AN ACT CONCERNING ACCESS TO BIRTH CERTIFICATES AND PARENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION FOR ADOPTED PERSONS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 7-51 of the 2014 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2015):

(a) (1) The department and registrars of vital statistics shall restrict access to and issuance of a certified copy of birth and fetal death records and certificates less than one hundred years old, to the following eligible parties: [(1)] [(A) The person whose birth is recorded, if such person is [(A)] (i) over eighteen years of age, (B) a certified homeless youth, as defined in section 7-36, or (ii) if such person is (a minor emancipated pursuant to sections 46b-150 to 46b-150e, inclusive; [(3)] (B) such person's children, grandchildren, spouse, parent, guardian or grandparent; [(4)] (C) the chief executive officer of the municipality where the birth or fetal death occurred, or the chief executive officer's authorized agent; [(5)] (D) the local director of health for the town or city where the birth or fetal death occurred or where the mother was a resident at the time of the birth or fetal death, or the director's authorized agent; [(6)] (E) attorneys-at-law representing such person or such person's parent, guardian, child or
surviving spouse; [(7)] (F) a conservator of the person appointed for such person; [(8) members] (G) a member of a genealogical [societies] society incorporated or authorized by the Secretary of the State to do business or conduct affairs in this state; [(9) agents] (H) an agent of a state or federal agency as approved by the department; and [(10) researchers] (I) a researcher approved by the department pursuant to section 19a-25.

(2) Except as provided in section 7-53, as amended by this act, and section 19a-42a, access to confidential files on paternity, adoption, gender change or gestational agreements, or information contained within such files, shall not be released to any party, including the eligible parties listed in subdivision (1) of this subsection, except upon an order of a court of competent jurisdiction.

(b) No person other than the eligible parties listed in subsection (a) of this section shall be entitled to examine or receive a copy of any birth or fetal death record or certificate, access the information contained therein, or disclose any matter contained therein, except upon written order of a court of competent jurisdiction. Nothing in this section shall be construed to permit disclosure to any person, including the eligible parties listed in subsection (a) of this section, of information contained in the "information for health and statistical use only" section or the "administrative purposes only" section of a birth certificate, unless specifically authorized by the department for statistical or research purposes. The Social Security number of the parent or parents listed on any birth certificate shall not be released to any party, except to those persons or entities authorized by state or federal law. Such confidential information, other than the excluded information set forth in this subsection, shall not be subject to subpoena or court order and shall not be admissible before any court or other tribunal.

(c) (1) The registrar of the town in which the birth or fetal death occurred or of the town in which the mother resided at the time of the birth or fetal death, or the department, may issue a certified copy of the
certificate of birth or fetal death of any person born in this state [which] that is kept in paper form in the custody of the registrar. Except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, such certificate shall be issued upon the written request of an eligible party listed in subsection (a) of this section. Any registrar of vital statistics in this state with access, as authorized by the department, to the electronic vital records system of the department may issue a certified copy of the electronically filed certificate of birth or fetal death of any person born in this state upon the written request of an eligible party listed in subsection (a) of this section.

(2) In the case of a certified homeless youth, such certified homeless youth and the person who is certifying the certified homeless youth as homeless, as described in section 7-36, shall appear in person when the certified homeless youth is presenting the written request described in subdivision (1) of this subsection at (A) the office of the registrar of the town in which the certified homeless youth was born, (B) the office of the registrar of the town in which the mother of the certified homeless youth resided at the time of the birth, (C) if the birth certificate of the certified homeless youth has been electronically filed, any registrar of vital statistics in the state with access, as authorized by the department, to the electronic vital records system, or (D) the state vital records office of the department. The certified homeless youth shall present to the registrar or the department information sufficient to identify himself or herself as may be required by regulations adopted by the commissioner pursuant to section 7-41. The person who is certifying the certified homeless youth as homeless shall present to the registrar or the department information sufficient to identify himself or herself as meeting the certification requirements of section 7-36.

