

Kathleen M. Flaherty

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, and Members of the Committee:
Greetings...

I sent the letter below earlier but I sent it before I completed my comments. The story is my niece's story and she is someone I love and respect a great deal. I wanted to show that we are all connected in this journey and I was in no way claiming her story to be mine. I am sorry I made that mistake and sent the letter before I completed my comments. Please accept this as my letter of testimony in her honor.

Sincerely,
Charleen Miele
63 Raynel Road
Newington, CT 06111

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today to express my SUPPORT for Raised Bill No. 5144. I am an adult adoptee born in Connecticut in 1967. Had my parents known they had access to my original birth certificate, they could have requested it up until 1975. Catholic Charities, the agency through which both I and my late brother were adopted, gave my parents documents with my younger brother's original name. I have no such documentation.

I have been engaged in a search effort on and off since 1990 when I was first diagnosed with bipolar disorder. The non-identifying information I received at that time revealed that both serious mental illness and substance abuse exist in my maternal family history, but every other box on both sides is checked "not known." So every time I'm asked by a medical professional or have to fill out a form about family medical history I can't easily check off boxes or give a short answer. I'm grateful for the advance of electronic medical records if only for the fact that I don't have to endlessly repeat "I'm adopted so I don't know anything except this..." over and over again.

I paid Catholic Charities to search for my birth mother, and they found her. She told them that she didn't want contact from me at that time. Rather cruelly, they told me that in a letter dated on my birthday. (Honestly, could someone not have looked at the file first and waited a week?) I can accept that. I am not looking for access to my birth certificate in order to make an unwanted intrusion into someone else's life. I want it to complete a missing puzzle piece of my OWN life.

I have already filed the probate court action that is the very unsatisfactory alternative under existing Connecticut law. I encourage any Committee members admitted to the bar (as I am) to try to figure out the PC-607 form, or explain it to the probate court staff. Simply put, it asks you to complete it with the very information you are trying to get. At the time I am writing this letter to you, I am still waiting for a hearing to be scheduled, even though I brought the paperwork to the court in December 2013.

I urge you to give me and other adult adoptees the ability to know our biological origins and protect our health. It is our right, it is time, and it is the right thing to do.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Kathleen M. Flaherty
139 Cedar Ridge Road
Newington, CT 06111