

John A Gueniat

Co-Chairs Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, Senator Kane and members of The Public Health Committee,

My name is John A. Gueniat and I am a resident of the Town of Washington. I am writing to ask for your support of RHB 5144, **AAC ACCESS TO BIRTH CERTIFICATES AND PARENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION FOR ADOPTED PERSONS.**

I am also part of the adoption circle, as three of my older siblings were relinquished and adopted before my own birth. My two eldest sisters located us when I was entering my teenage years and starting in my late teens I sought to find my sister June, who was relinquished as an infant (she was also supposed to be the family secret as my mother was not married at the time). I was finally able to locate her in 1998 when we were in our early 40s, reuniting my family in January 1999...4 months before our mother passed away suddenly.

I became involved in support for members of the adoption circle in Western Connecticut, with a support group and individually for those who wanted someone to listen privately. I have also assisted in searches and reunions. I also was part of Ct Council on Adoptions' Search Committee and Committee to Promote the Rights of Adopted Individuals, serving as Chairman for 5 years.

For health reasons alone, adopted individuals should have access to their original birth certificates. Genetic health information is so important yet we have sufficiently handicapped one group of people from the ability to have current and updated access to manage their own preventative care. Soon after I found my sister, our father relapsed with colon cancer. My doctor suggested that all of his children should start early screenings by mid-forties. Often that is the case, but without personal, current information, genetic predisposition is an unknown.

Over the years I have heard people talk about a state promise of anonymity to birth mothers. This could not be as the amended birth certificate is not created after relinquishment....only after adoption is finalized. Adoption is not guaranteed. In fact, you could have twins separated at relinquishment, one adopted and the other grown up in foster care. As an adult, the adopted twin would be denied access to the original Birth Certificate, the fostered twin would not. The denial is based solely on the adoptive status, not on a promise at relinquishment.

HB 5144, with the Contact Preference and Health History forms, is a fair way to restore the right that we who are not adopted often take for granted. This should be done retroactively.

In closing, I ask that you support and JF RHB 5144. Similar bills have become law in several states in recent years without adverse effects and many other states are moving toward the same. With the changes in how we deal with health care alone, now is the time to move forward and treat adopted adults as we do all others. This is their information. **THE RIGHT TO KNOW IS THE RIGHT TO GROW!** Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

John A Gueniat

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