

Dear Members of the Planning and Development Committee:

Please allow all women and men to have the right to answer answers to the questions that most individuals have as a birth right: Who am I? Who was I when I was born? What is my story? Who is my natural mother? What is my ancestry? What is my up-to-date family medical history? Refusing this right to those individuals is legally akin to allowing some slaves to be free, others still held captive. I write in unwavering support of SB972.

One tenet of freedom is the unhindered ability to make certain decisions about one's own life and identity. Yet ignoring common sense, legislators from another era took this right from the adopted without full consideration of its lifelong psychological impact. The laws were wrong and unjust when they were promulgated, and they are just as wrong and unjust today. Before DNA testing, *men* charged in paternity suits were not allowed to hide under a cloud of anonymity because it might embarrass them, and today women should not be in such a privileged status. To allow them this Victorian-era protection is prima facie wrong, immoral and unjust for it continues to violate the rights of another class whose only difference from the rest of us is that their mothers could not keep them, for whatever reason, and consequently these children were adopted.

I write as a birth mother who relinquished a child in 1966. We were reunited in 1981, and had a mutually satisfying relationship that included her adoptive parents until her death in 2007. Her daughter, my granddaughter, is an art teacher whose connection to her mother's adoptive family is distant and tenuous, and I am the only connection to her biological family--cousins, aunts and uncles who she knows and considers family and calls upon them as friends and a family resource. She recently moved to the Detroit area where I am from and the above relatives reside. As a side note, my family--my granddaughter's family--is rife with artists, art directors and graphic designers, and as an art teacher my granddaughter fits right in.

That is my story, but everyone has a right to their own story.

To be fully free and equal individuals with all of humankind, all should have the right to know their own stories, whether adopted or not. No one should be denied their ancestry because it might embarrass another.

I have been involved in this issue for decades, and have written about my experience and involvement in numerous national publications as well as written two books. ([hole in my heart](#) and [Birthmark](#)), and write at [firstmotherforum.com](#). I have testified in court and before a Senate committee in Washington DC, as well as in Albany, and frequently been interviewed by the media. I will be happy to answer any questions or supply research on a subject in which I perforce became an expert.

*Do the right thing! Lift that last barrier in Connecticut and give all adoptees the right to own their true identities!*

Yours truly,  
Lorraine Dusky