

March 13, 2019

Members of the Planning & Development Committee
State Capitol
Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1562

Re: Support for S.B. 972 An Act Concerning Access to Original Birth Records By Adult Adopted Persons

Salutations,

I have four children; three boys and a girl. I know all mothers think their children are spectacular, but mine really are. They are all so alike, yet they are so different. They are sometimes so much like me and then, at other times, so much like his or her father- both in appearance, and disposition, in mannerisms in voice, in attitude, in interests... my little genetic experiments I call them. Of course, none of them are little anymore as the youngest is now sixteen. Plus, being children, especially the teenagers, sometimes they really can tax a nerve, but they are, hands down, my favorite people. My children, these people I made, are magnificent beings. In them all I see such greatest, such potential. They are my greatest legacy. I love them all, all four, sometimes differently - depending on what they need at the time - but equally.

My children, however, are not equal. One of my kids, my oldest son, Max, is denied his civil rights and is discriminated against by his own government. Despite being a grown man of thirty, he is not allowed to access his original birth certificate. It is sealed away, supposedly, for my "protection".

"Why would I need to be protected from such a wonderful human being? " one might ask. "Why should a mother need to be shielded from a child she so obviously delights in?"

The answer is, of course, that when I became pregnant with my son Max at age 18, I was young, struggling and had lack of emotional and financial supports. I also was naïve, doubtful and scared and so, I did what I thought was the best solution; I consented to relinquish my newborn son to adoption. I became forever a birth mother and he, though my choice, was forced to become an adoptee.

He was only 48 hours old when we were separated. I was 19. It would be exactly 19 years, 111 days before I would set eyes upon him again when he was 19. There was a weekend filled with tons of overly animated conversations, lots of goofy pictures, and an excitement that felt almost manic. That's what we call an "adoption reunion". I had search for, and, obviously, found him, a few years earlier on MySpace - both of us thrilled with the contact. For me, I had been counting down the years until he would be 18, waiting. I left a trail of breadcrumbs throughout my life, hoping he would pick up my scent.

He didn't even know he ever could search, just wondered out loud, online, who he was, and I came and found the markers that confirmed he was my child.

Now, I cannot have imaged not knowing him. Over a decade into healing, the bridges over empty years, for us, it's just normal. He is my son, whom I did not raise, who has a whole other family who loves and adores him, too. Besides, I often say, it's perfectly normal for one's 31-year-old son to live in another state and visit when one can. And we do visit, often, and we all have a wonderful time.

But the law still sees a need to "protect" him from me. Just that one son; not his brothers, not his sister, just the one. He is treated differently due to a choice * I *made, because of a piece of paper, *I* signed, yet *his *rights are the ones violated.

There is no other mechanism in any law that would allow me to be able to deny my other children the right to access their own legal documentation. If I made a bon fire out of their social security cards and birth certificates, they could obtain new copies of their vital records. Their legal identity belongs to them. I cannot erase my name from the records of their birth, just as I cannot erase the stretch marks across my body, no matter what might come between us in life. We are legally bound by the fact that they came from my body. I created them and that is a lineage to be traced on ink and in our DNA, in blood.

But not Max.

How could any mother rationalize that is just, right, or fair to see one of her children treated unfairly, I wonder? But then I wonder how could any government rationalize that it is just, right, or fair, to see one class of beings being treated unfairly due to the very day of their birth or whether or not their own mother is still alive? Yet, that is exactly what your current law does and it is not just, nor right, nor fair.

Oh, I understand the arguments over the weird delineations of adoptees castes; due the nature of the laws at the time of the relinquishments, someone somewhere believes the mythology that it is actually healthy and normal for a woman to give birth to a child and never want to ever see nor hear from that person again. Maybe, back in the time that these laws were written, society and culture really thought it was possible for a mother to forget, to "move on", to become an "un-mother"; but it's only a legal document, not a magic wand. We do not forget. It does not erase our memories of flutters in our wombs and kicks in the night. The greatest majority of us want to know how our children are. What was understood when the laws were written is, simply, incorrect about the emotional needs of human nature. Yet, the "protection" continues?

The same laws that thought I was smart enough, wise enough, mature enough and able to comprehend the complexity of a lifelong legal decision that affected the lives of multiple people including a helpless

newborn when I was alone, scared, at the mercy of others for my very survival and without legal representation now thinks I need to be "protected". Now, when I am most certainly smarter, wiser, more mature and my brain is now fully developed, the government is concerned about my emotional wellbeing? I could make a *choice* then, of "clear mind" while still sore from birth and raging with hormones. I was told then, by the adoption professionals who I trusted, that I was strong and brave and selfless, yet now, when I am an adult, independent, accomplished and secure, the very thought of my now adult child sending an email with first contact, or a Facebook message, or calling me on the phone is supposed to send me running away in shame? If a mother can make the "brave" choice when she is at her most vulnerable and desperate place in life, how can she not be trusted to again, even be given a choice to know her own child again? That's just nonsense!

Frankly, it's completely insulting to see any government body permanently freeze a subset of the population in time. Adoptees are forever more babies with no rights and mothers are forever trapped in a decision made decades earlier. A law is supposed to be for the good of the people, not to encase them in cement.

I surrendered my son to adoption because I was lead to believe that it was "best" for him. Now the law refuses to do what is proven though years of anecdotal studies and research what is really " best" for those adopted; true equality in the eyes of the law.

Here's a picture of myself and my four children. Which one looks like he doesn't deserve to be treated equally?



I want you to think about my children as you consider Senate Bill 972.

Think about how I can love them equally, but also must live with the knowledge that something *I* did, a mistake *I* made, caused one of them to be denied his civil rights.

If you cannot give me a reason why one of my children is discriminated against except of my childish signature on a poorly typewritten ditto paper, then please do support the passage of Senate Bill 972.

Please treat your adopted citizens equally. Please love all four of them, just like I do.

Sincerely,



Claudia Corrigan D'Arcy
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