

To: The Planning and Development Committee

Re: Senate Bill 977

March 19, 2017

As a birthmother I write to offer my full support to allow adult adoptees access to their original birth certificates.

In 1961 as an unwed mother I had no other choice but to place my baby for adoption. In 1961 there was no respectful place for someone in my situation, not in our society, not in my family. However, in 1961 at the time of the adoption I was told by the adoption agency that when my child became of legal age he would have access to his birth certificate. Shortly after he became of legal age in the early 1980s I inquired about him at the adoption agency and it was then that I learned that the law had been changed to seal the records and to seal them retro-actively including the year 1961, making it impossible for him to have access to his birth records. The news was devastating and there appeared to be no hope. In 1992 I inquired again at the agency and I was told he had not made an inquiry.

So I continued with my life, keeping my silence, keeping my secrecy, keeping up the deception, keeping up the worry about the feelings of my child. They tell you "to go on with your life, in time you will forget", but you never forget your child. Finally after 40 years I knew that somehow I had to find my son, and so in 2001 I went back to Catholic Family Charities and they told me that now they could contact my son. It was then that I began my search and found my son. It was then that I learned from him that he had tried to get his records when he became of legal age but he was told by the agency the records were destroyed and he would never be able to find out his information. Fortunately this was untrue.

Thankfully, we have come a long way since 1961, and yet, it is hard to believe that in 2017 still one particular group of adults is being denied vital information; information that is the very foundation of their being, of their heritage, and of their medical background. To know who you are satisfies the most basic of human rights. This is not only a civil right, but a natural right that must be satisfied in the heart of every one of us.

And so from the bottom of my heart, I fervently and respectfully ask you to support access to original birth certificates by adult adopted persons.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Hook