIC ONLY THROUGH THE OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL  
157 EXAMINER AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS OF  
158 THE COMMISSION AND OF SECTION 1-19. Any person  
159 may obtain copies of such records upon such  
160 conditions and payment of such fees as may be  
161 prescribed by the commission, provided no person  
162 with a legitimate interest therein shall be denied  
163 access to such records. Upon application by the  
164 chief medical examiner or state's attorney to the  
165 superior court for the county in which the death  
166 occurred, or to any judge of the superior court in

167 such county when said court is not then sitting,  
168 said court or such judge may limit such disclosure  
169 to the extent that there is a showing by the chief  
170 medical examiner or state's attorney of compelling  
171 public interest against disclosure of any  
172 particular document or documents. In the  
173 discretion of the commission, public authorities,  
174 professional, medical, legal or scientific bodies  
175 or universities or similar research bodies may  
176 have access to all records upon such conditions  
177 and payment of such fees as may be prescribed by  
178 the commission. Where such information is made  
179 available for scientific or research purposes,  
180 such conditions shall include a requirement that  
181 the identity of the deceased persons shall remain  
182 confidential and shall not be published.

183 Sec. 7. Section 19-536 of said supplement is  
184 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
185 thereof: The records of the office of [medicolegal  
186 investigations] THE MEDICAL EXAMINER, or  
187 transcripts thereof certified by the chief medical  
188 examiner or his authorized representative, shall  
189 be subject to subpoena and shall be admissible in  
190 evidence in any court in the state in the same  
191 manner and subject to the same conditions as  
192 hospital records as provided in section 4-104,  
193 except that the findings or conclusions of the  
194 chief medical examiner, his deputy or an assistant  
195 medical examiner as to the cause or circumstances  
196 of death, other than those set forth in the death  
197 certificate or the autopsy report, and statements  
198 by witnesses or other persons and conclusions upon  
199 extraneous matters shall not be admissible.

200 Sec. 8. Section 6-65 of said supplement is  
201 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
202 thereof: Each coroner shall preserve in a  
203 temporary binder in chronological order all  
204 findings made by him and also a record of all  
205 sudden and suspicious deaths which have been  
206 brought to his attention. All such [certificates  
207 and] records shall be public records and open to  
208 inspection at all reasonable times; PROVIDED  
209 COPIES OF RECORDS RECEIVED FROM THE OFFICE OF THE  
210 MEDICAL EXAMINER SHALL BE AVAILABLE ONLY THROUGH  
211 THAT OFFICE AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 6 OF  
212 THIS ACT. When any coroner has accumulated [a]  
213 sufficient [number of certificates and] records to  
214 fill a temporary binder, such [certificates and]

215 records shall be arranged chronologically with an  
216 alphabetical index preceding and the same shall be  
217 at once permanently bound in book form and  
218 transmitted to the clerk of the superior court who  
219 shall place it among the records of the clerk's  
220 office.

221       Sec. 9. Section 1-24 of said supplement is  
222 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
223 thereof: The following officers may administer  
224 oaths: The clerks of the senate, the clerks of  
225 the house of representatives and the chairmen of  
226 committees of the general assembly, or of either  
227 branch thereof, during its session; the governor,  
228 lieutenant governor, judges and clerks of any  
229 court, justices of the peace, commissioners of the  
230 superior court, notaries public, commissioners  
231 appointed by the governor to take acknowledgment  
232 of deeds, towns clerks and assistant town clerks,  
233 in all cases where an oath may be administered,  
234 except in a case where the law otherwise requires;  
235 commissioners on insolvent estates, auditors,  
236 arbitrators and committees, to parties and  
237 witnesses, in all cases tried before them;  
238 assessors and boards of tax review in cases coming  
239 before them; commissioners, appointed by governors  
240 of other states to take the acknowledgment of  
241 deeds, in the discharge of their official duty;  
242 the moderator of a school district meeting, in  
243 such meeting, to the clerk of such district the  
244 oath required by law; the first selectman in any  
245 matter before the board of selectmen; coroners,  
246 the chief medical examiner, deputy medical  
247 examiner and assistant medical examiners of the  
248 office of [medicolegal investigations] THE MEDICAL  
249 EXAMINER in any matter before them; registrars of  
250 vital statistics in any matter before them;  
251 registrars of voters in any matter before them;  
252 and the commissioner of state police, and the  
253 chief, acting chief, superintendent of police,  
254 major, captain, lieutenant and sergeant of any  
255 local or the state police department, in all  
256 affidavits, statements, depositions, complaints,  
257 or reports made to or by any member of any local  
258 or the state police department.

