

## ***PUERTO RICANS NEED TO OBTAIN NEW BIRTH CERTIFICATES AFTER 1 JULY!!!***

by CPT Joshua Zell

If you or your dependent(s) were born in Puerto Rico, this article is for you. On 1 July 2010, all Puerto Rico birth certificates issued before 15 June 2010 will become invalid, and anyone who needs a Puerto Rico birth certificate will have to apply for a new one through the Puerto Rico Vital Statistics Record Office.

Birth certificates issued between 15 June and 30 June 2010 will remain valid for 15 days after they are issued. So, if for some reason you need a valid birth certificate during the first two weeks of July, you should apply for and have a certificate issued as close to 30 June as possible (a 30 June certificate is valid until 15 July, a 29 June certificate is valid until 14 July, etc.). You can apply for a new, permanent birth certificate beginning on 1 July, but it may take several weeks because of the large number of people who will likely apply at the same time.

To apply for a new birth certificate, download and fill out the application form available at this website: [www.salud.gov.pr/Programas/RegistroDemografico/Pages/RequisitosparasolicituddeNacimiento.aspx](http://www.salud.gov.pr/Programas/RegistroDemografico/Pages/RequisitosparasolicituddeNacimiento.aspx). Collect the following documents: (1) the application, (2) a copy of a valid driver's license or passport, (3) a check for \$5.00 (this fee is waived for veterans and people over 60), and (4) a self-addressed, postage-paid envelope. Mail these to the following address: Puerto Rico Vital Statistics Record Office, Registro Demografico, P.O. Box 11854, San Juan, PR 00910 (for regular mail) or 171 Quisqueya Street, Hato Rey, PR 00917 (for FedEx and UPS).

The Puerto Rico government is invalidating all pre-July 2010 birth certificates in order to help prevent identity theft, and to help the US Department of State and Department of Homeland Security reduce passport fraud. Puerto Rico birth certificates are currently used in roughly 40% of all US passport fraud cases, because they are relatively easy to steal from schools and other institutions which have traditionally kept original birth certificates among their records. For that reason, the law also makes it illegal for any public or private entity in Puerto Rico to keep an original birth certificate – they can only make a photocopy of your birth certificate to keep for their records. So, the bad news is that you may have to apply for a new birth certificate soon, but the good news is that you may only need that one original birth certificate for the rest of your life.

*For more information on Puerto Rican birth certificates, contact the Kaiserslautern Legal Services Center Legal Assistance Office at DSN 483-8848 or Civilian 0631-411-8848.*