(d) The department and each registrar of vital statistics shall issue only certified copies of birth certificates or fetal death certificates, [for births or fetal deaths occurring less than one hundred years prior to the date of the request] except as provided in sections 7-51a and 7-53, as amended by this act.
Sec. 2. Section 7-53 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2015):

(a) Upon receipt of the record of adoption referred to in subsection (e) of section 45a-745 or of other evidence satisfactory to the department that a person born in this state has been adopted, the department shall prepare a new birth certificate of such adopted person, except that no new certificate of birth shall be prepared if the court decreeing the adoption, the adoptive parents or the adopted person, if over fourteen years of age, so requests. Such new birth certificate shall include all the information required to be set forth in a certificate of birth of this state as of the date of birth, except that the adopting parents shall be named as the parents instead of the [genetic] birth parents and, when a certified copy of the birth of such person is requested by an [authorized person] eligible party as described in subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of section 7-51, as amended by this act, a copy of the new certificate of birth as prepared by the department shall be provided. [Any person] Immediately after a new certificate of birth has been prepared, an exact copy of such certificate, together with a written notice of the evidence of adoption, shall be transmitted by the department to the registrar of vital statistics of each municipality in which the birth of the adopted person is recorded. The new birth certificate, the original certificate of birth on file and the evidence of adoption shall be filed and indexed, under such regulations as the commissioner adopts, in accordance with chapter 54, to carry out the provisions of this section and to prevent access to the records of birth and adoption and the information contained in the records, except as provided in this section.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, an original certificate of birth may only be issued if the person named in the certificate of birth is deceased and the person seeking to obtain such certificate of birth is an authorized applicant, as defined in section 45a-743. Any authorized applicant seeking to [examine or] obtain a copy of the original [record or] certificate of birth shall first obtain a written
court order [signed by the judge of the probate court for the district in which the adopted person was adopted or born in accordance with section 45a-753, or a written order of the Probate Court in accordance with the provisions of section 45a-752, stating that the court is of the opinion that the examination of the birth record of the adopted person by the adopting parents or the adopted person, if over eighteen years of age, or by the person wishing to examine the same or that the issuance of a copy of such birth certificate to the adopting parents or the adopted person, if over eighteen years of age, or to the person applying therefor will not be detrimental to the public interest or to the welfare of the adopted person or to the welfare of the genetic or adoptive parent or parents] issued in accordance with section 10 of this act. Upon receipt of such court order, [the registrar of vital statistics of any town in which the birth of such person was recorded, or] the department [ ] may issue [the certified] an uncertified copy of the original certificate of birth on file, marked with a notation by the issuer that such original certificate of birth has been superseded by a replacement certificate of birth as on file [ ], or may permit the examination of such record. Immediately after a new certificate of birth has been prepared, an exact copy of such certificate, together with a written notice of the evidence of adoption, shall be transmitted by the department to the registrar of vital statistics of each town in this state in which the birth of the adopted person is recorded. The new birth certificate, the original certificate of birth on file and the evidence of adoption shall be filed and indexed, under such regulations as the commissioner adopts, in accordance with chapter 54, to carry out the provisions of this section and to prevent access to the records of birth and adoption and the information therein contained without due cause, except as provided in this section.]

(c) Upon request, the department shall issue an uncertified copy of an original certificate of birth to (1) an adopted person who is eighteen years of age or older, or (2) such adopted person's adult child or grandchild. Such certificate shall be marked with a notation by the issuer that such original certificate of birth has been superseded by a
replacement certificate of birth as on file. Additionally, a notice stating that information related to the birth parents' preferences regarding contact by such adopted person or such adopted person's adult child or grandchild and a medical health history form completed by the birth parent may be on file with the Department of Children and Families shall be printed on such certificate or attached thereto.

(d) Any person, except such birth or adoptive parents, [or] such adopted person or such adopted person's adult child or grandchild, who discloses any information contained in such records, except as provided in this section shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars or imprisoned not more than six months, or both.