259       Sec. 10. Section 19-8 of said supplement is  
260 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
261 thereof: The commissioner of health shall  
262 establish and maintain within the department of

263 health a special laboratory for examination,  
264 research and analysis of poisons, body fluids,  
265 tissues and all related toxicological matters.  
266 The facilities of such laboratory and of its  
267 personnel shall, under the supervision of the  
268 commissioner, be available to the coroners and the  
269 office of [medicolegal investigations] THE MEDICAL  
270 EXAMINER and all duly constituted prosecuting,  
271 police and investigating agencies of the state.

272 Sec. 11. Section 20-216 of said supplement  
273 is repealed and the following is substituted in  
274 lieu thereof: No person shall inject any fluid or  
275 substance into the body of any person whose death  
276 is subject to investigation by the office of  
277 [medicolegal investigations,] THE MEDICAL  
278 EXAMINER, until permission has been obtained from  
279 the coroner of the county, chief medical examiner,  
280 deputy medical examiner or an authorized assistant  
281 medical examiner.

282 Sec. 12. This act shall take effect July 1,  
283 1971.

File No. 972  
(Reprint of File No. 690)

Substitute Senate Bill No. 1797  
As Amended by Senate Amendment  
Schedule "A"



Approved by the Legislative Commissioner.

AN ACT CONCERNING AMENDMENTS TO THE MEDICOLEGAL  
INVESTIGATIONS ACT.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of  
Representatives in General Assembly convened:

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9 shall be paid by the state out of funds  
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12 appointed by the commission. His office shall be  
13 located at a medical school in this state.

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15 amended by adding subsection (c) as follows: If  
16 the investigation of the circumstances and  
17 examination of the body enable the chief medical  
18 examiner, the deputy medical examiner or an  
19 authorized assistant medical examiner to conclude  
20 with reasonable certainty that death occurred from  
21 natural causes or obvious traumatic injury, and  
22 there are no other circumstances which would  
23 appear to require an autopsy, the medical examiner

24 in charge shall certify the cause of death and  
25 file a report of his findings in the office of the  
26 medical examiner. If, in the opinion of such  
27 medical examiner, an autopsy is necessary, the  
28 same shall be performed by the chief medical  
29 examiner, the deputy medical examiner or a  
30 designated pathologist. Where indicated, the  
31 autopsy shall include toxicologic, histologic,  
32 microbiologic and serologic examinations. If a  
33 medical examiner has reason to suspect that a  
34 homicide has been committed, the autopsy shall be  
35 performed by the chief medical examiner, or the  
36 deputy medical examiner, or by a designated  
37 pathologist in the presence of at least one other  
38 designated pathologist. A detailed description of  
39 the findings of all autopsies shall be written or  
40 dictated during their progress. The findings of  
41 the investigation at the scene of death, the  
42 autopsy and any toxicologic, histologic, serologic  
43 and microbiologic examinations, and the  
44 conclusions drawn therefrom shall be filed in the  
45 office of the medical examiner.

