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Subject: HB 5144
Attachments: Testimony on Adult Adoptees birth certificates.doc

Attached is corrected testimony on 5144. I submitted it previously today but had the wrong hearing date on the testimony. Thank you.

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**Testimony on H.B. 5144:
AAC Access To Birth Certificates And Parental Health Information For Adopted Persons**

**February 28, 2014
Submitted By: Stephen Karp, MSW**

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, CT chapter representing over 3000 members we call upon the Public Health Committee to pass H.B. 5144. NASW/CT supports restoring the right of adult adoptees to receive a copy of their original birth certificate upon reaching the age of majority and receive information on their biological parent's health information. We believe this right should apply retroactively as well as prospectively.

Social Work Speaks, 9th edition, the association's policy statements, under *Foster Care and Adoption* calls for "the needs and rights of adult adoptees to have access to legally available information regarding their birth and family medical record". We believe that now is the time for this right to be made legal in Connecticut.

Social workers and other health care providers who work with adult adoptees can be hindered in their treatment of the individual due to a lack of biological health information. Proper treatment is predicated on having a full assessment of the individual's social, emotional, physical and biological factors. However with an adult adoptee the biological factors are not known, leaving a health care provider without key knowledge that may directly affect both prevention and acute treatment options. Such lack of key information due to an unnecessary legal barrier should be seen by all as unacceptable.

Psychologically it can be stressful on an adult adoptee to not have full information on their biological parent's health conditions, nor to have an original birth certificate. There are many circumstances where an original birth certificate is requested and with each of these requests the adult adoptee is reminded that unlike all others they lack an original certificate, that theirs is an unequal status. The same is true on requests for a family health history. For some adult adoptees this can be a painful experience that is repeated over and over.

H.B. 5144 provides birth parents with protections too by having the parent indicate whether they want to allow the adult adoptee to contact them and if so whether that contact may be direct or through an intermediary. These protections should offset any concerns birth parents may have as to confidentiality.

It is in the best interest, health and psychologically, of the adult adoptee that H.B. 5144 has been introduced and we urge its passage.