



Testimony on H.B. 5408

Dear members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Carolyn Goodridge. I am President of the CT Council on Adoption, which is a voluntary organization of adoption professionals, parents, therapists, judges and attorneys. CCA has been interested in the search process as part of the entire adoption process.

Our organization has been instrumental in changing legislation over the years to update laws as the adoption practice has changed. We learned nearly thirty years ago that secrecy around adoption was not a healthy practice. Birth mothers carried guilt and shame in secret because they were told to keep the surrender of their child a secret. This was not for their benefit as much as it was to protect the adoptive families. Birth parents were the first ones cut out of any contact or information about their child. A very small percentage of birth parents are not yet ready for contact by their child because they have so deeply buried the secret; we do find, though, that those who are "found" are relieved to find that their "child" survived and is okay. This can be very healing for these parents. Many birth parents have expressed the concern that they never wanted their child denied of information about them; they did want privacy from the general public, who had been very judgmental of any unwed pregnancies.

CT Council on Adoption supports this bill. Our organization realizes that this is the healthiest move for all the parties in adoption. The children did not have a say in the adoption process. They are now adults who need information about their **identity** and their **medical background**. Why should these adults be the only ones to be denied access to their own birth documents? It was the state that created an amended birth certificate to perpetuate the secrecy of adoption. It is time to allow Adopted **adults** to have the same rights as every other citizen.

On behalf of the members of CCA, I urge positive consideration of this bill.

Carolyn Goodridge