

Public Hearing: 3/2/2010

Testimony for SB-293

Carolyn Goodridge, President

Connecticut Council on Adoption

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Dear Senator Musto, Representative Urban and honorable members of the Select Committee on Children,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 293, An Act Providing Certain Adult Adopted Persons with Access to Parental Health Information and Information in Their Original Birth Certificates.

I feel that it is a basic human right for each citizen to have access to their own identity. The children and the birth parents are protected until the child is an adult, but when the adopted person reaches adulthood, they should be allowed to make decisions for themselves. Adopted adults are the only citizens of our country who are denied rights to their own identity. The amended birth certificate issued at the time of the adoption is not their identity.

All doctors ask each patient for the medical history. Adopted adults are the only ones who have little or no medical history to give. Even if a birthparent gave some medical history at the time of surrender, many medical conditions don't show up until later in life. The adopted person should have the ability to obtain updated medical information. In this bill, there is reference to that issue in Sec.2.Section 7-51, section e, where birth parents will be contacted to complete a health history form if the birth parent requests the Birth Certificate.

Passage of this bill would be a start to affirming the rights of adoptees. Records were open prior to 1975, and there were no major costs or repercussions. The records were closed by an amendment tacked onto another bill. The concern about opening records retroactively has always been that the birth mothers

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were made promises but if any promises were made during that time, they broke the law then that allowed access all those years. Over 90% of the birthmothers who have been contacted over the years were positive about the contact; most mothers never stopped thinking about the child they surrendered. Adults adopted prior to 1975 are the most in need of medical information. Opening access from 1/1/11 will be helpful; however, there is more openness in adoption now than there was previously.

I ask that the committee fully support Senate Bill 293 and help adopted adults to have their human right to their own birth certificate and health information. Please keep in mind that access retroactively is important as well.

Thank you for your time and commitment to Connecticut's children in need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carolyn Goodridge".

Carolyn Goodridge

Connecticut Council on Adoption President