

March 12, 2019

Dear Legislators,

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion as a birthmother. My name is Jennifer Fahlsing, I am an Indiana adoptee and mother who lost her son to adoption.

In 1980, when I was 16, my son's father and I were forced, by my family and church, to surrender our child. Because of my experience, I believe I can offer this committee a unique point of view.

I am actively involved in adoptee rights as a Board Member of Indiana Adoptee Network. I testified on behalf of SB91 in Indiana which became law on July 1, 2018. SEA91 restores rights to adoptee from Indiana's closed records era 1941-1993.

Before my son found me in 2013, I spent 33 years worrying and wondering about the well-being of my child while quietly living with the shame and lies. Our society has changed; unwed mothers are no longer expelled, shunned or considered outcasts but the law still treats Closed Records Era Adoptees as less than a whole person.

Many people wrongly believe I was, and all mothers of loss were, promised confidentially. Not only is this untrue but I went to great lengths to provide updated contact and health information to Lutheran Social Services. Like 99% of all birthmothers, I wanted a reunion with my adult son.

As a mother, I am asking you to grant equal rights to all adult adoptees. Rights to their original birth certificate, medical history, and heritage. My son like other adoptees had no control over the circumstances of their birth or relinquishment but it is held against them for their entire life.

I have no desire or need to be protected from my biological child!

I am asking you to support SB972.

Jennifer Fahlsing

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