46 Sec. 3. Section 19-531 of said supplement is  
47 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
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49 state's attorneys, prosecuting attorneys,  
50 coroners, deputy coroners, other officials,  
51 physicians, funeral directors, embalmers and other  
52 persons shall promptly notify the office of  
53 [medicolegal investigations] THE MEDICAL EXAMINER  
54 of any death coming to their attention which,  
55 under this chapter, is subject to investigation by  
56 the chief medical examiner and shall assist in  
57 making dead bodies and related evidence available  
58 to that office for investigations and postmortem  
59 examinations, including autopsies, and shall  
60 cooperate fully with [the] SAID office [of  
61 medicolegal investigations] in making the  
62 investigations and examinations herein provided  
63 for. (b) In cases of apparent homicide or  
64 suicide, or of accidental death, the cause of  
65 which is obscure, the scene of the event shall not  
66 be disturbed until authorized by the chief medical  
67 examiner, or an authorized assistant medical  
68 examiner. Upon receipt of notification of a death  
69 as provided herein, the chief medical examiner or  
70 an authorized assistant medical examiner, without  
71 delay, shall view and take charge of the body.

72 (c) In conducting his investigation, except as may  
73 be otherwise directed by the state's attorney or  
74 an assistant state's attorney, the chief medical  
75 examiner or his authorized representative shall  
76 take possession of any objects, writings or other  
77 articles of property which in his opinion may be  
78 useful in establishing the cause or manner of  
79 death and HOLD, ANALYZE OR deliver them to the  
80 appropriate law enforcement officials. When such  
81 articles are no longer required to be kept for the  
82 purposes of justice, they shall be delivered to  
83 the person or persons entitled to their custody  
84 or, if they are not claimed by such person or  
85 persons entitled thereto within one year after the  
86 date of death, such articles may be disposed of by  
87 the law enforcement official as provided in  
88 section 54-36. (d) Any person who wilfully fails  
89 to comply with any provision of this section shall  
90 be fined not more than five hundred dollars or  
91 imprisoned not more than one year, or both.

92 Sec. 4. Section 19-533 of said supplement is  
93 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
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95 investigations] THE MEDICAL EXAMINER shall  
96 complete its investigation [as soon as] WHERE  
97 reasonably possible, [but in any event] within  
98 thirty days. Upon completion of the  
99 investigation, the chief medical examiner or an  
100 authorized assistant medical examiner shall file  
101 a death certificate, or a certificate  
102 supplementing that already filed, with the  
103 registrar of vital statistics for the town in  
104 which the death occurred, if known, or, if not  
105 known, for the town where the body was found. If  
106 the deceased is unidentified, fingerprints of both  
107 hands and a photograph of the body, provided  
108 mortification has not proceeded so far or the  
109 nature of the cause of death was not such as to  
110 make identification impossible, shall be sent by  
111 said office to such registrar of vital statistics  
112 and copies shall be sent to the state department  
113 of health and to the state police department.

114 Sec. 5. Section 19-534 of said supplement is  
115 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
116 thereof: The office of [medicolegal  
117 investigations] THE MEDICAL EXAMINER shall  
118 maintain a laboratory or laboratories suitably  
119 equipped with medical, scientific and other



120 facilities for performance of the duties imposed  
121 by this chapter. Laboratories may be maintained  
122 in collaboration with The University of  
123 Connecticut or any other medical school or  
124 hospital and any other agencies in the state which  
125 have facilities that can be utilized in performing  
126 the duties of the office. The manner of  
127 compliance with this section shall be in the  
128 discretion of the commission.

