



Catholic Charities Diocese of Norwich

Providing Help, Creating Hope

28 Huntington Street
New London, Connecticut 06320

Phone 860 443-5328
Fax 860 443-6013

Most Rev. Michael R. Cote, D.D.
President

James J. Maffuid, LMFT
Executive Director

February 27, 2014

TESTIMONY AGAINST H.B. 5144-

An Act Concerning Access to Birth Certificates and Parental Information for Adopted Persons

Senator Gerrantana, Representatives Johnson and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee, Catholic Charities, Diocese of Norwich, Inc. does not support House Bill 5144 as currently written, despite this agency's acknowledgement that the knowledge of one's identity, family history and medical history are important and valuable to each individual.

However, the Committee should also recognize and respect the privacy rights of biological parents who were ensured confidentiality at the time that they made the decision to place their children for adoption. Releasing this information without their consent violates fundamental fairness and privacy rights which are the foundation of our laws.

The current law allows adult adoptees to reunify with his/her biological parent(s) and to obtain medical history by contacting the agency that facilitated their adoption. Connecticut adoption agencies, like Catholic Charities, Diocese of Norwich, Inc. routinely facilitate the search process for adult adoptees. Moreover, under the law's current language, the adoption agency is able to act as an intermediary to obtain updated medical history for the adult adoptee, while continuing to maintain confidentiality if that is desired by the biological parent.

Catholic Charities does support what appears to be the intent of the bill in regard to one accessing their medical history if the following modifications are made:

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

Respectfully submitted,



James Maffuid, LMFT
Executive Director

