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Connecticut General Assembly
Public Health Committee Members
Room 3000
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

February 18, 2014

RE: RAISED BILL 5144: AN ACT CONCERNING ACCESS TO BIRTH
CERTIFICATES AND PARENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION FOR ADOPTED
PERSONS

Dear Committee Members:

Connecticut Association of Foster & Adoptive Parents, Inc. ("CAFAP") endorses Raised Bill 5144 and asks that each committee member vote in its favor. Adult adoptees in Connecticut have wrongfully been denied vital information about their lineage and medical histories since 1975 and there exists no counter public policy of equal or greater import justifying this continued denial of access to individual heritage.

CAFAP supports foster and adoptive parents and relative caregivers statewide. Our families appreciate how deeply young adults want the right to know who their biological parents are (or were) and to have access to medical information that they would otherwise be able to obtain, except for the fact that were adopted in Connecticut. Each adult adoptee should have access to their own history, whether they ever decide to obtain it or not, just as non-adoptees have the right to obtain their birth certificates, if they so choose.

Connecticut has taken a strong public policy position in favor of adoptions, including open adoptions between birth parents and adopting parents. Our administrative agencies, including Department of Children and Families, tell children & youth that state officials will search and find for them "forever homes" and "forever families." Yet after that forever family is found, young adults are refused information about their biological families and what medical conditions they were born into. This unequal treatment under the law not only undercuts Connecticut's public claim of support for adoption and adoptees but inflicts real and lasting damage to those adults denied this right enjoyed by all other adults.

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Our sister states of Maine, New Hampshire and Rhode Island have already realized that access to original birth certificates for adult adoptees is a positive step in the area of human rights and equal protection under the law.

The time has come for Connecticut to truly support those children and youth, who soon become legal adults, who have found forever families while still being able to access important information about their families and medical histories of origin.

Please vote in favor of Raised Bill 5144. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Margaret M. Doherty
Executive Director