(e) Whenever a certified copy of an adoption decree from a court of a foreign country, having jurisdiction of the adopted person, is filed with the department under the provisions of this section, such decree, when written in a language other than English, shall be accompanied by an English translation, which shall be subscribed and sworn to as a true translation by an American consulate officer stationed in such foreign country.

Sec. 3. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2015) (a) Upon the request of a birth parent, the Department of Children and Families shall make available to him or her a contact preference form on which the birth parent may state a preference regarding contact by the person whose birth is recorded on a certificate of birth that may be made available in accordance with section 7-53 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, to an adopted person when such person is eighteen years of age or older or to such adopted person's adult child or grandchild. Upon such request, the department shall also provide the birth parent with a form on which to record his or her health history pursuant to subdivision (10) of subsection (a) of section 45a-746 of the general statutes.

(b) The contact preference form shall provide the birth parent with the following options from which the birth parent shall select one:
(1) I would like to be contacted.

(2) I would like to be contacted, but only through an intermediary, as designated by the birth parent.

(3) I do not want to be contacted.

(c) When the department receives a completed contact preference form or completed health history form from a birth parent, the department shall maintain such form in a confidential file and shall provide copies only to the adopted person who is eighteen years of age or older or such adopted person's adult child or grandchild, upon request. A completed contact preference form shall not be considered a public record for the purposes of section 1-210 of the general statutes.

Sec. 4. (NEW) (Effective from passage) (a) Not later than January 1, 2016, and annually thereafter until January 1, 2021, the Commissioner of Public Health shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, concerning the number of original birth certificates issued annually to adopted persons or the adult children or grandchildren of adopted persons in accordance with section 7-53 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public health.

(b) Not later than January 1, 2016, and annually thereafter until January 1, 2021, the Commissioner of Children and Families shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, concerning the number of contact preference forms and medical health history forms annually filed with the department in accordance with section 3 of this act to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public health. The report shall include the number of birth parents that selected each option described in section 3 of this act.

Sec. 5. Section 7-74 of the general statutes is repealed and the
following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2015):

(a) The fee for a certification of birth registration, short form, shall be fifteen dollars. The fee for a certified copy of a certificate of birth, long form, shall be twenty dollars, except that the fee for such certifications and copies when issued by the department shall be thirty dollars.

(b) The fee for a certified copy of a certificate of marriage or death shall be twenty dollars. Such fees shall not be required of the department.

(c) The fee for one certified copy of a certificate of death for any deceased person who was a veteran, as defined in subsection (a) of section 27-103, shall be waived when such copy is requested by a spouse, child or parent of such deceased veteran.

(d) The fee for an uncertified copy of an original certificate of birth issued pursuant to section 7-53, as amended by this act, shall be sixty-five dollars.

Sec. 6. Section 45a-744 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2015):

It is the policy of the state of Connecticut to make available to adopted and adoptable persons who are adults (1) information concerning their background and status; to give the same information to their adoptive parent or parents; and, in any case where such [adult] adopted or adoptable persons are deceased, to give the same information to their adult descendants, including adopted descendants; [except a copy of their original birth certificate as provided by section 7-51.] (2) to provide for consensual release of additional information which may identify the biological parents or relatives of such adult adopted or adoptable persons when release of such information is in the best interests of such persons; (3) except as provided in subdivisions [(4) and (5)] (1) and (4) to (6), inclusive, of this section, to protect the right to privacy of all parties to termination
of parental rights, statutory parent and adoption proceedings; (4) to
make available to any biological parent of an adult adopted or adult
adoptable person, including a person claiming to be the father who
was not a party to the proceedings for termination of parental rights,
information which would tend to identify such adult adopted or
[adult] adoptable person; [and] (5) to make available to any adult
biological sibling of an adult adopted or adult adoptable person
information which would tend to identify such adult adopted or adult
adoptable person; and (6) to make available to any adult adopted
person eighteen years of age or older or such adopted person's adult
child or grandchild a copy of an original birth certificate, as provided
in section 7-53, as amended by this act.

