

Senator Coleman, Representative Tong and members of the Judiciary Committee,

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 am also an adoptee born in Hartford, CT, the mother of a 25 yr. old son who was born to Mexican birthparents in Guadalajara, Mexico and the Vice President of an Adoptee Rights organization, in Connecticut, called Access Connecticut.

Access Connecticut supports SB 1067 for the following reasons:

1. It will unseal documents signed by persons who should have the right to them. The documents would be available only to persons who signed them or their attorney, not the public.
2. It will protect vulnerable consumers by providing access to legal documents, which any ordinary consumer would have access.
3. It will counter the myth that birth parents were "promised" their identifies would remain permanently hidden from their adult offspring, as shown by the omission of any such assurance in relinquishment documents obtained in Connecticut and other states.
4. It will inform future legislation based on factual information regarding termination of parental rights.
5. It will conform access to files concerning termination of parental rights maintained by child-placing agencies to the law allowing biological parents access to their Probate Court files concerning termination of their parental rights. Access to Probate Court files is not sufficient to obtain all signed relinquishment documents because child- placing agencies may hold relinquishment documents signed by biological parents that are not contained in Probate Court files.
6. It would correct an injustice to biological parents who frequently waived, or were required to waive, notice of the right to a hearing on the termination of parental rights proceedings and therefore are unable to exercise their right to access their Probate Court files as currently provided under Connecticut General Statute , section 45a-754.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Carol Goodyear
Vice President, Access Connecticut.