

Support for SB 972

Dear Senators and Representatives of the Connecticut legislature:

I am asking you to support Senate Bill 972. I am asking you this because I am an adoptive father of two girls. I am also a first father of one child. I have been employed as a social worker for the past 25 years working with adopted children, first parents, and adoptive parents. I have spent hundreds of hours over the past few years dedicated to this issue. I have gotten numerous organizations to engage in this conversation about the need to give adoptees access to their original birth certificates.

I say the above to inform you how committed I am to the issue of adoptees having access to their original birth certificates. Denying them this right is a denial of their human story. It is a denial of affirming who they are as people. My children have access to their original birth certificates. The Connecticut legislature approved for them to have their rights during the 2014 legislative session. I continued to remain involved in the passage of the bills because I firmly believe there is nothing more wrong than denying a person's truth. Adoption has changed over the years. My grandmother was adoptive in the early 1900s. It was a time of secrecy and denial. Adoption was something to be ashamed of. The whole idea of the amended birth certificates was so that adoptive parents could "create" a story which would be appealing to others. It was so that first parents would go away after they had their parental rights terminated. It was hoped that the child would grow up not knowing they were adopted or at least not knowing who actually gave birth to them. The social experiment of having amended birth certificates failed. It grew distrust between the adoptee and the adoptive parent. It created a void in their lives. The lie should not continue into the future. It is time to acknowledge that adoptees will always live in distrust if individuals are not honest with them. I will not lie to my children. Love is about being open and honest between individuals. Adoptees do not need to live in the shadow of darkness and feeling voids in their life. This is preventable. They should be able to have the same right to know their human story as nonadoptees. I am not adoptive. I know who my first parents are. I know where I came from, what hospital I was born in. The original birth certificate is evidence of connection to society. It shows a date and time of birth. It allows an individual feel connected to the human society.

People say that the concealment of the original birth certificates is to help first parents. That is false. We know by facts that the original birth certificates remains intact and accessible until the child is adopted by the adoptive parent. If the child is not adopted, there is no amendment to the birth certificates, Concerned United Birthparents, a national organization for first parents who have had their legal rights terminated to their children, has endorsed adoptees having access to their original birth certificates. Studies show that 95% of first parents want their children to have this right, The National Foster Parent Association (NFPA), which represents foster and adoptive parents, also want adoptees to have access to their original birth certificates. This is a position statement issued by the NFPA. These are extremely important organizations when it comes to this issue. However in reality, their endorsements are not as important as the feelings from adoptees themselves because the original birth certificate is a document only directly impacting the adoptee. No one should be able to deny another person's humanity. The issue is not about reunification with the first parent or anything related to the adoptive parent. It is only about

documenting an event which occurred in the life of an individual. There are no other documents which are amended in a person's life. There are no amended degrees, marriage or divorce certificates. There are no amended death certificates. How come there are amended birth certificates? One can't be delivered into this world two times on two different days to two different set of parents. No made up stories should replace truth and facts. Life is hard enough for adopted individuals. They don't need false stories. It is similar to believing in Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny. Many children are often told a nice story to make them happy. However when they are told the truth they are disappointed at first and need to work on trusting the individuals who told them these false characters existed. The child usually finds out the truth after a few years of their life. However imagine growing up, year after year, in a fictional world. Imagine having to live your adult lives with knowing something as fundamental as your human story is made up and fictionalized. Ask yourself, how would you feel if the people closest to you lied to you about your human story. Further ask yourself how would you view the society you live in who kept your human story a secret from you and refused to provide you with information that is the heart of your existence. How would you view the government who denied your existence? Would you be willing to trust others? Would you be willing to be committed to others who treat you as a forever child? Isn't the government's role to protect people from harm? Well denying access to the original birth certificate is creating harm and causing mistrust. You have the power to end the harm caused to adoptees who don't have access to their original birth certificates.

I ask you please lift this barrier to adoptees' life stories. Please affirm their humanity. Please provide them with dignity which is given to nonadoptees. May ALL adoptees have access to their original birth certificates and may it happen now. The Connecticut legislature has the ability and authority to give adoptees their rights to their stories about their existence. May this happen this legislative session.

Thank you for your time and consideration in relation to this matter.

Brian Donahue