129       Sec. 6. Section 19-535 of said supplement is  
130 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
131 thereof: The office of [medicolegal  
132 investigations] THE MEDICAL EXAMINER shall keep  
133 full and complete records properly indexed, giving  
134 the name, if known, of every person whose death is  
135 investigated, the place where the body was found,  
136 the date, cause and manner of death, and all other  
137 relevant information concerning the death, and a  
138 copy of the death certificate. The full report  
139 and detailed findings of the autopsy and  
140 toxicological and other scientific investigation,  
141 if any, shall be a part of the record in each  
142 case. The office shall promptly notify of such  
143 death and deliver to the state's attorney and the  
144 coroner having jurisdiction over the case copies  
145 of all pertinent records relating to every death  
146 as to which further investigation may be  
147 advisable. Any state's attorney, coroner, chief  
148 of police or other law enforcement official may,  
149 upon request, secure copies of such records or  
150 other information deemed necessary by him to the  
151 performance of his official duties. THE REPORT OF  
152 EXAMINATIONS CONDUCTED BY THE CHIEF MEDICAL  
153 EXAMINER, DEPUTY MEDICAL EXAMINER OR AN AUTHORIZED  
154 ASSISTANT MEDICAL EXAMINER, AND OF THE AUTOPSY AND  
155 OTHER SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS MAY BE MADE AVAILABLE TO  
156 THE PUBLIC ONLY THROUGH THE OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL  
157 EXAMINER AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS OF  
158 THE COMMISSION AND OF SECTION 1-19. Any person  
159 may obtain copies of such records upon such  
160 conditions and payment of such fees as may be  
161 prescribed by the commission, provided no person  
162 with a legitimate interest therein shall be denied  
163 access to such records. Upon application by the  
164 chief medical examiner or state's attorney to the  
165 superior court for the county in which the death  
166 occurred, or to any judge of the superior court in  
167 such county when said court is not then sitting,

168 said court or such judge may limit such disclosure  
169 to the extent that there is a showing by the chief  
170 medical examiner or state's attorney of compelling  
171 public interest against disclosure of any  
172 particular document or documents. In the  
173 discretion of the commission, public authorities,  
174 professional, medical, legal or scientific bodies  
175 or universities or similar research bodies may  
176 have access to all records upon such conditions  
177 and payment of such fees as may be prescribed by  
178 the commission. Where such information is made  
179 available for scientific or research purposes,  
180 such conditions shall include a requirement that  
181 the identity of the deceased persons shall remain  
182 confidential and shall not be published.

183       Sec. 7. Section 19-536 of said supplement is  
184 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
185 thereof: The records of the office of [medicolegal  
186 investigations] THE MEDICAL EXAMINER, or  
187 transcripts thereof certified by the chief medical  
188 examiner or his authorized representative, shall  
189 be subject to subpoena and shall be admissible in  
190 evidence in any court in the state in the same  
191 manner and subject to the same conditions as  
192 hospital records as provided in section 4-104,  
193 except that the findings or conclusions of the  
194 chief medical examiner, his deputy or an assistant  
195 medical examiner as to the cause or circumstances  
196 of death, other than those set forth in the death  
197 certificate or the autopsy report, and statements  
198 by witnesses or other persons and conclusions upon  
199 extraneous matters shall not be admissible.

200       Sec. 8. Section 6-65 of said supplement is  
201 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
202 thereof: Each coroner shall preserve in a  
203 temporary binder in chronological order all  
204 findings made by him and also a record of all  
205 sudden and suspicious deaths which have been  
206 brought to his attention. All such [certificates  
207 and] records shall be public records and open to  
208 inspection at all reasonable times; PROVIDED  
209 COPIES OF RECORDS RECEIVED FROM THE OFFICE OF THE  
210 MEDICAL EXAMINER SHALL BE AVAILABLE ONLY THROUGH  
211 THAT OFFICE AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 6 OF  
212 THIS ACT. When any coroner has accumulated [a]  
213 sufficient [number of certificates and] records to  
214 fill a temporary binder, such [certificates and]  
215 records shall be arranged chronologically with an

216 alphabetical index preceding and the same shall be  
217 at once permanently bound in book form and  
218 transmitted to the clerk of the superior court who  
219 shall place it among the records of the clerk's  
220 office.

