

I am writing in support of HB5144. Although I am not a resident of Connecticut, I am a mother who lost a child to adoption in 1964 (reunited in 1986) and am very passionate about the absolute right of every person to their own personal birth information. I have spent the past 25 years of my life, full-time since retirement seven years ago, advocating for adoption reform, adoptee and parental rights, and providing Search Angel services free of charge. I have personally facilitated more than 500 adoption reunions. From my experience and knowledge, more than 95% of the mothers are happy to be found and look forward to having their lost children back in their lives. There is simply no justifiable reason to keep adoptees' original birth certificates (OBCs) sealed.

But, ultimately this bill is not about search and reunion; it is about the absolute right of adoptees to be free of state-imposed discrimination and oppression by the sealing of their OBCs. What they choose to do with it is their personal business. The public and the State have no more right to intrude in their personal lives and question their motives for wanting their personal information than we do in anyone else's who was not adopted.

This is such an important piece of legislation that is way overdue for passage. Especially in this age of information technology and the generally-accepted acknowledgement of the importance of knowing one's family history, heritage and the identity of those to whom one is blood related, to force adopted persons - and only adopted persons - to live in the dark ages of secrets and lies is cruel and ludicrous. As a basic human right, adopted people deserve the opportunity enjoyed by every other citizen of saying "I know" instead of "I wonder." We have the examples and experiences of several other states that have restored dignity, justice and respect to people whose records were sealed because of adoption - OR, AL, ME, NH, RI, IL, among them - where tens of thousands of adoptees have received their original birth certificates with no negative repercussions whatsoever. I hope and pray CT legislators will now step up and do the right thing.

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