Sec. 7. Section 45a-751b of the general statutes is repealed and the
following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2015):

(a) [If] Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, if parental
rights were terminated on or after October 1, 1995, any information
tending to identify the adult adopted or adoptable person, a biological
parent, including a person claiming to be the father who was not a
party to the proceedings for the termination of parental rights, or adult
biological sibling shall not be disclosed unless written consent is
obtained from the person whose identity is being requested.

(b) (1) [If] Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, if
parental rights were terminated on or before September 30, 1995, (A)
any information tending to identify the biological parents, including a
person claiming to be the father who was not a party to the
proceedings for the termination of parental rights, shall not be
disclosed unless written consent is obtained from each biological
parent who was party to such proceedings, except as provided in
subdivision (2) of this subsection, and (B) identifying information shall
not be disclosed to a biological parent, including a person claiming to
be the father who was not a party to the proceedings for the
termination of parental rights, without the written consent of each
biological parent who was a party to such proceedings and the consent
of the adult adopted or adoptable person whose identity is being requested.

(2) [On] Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, on and after October 1, 2009, information tending to identify a biological parent who is subject to this subsection may be disclosed to an authorized applicant if the biological parent whose information is to be disclosed provides written consent, provided the child-placing agency or department attempts to determine the whereabouts of the other biological parent and obtain written consent from such other biological parent to permit disclosure of such information in the manner permitted under subdivision (1) of this subsection. If such other biological parent cannot be located or does not provide such written consent, information tending to identify the biological parent who has provided written consent may be disclosed to an authorized applicant, provided: (A) Information tending to identify the other biological parent shall not be disclosed without the written consent of the other biological parent, and (B) the biological parent whose information is to be disclosed signs an affidavit that such parent shall not disclose any information tending to identify the other biological parent without the written consent of the other biological parent.

(c) Regardless of the date parental rights were terminated, on or after July 1, 2015, the Department of Public Health shall, upon request, issue an uncertified copy of an original birth certificate to an adopted person eighteen years of age or older who is the subject of the birth certificate or such adopted person's adult child or grandchild, in accordance with the provisions of section 7-53, as amended by this act.

[(c) (d) If the whereabouts of any person whose identity is being sought are unknown, the court shall appoint a guardian ad litem pursuant to subsection (c) of section 45a-753, as amended by this act.

[(d) (e) When the authorized applicant requesting identifying information has contact with a biological sibling who is a minor, identifying information shall not be disclosed unless consent is
obtained from the adoptive parents or guardian or guardian ad litem of the sibling.

[(e) (f)] Any information tending to identify any adult relative other than a biological parent shall not be disclosed unless written consent is obtained from such adult relative. The consent of any biological parents common to the person making the request and the person to be identified shall be required unless (1) the parental rights of such parents have been terminated and not reinstated, guardianship has been removed and not reinstated or custody has been removed and not reinstated with respect to such adult relative or (2) the adoption was finalized on or after June 12, 1984. No consent shall be required if the person to be identified is deceased. If the person to be identified is deceased, the information that may be released shall be limited as provided in subsection (e) of section 45a-753, as amended by this act.

[(f) (g)] Any adult person for whom there is only removal of custody or removal of guardianship as specified in subsection (b) of section 45a-750, as amended by this act, may apply in person or in writing to the child-placing agency, the department, the court of probate or the superior court [which] has the information. Such information shall be made available within sixty days of receipt of such request unless the child-placing agency, department or court notifies the person requesting the information that it cannot be made available within sixty days and states the reason for the delay. If the person making such request is a resident of this state and it appears that counseling is advisable with release of the information, the child-placing agency or department may request that the person appear for an interview. If the person making such request is not a resident of this state, and if it appears that counseling is advisable with release of the information, the child-placing agency, department or court may refer the person to an out-of-state agency or appropriate governmental agency or department, approved by the department or accredited by the Child Welfare League of America, the National Conference of Catholic Charities, the Family Services Association of America or the Council
Sec. 8. Subsection (c) of section 19a-42 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2015):

(c) An amended certificate shall supersede the original certificate that has been changed and shall be marked "Amended", except for amendments due to parentage or gender change. The original certificate in the case of parentage or gender change shall be physically or electronically sealed and kept in a confidential file by the department and the registrar of any town in which the birth was recorded, and may be unsealed for viewing or issuance only as provided in section 7-53, as amended by this act, or upon a written order of a court of competent jurisdiction. The amended certificate shall become the [public] official record.