221       Sec. 9. Section 1-24 of said supplement is  
222 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
223 thereof: The following officers may administer  
224 oaths: The clerks of the senate, the clerks of  
225 the house of representatives and the chairmen of  
226 committees of the general assembly, or of either  
227 branch thereof, during its session; the governor,  
228 lieutenant governor, judges and clerks of any  
229 court, justices of the peace, commissioners of the  
230 superior court, notaries public, commissioners  
231 appointed by the governor to take acknowledgment  
232 of deeds, towns clerks and assistant town clerks,  
233 in all cases where an oath may be administered,  
234 except in a case where the law otherwise requires;  
235 commissioners on insolvent estates, auditors,  
236 arbitrators and committees, to parties and  
237 witnesses, in all cases tried before them;  
238 assessors and boards of tax review in cases coming  
239 before them; commissioners, appointed by governors  
240 of other states to take the acknowledgment of  
241 deeds, in the discharge of their official duty;  
242 the moderator of a school district meeting, in  
243 such meeting, to the clerk of such district the  
244 oath required by law; the first selectman in any  
245 matter before the board of selectmen; coroners,  
246 the chief medical examiner, deputy medical  
247 examiner and assistant medical examiners of the  
248 office of [medicolegal investigations] THE MEDICAL  
249 EXAMINER in any matter before them; registrars of  
250 vital statistics in any matter before them;  
251 registrars of voters in any matter before them;  
252 and the commissioner of state police, and the  
253 chief, acting chief, superintendent of police,  
254 major, captain, lieutenant and sergeant of any  
255 local or the state police department, in all  
256 affidavits, statements, depositions, complaints,  
257 or reports made to or by any member of any local  
258 or the state police department.

259       Sec. 10. Section 19-8 of said supplement is  
260 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
261 thereof: The commissioner of health shall  
262 establish and maintain within the department of  
263 health a special laboratory for examination,

264 research and analysis of poisons, body fluids,  
265 tissues and all related toxicological matters.  
266 The facilities of such laboratory and of its  
267 personnel shall, under the supervision of the  
268 commissioner, be available to the coroners and the  
269 office of [medicolegal investigations] THE MEDICAL  
270 EXAMINER and all duly constituted prosecuting,  
271 police and investigating agencies of the state.

272       Sec. 11. Section 20-216 of said supplement  
273 is repealed and the following is substituted in  
274 lieu thereof: No person shall inject any fluid or  
275 substance into the body of any person whose death  
276 is subject to investigation by the office of  
277 [medicolegal investigations,] THE MEDICAL  
278 EXAMINER, until permission has been obtained from  
279 the [coroner of the county,] chief medical  
280 examiner, deputy medical examiner or an authorized  
281 assistant medical examiner.

282       Sec. 12. This act shall take effect July 1,  
283 1971.

File No. 1220  
(Reprint of File Nos. 690 and 972)

Substitute Senate Bill No. 1797  
As Amended by Senate Amendment  
Schedule "A" and House Amendment  
Schedule "A"



Approved by the Legislative Commissioner.

AN ACT CONCERNING AMENDMENTS TO THE MEDICOLEGAL  
INVESTIGATIONS ACT.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of  
Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 19-527 of the 1969  
2 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and  
3 the following is substituted in lieu thereof: The  
4 office of [medicolegal investigations] THE MEDICAL  
5 EXAMINER is established to be operated under the  
6 control and supervision of the commission. The  
7 expenses of the commission and of operation of  
8 [the] SAID office [of medicolegal investigations]  
9 shall be paid by the state out of funds  
10 appropriated for the purpose. The office shall be  
11 directed by a chief medical examiner who shall be  
12 appointed by the commission. His office shall be  
13 located at a medical school in this state.

