

Elsa Peterson Obuchowski

HB 5144

Please accept the following written testimony:

As an adult adoptee, I was deeply moved to read in CT News Junkie that "The Public Health Committee will hear testimony Friday on a bill that would give adult adoptees access to their original birth certificate."

I am an adult adoptee, born in one state and adopted in another state.

I found my birth mother 30 years ago by hiring a private searcher and – at one point – making a phone call on a Saturday afternoon to the home phone of the judge who finalized my adoption. Luckily the judge was sympathetic and agreed to pull my record out of storage and answer a few "yes/no" questions when I called back during office hours at an appointed time. A couple of years later I found my birth father by writing a slightly misleading letter to the union of which he was a longtime member.

No adult should have to go through these contortions to find out his or her genetic family history.

In my case, both parents could not have been more delighted to welcome me as members of their family. I know this isn't always the case, but the point is that adults should have access to knowing who they are and where they came from. The antiquated idea that birth parents deserve anonymity because of the stigma is just silly nowadays when 40% of births are out of wedlock, according to the CDC (<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/unmarry.htm>).

Moreover, science has learned vastly more about genes and how they influence our health, both physical and mental, than was known in the days when these "privacy" laws were enacted. When I was growing up, my adoptive parents were told that children carried ***nothing*** in their genes except physical appearance. This is obviously false. Knowing one's genetic history is key to forming a secure sense of personal identity, whether or not one is able to have a familial relationship with one's birth mother and father.

Sincerely,

Elsa Peterson Obuchowski
41 East Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06851-3919 USA
(203) 846-8331 / Mobile (203) 984-8892