

Dear Members of the Planning and Development Committee,

I am a birth mother. I lost my daughter to adoption in 1972. To "protect" me and my family from the "shame" of my pregnancy, I was sent away, in secret, to an unwed mother's home to await the birth of my beloved daughter.

To help me survive the trauma of this experience, I nurtured a deeply held hope that I would one day be allowed to know her. The counselor told me that I should never try to search for her; I would never know her name or where she lived. My confidentiality was never discussed and I never wanted confidentiality. I knew I would find her some day. I promised her I would. I clung to the hope that one day I could have a place in her life. I found my daughter when she was 26 years and 9 months old. That was almost 20 years ago. We have a loving and caring relationship.

Whether or not there is access to original birth certificates, people will find each other. The use of DNA has immeasurably changed the search for original parents. No longer can the first parents hide in secret. The question is, will the adoptees search and the biological parents be found in shame? Or should we validate the sanctity of human life by giving people the opportunity to access the basic information about their heritage? If we can get rid of the shame, we can begin to honor these women, regardless of the circumstances of pregnancy.

I understand the desire for some people to maintain their privacy. I, too, was one of those that lived with the guilt, shame, and secrecy that losing a child to adoption brings. But there is a difference between confidentiality from the general public and allowing one's own adult child the basic information about themselves. I never wanted to be anonymous to my own daughter. Most mothers of adoption loss do not want to be anonymous to their lost children.

Please take the secrecy and shame out of relinquishment and bring knowledge and validation in by the passage of S.B. 972: An Act Concerning Access To Birth Records By Adult Adopted Persons. Give adopted people and their first parents the hope they yearn for; to one day have answers. It doesn't matter whether that answer is basic knowledge of one's beginnings, the answer of "no contact," or a welcoming relationship. I knew when I searched that my daughter could ask me not to interfere in her life and I would have to respect that. Adults can act maturely, responsibly, and thoughtfully in the reunion process. Allow all the sons and daughters of Connecticut the same access to their birth certificate records that all other citizens currently have. Please support SB 972 allowing open birth certificate records for adult adoptees.

Kathy Aderhold