14 Sec. 2. Section 19-530 of said supplement is  
15 amended by adding subsection (c) as follows: If  
16 the investigation of the circumstances and  
17 examination of the body enable the chief medical  
18 examiner, the deputy medical examiner or an  
19 authorized assistant medical examiner to conclude  
20 with reasonable certainty that death occurred from  
21 natural causes or obvious traumatic injury, and  
22 there are no other circumstances which would

23 appear to require an autopsy, the medical examiner  
24 in charge shall certify the cause of death and  
25 file a report of his findings in the office of the  
26 medical examiner. If, in the opinion of such  
27 medical examiner, an autopsy is necessary, the  
28 same shall be performed by the chief medical  
29 examiner, the deputy medical examiner or a  
30 designated pathologist. Where indicated, the  
31 autopsy shall include toxicologic, histologic,  
32 microbiologic and serologic examinations. If a  
33 medical examiner has reason to suspect that a  
34 homicide has been committed, the autopsy shall be  
35 performed by the chief medical examiner, or the  
36 deputy medical examiner, or by a designated  
37 pathologist in the presence of at least one other  
38 designated pathologist, if such other pathologist  
39 is immediately available. A detailed description  
40 of the findings of all autopsies shall be written  
41 or dictated during their progress. The findings  
42 of the investigation at the scene of death, the  
43 autopsy and any toxicologic, histologic, serologic  
44 and microbiologic examinations, and the  
45 conclusions drawn therefrom shall be filed in the  
46 office of the medical examiner.

47 Sec. 3. Section 19-531 of said supplement is  
48 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
49 thereof: (a) All law enforcement officers,  
50 state's attorneys, prosecuting attorneys,  
51 coroners, deputy coroners, other officials,  
52 physicians, funeral directors, embalmers and other  
53 persons shall promptly notify the office of  
54 [medicolegal investigations] THE MEDICAL EXAMINER  
55 of any death coming to their attention which,  
56 under this chapter, is subject to investigation by  
57 the chief medical examiner and shall assist in  
58 making dead bodies and related evidence available  
59 to that office for investigations and postmortem  
60 examinations, including autopsies, and shall  
61 cooperate fully with [the] SAID office [of  
62 medicolegal investigations] in making the  
63 investigations and examinations herein provided  
64 for. (b) In cases of apparent homicide or  
65 suicide, or of accidental death, the cause of  
66 which is obscure, the scene of the event shall not  
67 be disturbed until authorized by the chief medical  
68 examiner, or an authorized assistant medical  
69 examiner. Upon receipt of notification of a death  
70 as provided herein, the chief medical examiner or

71 an authorized assistant medical examiner, without  
72 delay, shall view and take charge of the body.  
73 (c) In conducting his investigation, except as may  
74 be otherwise directed by the state's attorney or  
75 an assistant state's attorney, the chief medical  
76 examiner or his authorized representative shall  
77 take possession of any objects, writings or other  
78 articles of property which in his opinion may be  
79 useful in establishing the cause or manner of  
80 death and HOLD, ANALYZE OR deliver them to the  
81 appropriate law enforcement officials. When such  
82 articles are no longer required to be kept for the  
83 purposes of justice, they shall be delivered to  
84 the person or persons entitled to their custody  
85 or, if they are not claimed by such person or  
86 persons entitled thereto within one year after the  
87 date of death, such articles may be disposed of by  
88 the law enforcement official as provided in  
89 section 54-36. (d) Any person who wilfully fails  
90 to comply with any provision of this section shall  
91 be fined not more than five hundred dollars or  
92 imprisoned not more than one year, or both.

93 Sec. 4. Section 19-533 of said supplement is  
94 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
95 thereof: The office of [medicolegal  
96 investigations] THE MEDICAL EXAMINER shall  
97 complete its investigation [as soon as] WHERE  
98 reasonably possible, [but in any event] within  
99 thirty days. Upon completion of the  
100 investigation, the chief medical examiner or an  
101 authorized assistant medical examiner shall file  
102 a death certificate, or a certificate  
103 supplementing that already filed, with the  
104 registrar of vital statistics for the town in  
105 which the death occurred, if known, or, if not  
106 known, for the town where the body was found. If  
107 the deceased is unidentified, fingerprints of both  
108 hands and a photograph of the body, provided  
109 mortification has not proceeded so far or the  
110 nature of the cause of death was not such as to  
111 make identification impossible, shall be sent by  
112 said office to such registrar of vital statistics  
113 and copies shall be sent to the state department  
114 of health and to the state police department.

