

## Testimony

Bill 1067

3/23/15

Senator Coleman, Representative Tong and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Carolyn Goodridge, and I am testifying in support of SB 1067, An Act Concerning a Biological Parents' Access to Certain Documents in Cases Involving a Voluntary Termination of Parental Rights. I have worked in the field of foster care and adoption for over thirty-five years. I have been the intermediary in many searches between adoptees and birth mothers, and I have talked with many birth mothers who have not had any information about the child they relinquished for adoption. None of these birth parents had any copies of any of the documents they signed in the process of relinquishing a child. That has always puzzled me because it is illegal in any other transaction not to give all parties copies of the documents they sign. If a person signs a loan, mortgage, or any sales agreement, they have a right to a copy. Yet, these birth parents have nothing and this involved a human being.

In the years prior to 1970's, birth parents were treated very negatively if they decided to relinquish a child for adoption, particularly if the pregnancy was "out of wedlock". Decisions were often made **for them** even though it had a profound effect upon their lives. There is a lot of confusion over what these birth parents actually signed, and it seems that they should have the right to those papers that have their signature. It may be the only proof that they had a child. Despite some public opinion that birth parents "forgot" the child they relinquished, I have not yet met a birth parent who forgot the child they relinquished.

Thank you for your time.