

March 30, 2007

The Honorable Andrew J. McDonald  
The Honorable Michael P. Lawlor  
Room 2500  
Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Raised Bill No. 1437

Dear Senator McDonald and Representative Lawlor:

I am here today speaking not only on behalf of my daughter but also for all other adoptive parents of international children.

There is an estimated 2 - 3 million orphans in China. Most of them are abandoned anonymously. When they are brought to the orphanage a Doctor examines them and then 'guesses' at their date of birth.

In the case of my daughter, they gave her the birth date of the day she was abandoned and an arbitrary birth year.

It is a common procedure to "under" age the child in hopes that the child will be adopted. There is a presumption that parents only want to adopt younger children. While the act is a noble one, it can also create great difficulties for the child in her newly adopted country.

My daughter, Marielle, came to us with paperwork saying that she was 10 years old. In fact she is 12 years old according to her pediatrician and dentist.

It is impossible for her to receive adequate educational intervention if she is evaluated as a 10 year old instead of a 12 year old. A recent educational evaluation was given to her. When they had her at 10 the results showed her at a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level. When they had her at 12, she is at a 1<sup>st</sup> grade level. The gap of deficit widened. In September she will be going into Middle School and she will need the appropriate

modifications and support systems mandated for a 12 year old evaluated at a 1<sup>st</sup> grade level in all areas of standardized testing. Marielle will not receive these if her birth certificate states she is 10 years old. By not receiving the necessary programs to support her, she will be denied an equal education opportunity and fall further and further behind.

Marielle's social opportunities will also be limited. The classes that she will choose to take will place her with 10 year olds instead of putting her on the same level as her peer group of 12 year olds.

Our medical insurance company will deny us certain tests and procedures for a 12 year old, if the documents say she is 10.

Finally, there are the emotional, developmental and psychological consequences that will follow her and affect every part of her life. She is a fully developed pre-teen (13 next month) trying to 'fit in' with 10 year olds.

This is just one Mother's story, but it is representative of many.

**We ask that you pass Bill No. 1437, to take effect immediately and make past birth certificate changes legal.**

It is imperative that this bill is effective forthwith, not only for Marielle's immediate educational concerns, but also for all the other children that are impacted by being assigned an incorrect birth date on a daily basis.

Yours sincerely,

Kathleen Heller & James Nicoloro  
(Mother) (Father)