115 Sec. 5. Section 19-534 of said supplement is  
116 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
117 thereof: The office of [medicolegal  
118 investigations] THE MEDICAL EXAMINER shall

119 maintain a laboratory or laboratories suitably  
120 equipped with medical, scientific and other  
121 facilities for performance of the duties imposed  
122 by this chapter. Laboratories may be maintained  
123 in collaboration with The University of  
124 Connecticut or any other medical school or  
125 hospital and any other agencies in the state which  
126 have facilities that can be utilized in performing  
127 the duties of the office. The manner of  
128 compliance with this section shall be in the  
129 discretion of the commission.

130 Sec. 6. Section 19-535 of said supplement is  
131 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
132 thereof: The office of [medicolegal  
133 investigations] THE MEDICAL EXAMINER shall keep  
134 full and complete records properly indexed, giving  
135 the name, if known, of every person whose death is  
136 investigated, the place where the body was found,  
137 the date, cause and manner of death, and all other  
138 relevant information concerning the death, and a  
139 copy of the death certificate. The full report  
140 and detailed findings of the autopsy and  
141 toxicological and other scientific investigation,  
142 if any, shall be a part of the record in each  
143 case. The office shall promptly notify of such  
144 death and deliver to the state's attorney and the  
145 coroner having jurisdiction over the case copies  
146 of all pertinent records relating to every death  
147 as to which further investigation may be  
148 advisable. Any state's attorney, coroner, chief  
149 of police or other law enforcement official may,  
150 upon request, secure copies of such records or  
151 other information deemed necessary by him to the  
152 performance of his official duties. THE REPORT OF  
153 EXAMINATIONS CONDUCTED BY THE CHIEF MEDICAL  
154 EXAMINER, DEPUTY MEDICAL EXAMINER OR AN AUTHORIZED  
155 ASSISTANT MEDICAL EXAMINER, AND OF THE AUTOPSY AND  
156 OTHER SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS MAY BE MADE AVAILABLE TO  
157 THE PUBLIC ONLY THROUGH THE OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL  
158 EXAMINER AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS OF  
159 THE COMMISSION AND OF SECTION 1-19. Any person  
160 may obtain copies of such records upon such  
161 conditions and payment of such fees as may be  
162 prescribed by the commission, provided no person  
163 with a legitimate interest therein shall be denied  
164 access to such records. Upon application by the  
165 chief medical examiner or state's attorney to the  
166 superior court for the county in which the death



167 occurred, or to any judge of the superior court in  
168 such county when said court is not then sitting,  
169 said court or such judge may limit such disclosure  
170 to the extent that there is a showing by the chief  
171 medical examiner or state's attorney of compelling  
172 public interest against disclosure of any  
173 particular document or documents. In the  
174 discretion of the commission, public authorities,  
175 professional, medical, legal or scientific bodies  
176 or universities or similar research bodies may  
177 have access to all records upon such conditions  
178 and payment of such fees as may be prescribed by  
179 the commission. Where such information is made  
180 available for scientific or research purposes,  
181 such conditions shall include a requirement that  
182 the identity of the deceased persons shall remain  
183 confidential and shall not be published.

184       Sec. 7. Section 19-536 of said supplement is  
185 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
186 thereof: The records of the office of [medicolegal  
187 investigations] THE MEDICAL EXAMINER, or  
188 transcripts thereof certified by the chief medical  
189 examiner or his authorized representative, shall  
190 be subject to subpoena and shall be admissible in  
191 evidence in any court in the state in the same  
192 manner and subject to the same conditions as  
193 hospital records as provided in section 4-104,  
194 except that the findings or conclusions of the  
195 chief medical examiner, his deputy or an assistant  
196 medical examiner as to the cause or circumstances  
197 of death, other than those set forth in the death  
198 certificate or the autopsy report, and statements  
199 by witnesses or other persons and conclusions upon  
200 extraneous matters shall not be admissible.