Sec. 9. Subsection (b) of section 45a-750 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2015):

(b) Any person for whom there is only a removal of custody or removal of guardianship, and such removal took place in this state shall be given information [which] that may identify the biological parent or parents or any relative of such person, upon request, in person or in writing, in accordance with subsection [(f)] (g) of section 45a-751b, as amended by this act, provided such information with respect to any relative shall not be released unless the consents required in subsection [(e)] (f) of section 45a-751b, as amended by this act, are obtained.
Sec. 10. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2015) On the petition of an authorized applicant, as defined in section 45a-743 of the general statutes, the Probate Court or the Superior Court that finalized an adoption or appointed a guardian ad litem in accordance with section 45a-753 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, shall issue an order directing the Department of Public Health to issue an uncertified copy of an original birth certificate to the authorized applicant in accordance with subsection (b) of section 7-53 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, provided the person named in the certificate of birth is deceased and each birth parent named on the original birth certificate: (1) Consents to the release of identifying information in accordance with sections 45a-751 to 45a-751b, inclusive, of the general statutes, as amended by this act; (2) is deceased; or (3) a legal representative or guardian ad litem consents to the release of identifying information on behalf of the birth parent in accordance with section 45a-753 of the general statutes, as amended by this act. Nothing in this section shall limit the right of an adopted person eighteen years of age or older or such adopted person's adult child or grandchild to obtain an uncertified copy of an original birth certificate pursuant to section 7-53 of the general statutes, as amended by this act.

Sec. 11. Section 45a-753 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2015):

(a) If a request is received pursuant to section 45a-751, the childplacing agency or department [which] that has agreed to attempt to locate the person or persons whose identity is being requested or the child-placing agency or department [which] that furnished a report ordered by the court following a petition [made under subsection (f) of this section] shall not be required to expend more than ten [hours] hours' time within sixty days of receipt of the request unless the child-placing agency or department notifies the authorized applicant of a delay and states the reason for the delay. The child-placing agency or department may charge the applicant reasonable compensation and be reimbursed for expenses in locating any person whose identity is being
requested. The obtaining of such consent shall be accomplished in a manner [which] that will protect the confidentiality of the communication and shall be done without disclosing the identity of the applicant. For the purposes of this section any records at the Court of Probate or the Superior Court shall be available to an authorized representative of the child-placing agency or department to which the request has been made.

(b) If the child-placing agency or department is out-of-state and unwilling to expend time for such purpose, the [court of probate which] Probate Court or Superior Court that finalized the adoption or terminated parental rights [or the superior court which terminated parental rights] shall upon petition appoint a licensed or approved child-placing agency or the department to complete the requirements of this section.

(c) If the relative whose identity is requested cannot be located or appears to be incompetent but has not been legally so declared, the [Court of] Probate Court or the Superior Court shall appoint a guardian ad litem under the provisions of section 45a-132, at the expense of the person making the request. The guardian ad litem shall decide whether to give consent on behalf of the relative whose identity is being requested.

(d) If the relative whose identity has been requested has been declared legally incapable or incompetent by a court of competent jurisdiction, then the legal representative of such person may consent to the release of such information.

