

Moniz-Carroll, Rhonda

From: Carol Goodyear <carolagdyr@aol.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 22, 2015 9:16 PM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: Senate Bill 1067, An Act Concerning a Biological Parents' Access to Certain Documents in Cases Involving a Voluntary Termination of Parental Rights

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

I am writing to you 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 the Vice President of an adoptee rights organization in CT called Access Connecticut, as well as an adult adoptee and the mother of a 25 year old son who was adopted when he was 6 weeks old.

I urge you to support SB 1067 for the following reasons:

1. It will unseal documents signed by persons who should have a 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 signed legal documents which any ordinary consumer would have access.
3. It will counter the myth that birth parents were "promised" their identities 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 will 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 proceeding and therefore are unable to exercise their right to access their probate court files as currently provided in Connecticut General Statute section 45a-754.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Carol Goodyear
Vice President, Access Connecticut