Dear Members of the Committee:

I am a lawyer and co-founder of Adoptee Rights Law Center PLLC. I represent adult adoptees in Minnesota and I also advocate for removing unlawful restrictions on the right of adult adoptees to obtain copies of their own vital records.

I urge the committee to pass SB977 and to remove Connecticut’s unequal treatment of adoptees whose adoptions were finalized prior to October 1, 1983.

While laws in the 1940s and 1950s sealed adoptees’ birth records in many states across the country, the purpose of these laws were never intended to restrict adult adoptees’ access to their own personal birth records. Rather, the purpose of such laws have always been two-fold:

1. To assure that adopting parents and natural parents remained unknown to each other, so that the relationship between the adoptive parents and the adoptee can proceed without hindrance; and

2. To assure that children born out-of-wedlock would not be stigmatized by that status. To a lesser extent, the sealing of records prevented adoptive parents and adoptees from being blackmailed through the use of public knowledge of a child’s illegitimacy.

The purpose was never to prevent an adult adoptee from securing a right given to all people: to know their full identity and heritage.

Indeed, in 1949, officials from the U.S. Children’s Bureau and the National Office of Vital Statistics developed specific guidelines for states to follow to assure responsible treatment of confidential birth records. The resulting publication was unequivocal about an adopted person’s record:

The right to inspect or to secure a certified copy of the original birth certificate of an adopted child should be restricted to the registrant, if of legal age; or upon court order.

I urge the committee to restore this right to all Connecticut adoptees. I urge you to pass SB977.

Best regards,

/s/

Gregory D. Luce