(e) Such guardian ad litem or legal representative shall give such consent unless after investigation he or she concludes that it would not be in the best interest of the adult person to be identified for such consent to be given. [If] Except as provided in section 10 of this act, if release of the information requires the consent of such guardian ad litem or legal representative, or if the person whose identity is sought is deceased, only the following information may be released: (1) All
names by which the person whose identity is being sought has been known, and all known addresses; (2) the date and place of such person's birth; (3) all places where such person was employed; (4) such person's Social Security number; (5) the names of educational institutions such person attended; and (6) any other information that may assist in the search of a person who cannot be located.

[(f) (1) If (A) the person whose identity is being sought cannot be located or is incompetent or (B) the child-placing agency or department has not located the person within sixty days, the authorized applicant may petition for access to the information to the court of probate or the superior court which terminated the parental rights or to the court of probate which approved the adoption.

(2) Within fifteen days of receipt of the petition, the court shall order the child-placing agency or department which has access to such information to present a report. The report by the child-placing agency or department shall be completed within sixty days after receipt of the order from the court.

(3) If the child-placing agency or department is out-of-state and unwilling to provide the report, the court shall refer the matter to a child-placing agency in this state or to the department for a report.

(4) The report shall determine through an interview with the adult adopted or adult adoptable person and through such other means as may be necessary whether (A) release of the information would be seriously disruptive to or endanger the physical or emotional health of the authorized applicant, and (B) release of the information would be seriously disruptive to or endanger the physical or emotional health of the person whose identity is being requested.

(5) Upon receipt of the report, or upon expiration of sixty days, whichever is sooner, the court shall set a time and place for hearing not later than fifteen days after receipt of the report or expiration of such sixty days, whichever is sooner. The court shall immediately give
notice of the hearing to the authorized applicant and to the child-
placing agency or the department.

(6) At the hearing, the authorized applicant may give such evidence
to support the petition as the authorized applicant deems appropriate.

(7) Within fifteen days after the conclusion of the hearing, the court
shall issue a decree as to whether the information requested shall be
given to the authorized applicant.

(8) The requested information shall be provided to the authorized
applicant unless the court determines that: (A) Consent has not been
granted by a guardian ad litem appointed by the court to represent the
person whose identity has been requested; (B) release of the
information would be seriously disruptive to or endanger the physical
or emotional health of the authorized applicant; or (C) release of the
information would be seriously disruptive to or endanger the physical
or emotional health of the person whose identity is being requested.

(9) If the court denies the petition and determines that it would be in
the best interests of the person whose identity is being requested to be
notified that the authorized applicant has petitioned the court for
identifying information, the court shall request the child-placing
agency or department to so notify the person whose identity is being
requested. The notification shall be accomplished in a manner which
will protect the confidentiality of the communication and shall be done
without disclosing the identity of the authorized applicant. If the
person whose identity is being requested is so notified, the authorized
applicant who petitioned the court shall be informed that this
notification was given.]

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following
sections:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Section</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>July 1, 2015</td>
<td>7-51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>July 1, 2015</td>
<td>7-53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>July 1, 2015</td>
<td>New section</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sec. 4</td>
<td>from passage</td>
<td>New section</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sec. 5</td>
<td>July 1, 2015</td>
<td>7-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sec. 6</td>
<td>July 1, 2015</td>
<td>45a-744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sec. 7</td>
<td>July 1, 2015</td>
<td>45a-751b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sec. 8</td>
<td>July 1, 2015</td>
<td>19a-42(c)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sec. 9</td>
<td>July 1, 2015</td>
<td>45a-750(b)</td>
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<td>Sec. 10</td>
<td>July 1, 2015</td>
<td>New section</td>
</tr>
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<td>Sec. 11</td>
<td>July 1, 2015</td>
<td>45a-753</td>
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**Statement of Legislative Commissioners:**
In section 1(a)(1)(A)(i), "or [(B)]" was changed to "[or (B)]" because the "or" was superfluous; in section 6(1), the phrase "such adult persons" was changed to "such [adult] adopted or adoptable persons", for consistency and clarity; and in section 11, "made under subsection (f) of this section" was bracketed for internal consistency.

**PH** Joint Favorable Subst.