

Brian Donahue HB 5144

I am an adoptive father of two little girls. The girls are 2 and 3 years old. They are fortunate as they will have access to their records as they were adopted through DCF. They will be given all the information we have regarding their birth parents. Unfortunately there are many adult adoptees who will not have access to their birth certificates nor will they have access to their medical history. This is important for every individual to have.

I have worked for DCF for the past 20 years. I have worked with birth parents who have had their parental rights terminated. These parents are offered counseling, as well as other services, prior to their rights being terminated. They are able to process their feelings and are aware at some time in the future, many adult adoptees may go searching for their biological parents so they can learn about their identity, as well as learn about critical information about their lives. The adult adoptees may learn about what medical conditions they may develop in the future. This becomes a life and death issue. Most of the birth parents I have encountered in my work pray their children will make efforts to find them. Often the birth parents will make attempts to contact the child. This law if passed would allow the adult adoptee to have the ability to decide whether they want the information or not. This may reduce them from trying to find out through negative channels this information. The birth parent is able to decide for themselves whether they would like the child to know their information. Instead of putting barriers in the way of obtaining the information, the information would be accessible to the adult adoptee in a safe emotional manner. With the present barrier in place, many birth parents may not be aware of the fact the adult adoptee can't find them. Many times the birth parent is aware their grown up child may make efforts to find them in the future. The birth parent has legal representation in the juvenile court. This is often an issue the birth parent has discussed with their attorney. Often the birth parent has prepared for the day when the child will knock on their door. However the birth parents who do not want this information to be released are able to state this by signing paperwork which would not disclose their whereabouts.

The birth parent who has had their legal rights terminated to the child has never been promised anonymity for life. They are aware at some time in the future the child may want contact or information so the child will feel "complete". The parent has usually dealt with this with their mental health provider.

It is sometimes the adult who adopted the child who may not want this to occur in fear the child's becomes bonded to the birth parent. The adult who adopted the child fear they may lose the child they raised to adulthood. However as an adult who has adopted two children, I realize I don't own the them. They are human beings. When they are adults they should be able to have access to all information about who they are. This should be done with much support. If I love them, I must want what is best for them. This means I want them to be able to obtain the information they need to have to ensure they feel "complete" as individuals. I want them to be able to have knowledge of their identity and their medical background. This is the reason I am advocating for adult adoptees to have access to their initial birth certificate.

I ask you to strongly consider passing the law to provide adult adoptees with the access to their initial birth certificates.

Sincerely

Brian Donahue
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