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**Connecticut State Medical Society Testimony in support of House Bill 5408,
An Act Concerning Access to Original Birth Records By Adult Adopted Persons
Judiciary Committee
March 19, 2018**

Senator Doyle, Senator Kissel, Representative Tong and members of the Judiciary Committee, on behalf of the physicians and physicians in training of the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS), thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in **support** of House Bill 5408, An Act Concerning Access to Original Birth Records By Adult Adopted Persons.

CSMS fully believes that allowing adult adopted persons access to their original birth certificate will lead to improved patient care and medical health. A family health history, which many adoptees do not presently have, helps physicians and other health care practitioners provide better care for patients. A properly collected family history, according to the American Medical Association, can: identify whether a patient has a higher risk for a disease; help the health care practitioner recommend treatments or other options to reduce a patient's risk of disease; provide early warning signs of disease; and help plan lifestyle changes to keep the patient well.

House Bill 5408 is consistent with the Connecticut Department of Public Health's mission. The department emphasizes the importance of persons knowing their family health history and sharing it with their doctor. "One of the best predictors for chronic illness or disability is a family history of the same condition," according to the agency's website. Did "you know that your family history might be one of the strongest influences on your risk of developing heart disease, stroke, diabetes, or cancer? Even though you cannot change your genetic makeup, knowing your family health history now could help you reduce your risk of developing health problems later. Knowing your family history can also help your doctor predict your risk of developing diseases like heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer."

CSMS's support for House Bill 5408 aligns with DPH's joining the U.S. Surgeon General's Family History initiative to promote health and prevent disease for Connecticut's citizens. "DPH is promoting this Family History initiative to encourage family discussion of their health history. Together with the U.S. Surgeon General, the Department of Public Health urges all Connecticut families to increase their awareness of the importance of family health history and to join together to protect their health."

Adoptees in Connecticut between 18 and about 34 years old now have the ability to access their original birth records and obtain medical health history information. The distinction between treating adoptees who are 34 years old and those who are 35 appears arbitrary and does not advance public health. Indeed, many older adoptees by nature of their age who do not have access to such information would benefit from House Bill 5408. Family health history is vital to all persons as they grow older and it helps physicians to educate and treat such patients.

Access to their original birth certificates will help adoptees protect their own health and will likely lead to better treatment of disease and improved outcomes as well as reduced health care costs for society.

Please support House Bill 5408.