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To: PHC Testimony
Cc: ken@klpgovaffairs.com; Brian Sullivan; Lois Nesci; mculhane@ctcatholic.org; Marek Kukulka
Subject: Testimony Bill 5144 Access to Birth Certificates & Parental Information for Adopted Persons
Attachments: Testimony Bill 5144 Access to Birth Certificates 2.28.14.pdf

Attached please find testimony against H. B. 5144 from Lois Nesci of Catholic Charities – Archdiocese of Hartford.

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Catholic Charities

Archdiocese of Hartford

February 26, 2014

**TESTIMONY AGAINST H.B. 5144-
An Act Concerning Access to Birth Certificates and Parental Information
for Adopted Persons**

Senator Gerrantana, Representative Johnson and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Hartford does not support House Bill 5144 (**as currently written**), although the intent of the proposed legislation is understood and supported, that is, the importance of knowing one's identify and history as well as access to a medical history.

It is important to consider that agreements had been made with biological parents that ensured confidentiality when adoptions were determined to be "closed." Biological parents had made this decision based on a variety of individual circumstances at the time. Therefore, this proposal doesn't allow for the confidentiality of the biological parents whose understanding was that identifying information would remain confidential.

Currently, there are already existing processes in place for an adult adoptee to reunify with his/her biological parent(s), as well as obtaining a medical history. Agencies like Catholic Charities have been able to facilitate the search process for adult adoptees when adoptions are closed.

Given the intent of the bill, Catholic Charities would support the intent with some modifications. This would include:

- A consent form be attached to the original birth certificate indicating the biological parent(s) choice whether or not to be contacted.
- If the biological parent(s) choose to be contacted, the original birth certificate would be released.
- If the biological parent(s) chooses not to be contacted, the original birth certificate would not be released.

Prospectively, we would support a method that ensures a similar process whereby an adult adoptee may obtain his/her original birth certificate when the biological parent(s) have full knowledge at the time of adoption that this may occur with or without their consent.

Respectfully submitted,

Lois Nesci, Chief Executive Officer