
From: Julie Stromberg <julie.stromberg@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 19, 2013 8:19 PM
To: PHC Testimony
Subject: SB 59 Testimony

Members of the Connecticut Public Health Committee,

I am writing to you all regarding the public hearing for SB 59 scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 20. This important legislation, if enacted, would result in thousands of adult adoptees realizing equal treatment under law when it comes to their birth certificates. The passing of SB 59 would restore the rights of all Connecticut-born adult adoptees to obtain their original, factual birth certificates.

When a child is adopted in the state of Connecticut, the adoptee's original, factual birth certificate is altered--or amended--to make it appear as though the adoptive parents actually gave birth to the adoptee. There is no indication on the amended birth certificate that an adoption even took place. The original, factual birth certificate is sealed away and not legally recognized. Currently, Connecticut-born adult adoptees (age 18+) are not allowed to access their original birth certificate. In contrast, all non-adopted adults born in Connecticut can obtain a copy of their original birth certificates through a simple request process.

Prior to 1974, adult adoptees born in Connecticut were able to access their original birth certificates just as all non-adopted adults who were born in Connecticut. Between 1974 and 1977, however, Connecticut changed its laws and sealed the birth records, preventing adult adoptees from having the same access to their own, factual birth certificates as non-adopted adults.

Restoring the right for adult adoptees to be treated equally under law is a legal matter and not one of search and reunion. As private adult citizens, what an adult adoptee chooses to do, or not do, with the information contained on his or her original birth certificate is a personal matter that does not require state interference. As SB 59 includes the option of a contact preference form, the birth parents of adult adoptees can indicate any preferences they have regarding contact while also granting the adult adoptee access to his or her original birth certificate. This would allow for adult adoptees to regain equal treatment under law while also allowing birth parents to make their preferences known. Again, what occurs between private adult citizens is a personal matter. Birth parents have the same options available to them that all private adult citizens have regarding interactions with other adult citizens.

I was born and adopted in Connecticut. I am one of the adult adoptees who is currently being treated as legally less important than non-adopted adults, simply because I was adopted as a child--which I no more chose for myself than I did my hair, eye, or skin color. I implore all members of the Public Health Committee to show adult adoptees born in Connecticut that the state of our birth recognizes our right to be treated equally under law to non-adopted adults born in Connecticut. Please pass SB 59 and end almost four decades of inequality.

Your consideration is most appreciated.

Thank you.

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