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I would like to thank Senator Coleman, Representative Tong, Senator Kissel, Representative Rebimbas and the entire membership of the Judiciary Committee for the opportunity to testify today. I am David Alexander, State Representative for the 58th District of Enfield, and I am here to testify in support of SB 1067 An Act Concerning A Biological Parent's Access to Certain Documents In Cases Involving A Voluntary Termination Of Parental Rights. The premise of this bill is simple. It would allow a biological parent (or birth parent), who voluntarily terminated his or her parental rights to a child, access to documents that such biological parents signed or received in connection with the parental rights termination proceeding.

This bill is somewhat connected to last year's HB 5144 that became law allowing Connecticut adoptees who were adopted after 1 October 1983 to obtain a copy of their original birth certificate. The connection lies with the fact that it deals with the issue of adoption reform, and it also is supported by Access Connecticut, a grassroots adoption reform advocacy group who supported HB 5144. But let me be clear. SB 1067 is different because it would allow birth parents the right to obtain copies of documents they signed when they put their children up for adoption. Thus, HB 5144 focused on adoptees' rights, and SB 1067 focuses on birth parents' rights.

This bill should pass because it makes no sense for adoption agencies to deny birth parents access to copies of documents that they actually signed when they put their children up for adoption. Connecticut residents have a legal right to obtain copies of documents they signed regarding car sales, mortgages and other contractual transactions. Therefore, why should we deny birth parents access to copies of documents that they signed completing the contractual transaction of their adoption? Keep in mind that the actual adoptee is not obtaining copies of these documents. Birth parents who signed these documents and proactively decided to go forward with the adoption are asking for the copies. Furthermore, this would be a voluntary right; birth parents would simply have the option to exercise their right to obtain copies of these documents. In fact, I believe that it is a "Due Process" violation to deny these birth parents the right to obtain copies of these documents: