

2
Carolyn Goodridge, Outreach Social Worker

CT Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents

2189 Silas Deane Highway

Rocky Hill, CT 06067

2/8/11

Raised bill 890

Good Morning Representative Urban and members of the Select Committee on Children.

My name is Carolyn Goodridge and I am a social worker and public policy liaison for the CT Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents, a nonprofit agency whose mission is to support, train, and advocate for foster, adoptive and relative caregiver parents in the State. I am also President of the CT Council on Adoption, a volunteer organization of parents, professionals and court personnel, that monitors adoption practices in Connecticut .

We oppose raised bill 890, "An Act Providing Certain Adult Adopted Persons with Access to Parental Health Information and Information in Their Original Birth Certificates" as written.

Our objections to this prospective bill are as follows:

- This bill would allow access to the information only for those adopted after October 2010 instead of allowing all adult adoptees access to this information.
- It is a human rights issue that adopted adults should be allowed access to their personal information regardless of when their adoption was finalized. Adopted persons are the only citizens who do not have access to their own birth certificates.
- Original birth certificates and adoption files were open to adopted adults until 1974/75 when an amendment was placed on another bill and the records were suddenly closed. (There was no public hearing or announcement of any kind prior to that closing.)
- In research of court documents available back to 1983, the Probate Court form used by birth parents to surrender a child for adoption (JD-JM 60) has a statement above the parent's signature that states, "I further represent that I am aware that the child, upon reaching his 18th birthday, may have the right to information which may identify me or other blood relatives". The form uses the age of 18, yet this bill suggests 21 as an appropriate age. This form also shows that birth parents were not promised confidentiality.
- In section 2. Section 7-51 (a) #2 this proposed bill states that, "the department shall provide access to and shall, upon request, issue a copy of a sealed original birth record or certificate". In our research to propose an "access bill", we met with the Vital Records Department. They advised that when an original birth certificate is given to an adopted adult who already has an

amended birth certificate, it should not be a sealed copy but rather an uncertified copy to prevent its use in a second identity. This may need to be clarified.

- The U.S. Surgeon General's Office, in its Family History Initiative, stated that biological family history is vital to prevention, early diagnosis and treatment, particularly in regard to genetically predisposed conditions. Adult adopted persons should have the same right to their family history as any other citizen of this country.

WE are opposing this bill based on the belief that access to original birth certificates should be **re-opened** as it was prior to 1974, and be open to all adopted adults.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.