201       Sec. 8. Section 6-65 of said supplement is  
202 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
203 thereof: Each coroner shall preserve in a  
204 temporary binder in chronological order all  
205 findings made by him and also a record of all  
206 sudden and suspicious deaths which have been  
207 brought to his attention. All such [certificates  
208 and] records shall be public records and open to  
209 inspection at all reasonable times; PROVIDED  
210 COPIES OF RECORDS RECEIVED FROM THE OFFICE OF THE  
211 MEDICAL EXAMINER SHALL BE AVAILABLE ONLY THROUGH  
212 THAT OFFICE AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 6 OF  
213 THIS ACT. When any coroner has accumulated [a]  
214 sufficient [number of certificates and] records to

215 fill a temporary binder, such [certificates and]  
216 records shall be arranged chronologically with an  
217 alphabetical index preceding and the same shall be  
218 at once permanently bound in book form and  
219 transmitted to the clerk of the superior court who  
220 shall place it among the records of the clerk's  
221 office.

222 Sec. 9. Section 1-24 of said supplement is  
223 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
224 thereof: The following officers may administer  
225 oaths: The clerks of the senate, the clerks of  
226 the house of representatives and the chairmen of  
227 committees of the general assembly, or of either  
228 branch thereof, during its session; the governor,  
229 lieutenant governor, judges and clerks of any  
230 court, justices of the peace, commissioners of the  
231 superior court, notaries public, commissioners  
232 appointed by the governor to take acknowledgment  
233 of deeds, towns clerks and assistant town clerks,  
234 in all cases where an oath may be administered,  
235 except in a case where the law otherwise requires;  
236 commissioners on insolvent estates, auditors,  
237 arbitrators and committees, to parties and  
238 witnesses, in all cases tried before them;  
239 assessors and boards of tax review in cases coming  
240 before them; commissioners, appointed by governors  
241 of other states to take the acknowledgment of  
242 deeds, in the discharge of their official duty;  
243 the moderator of a school district meeting, in  
244 such meeting, to the clerk of such district the  
245 oath required by law; the first selectman in any  
246 matter before the board of selectmen; coroners,  
247 the chief medical examiner, deputy medical  
248 examiner and assistant medical examiners of the  
249 office of [medicolegal investigations] THE MEDICAL  
250 EXAMINER in any matter before them; registrars of  
251 vital statistics in any matter before them;  
252 registrars of voters in any matter before them;  
253 and the commissioner of state police, and the  
254 chief, acting chief, superintendent of police,  
255 major, captain, lieutenant and sergeant of any  
256 local or the state police department, in all  
257 affidavits, statements, depositions, complaints,  
258 or reports made to or by any member of any local  
259 or the state police department.

260 Sec. 10. Section 19-8 of said supplement is  
261 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
262 thereof: The commissioner of health shall

263 establish and maintain within the department of  
264 health a special laboratory for examination,  
265 research and analysis of poisons, body fluids,  
266 tissues and all related toxicological matters.  
267 The facilities of such laboratory and of its  
268 personnel shall, under the supervision of the  
269 commissioner, be available to the coroners and the  
270 office of [medicolegal investigations] THE MEDICAL  
271 EXAMINER and all duly constituted prosecuting,  
272 police and investigating agencies of the state.

273       Sec. 11. Section 20-216 of said supplement  
274 is repealed and the following is substituted in  
275 lieu thereof: No person shall inject any fluid or  
276 substance into the body of any person whose death  
277 is subject to investigation by the office of  
278 [medicolegal investigations,] THE MEDICAL  
279 EXAMINER, until permission has been obtained from  
280 the [coroner of the county,] chief medical  
281 examiner, deputy medical examiner or an authorized  
282 assistant medical examiner.

283       Sec. 12. This act shall take effect July 1,  
284 1971.