

I am a birth mother writing to ask you to please support SB 972, An Act Concerning Access to Original Birth Records By Adult Adopted Persons.

In 1988 I was found by my daughter, when was 16. Until then, I had kept the fact I had given birth to her a secret from most everyone I knew, even my sons and two of my brothers. Suddenly I had to explain to loved ones why I hadn't told them about this profound experience in my life and about the existence of their own blood relation. Yes, it was embarrassing and painful.

Yet there was something else operating here, something more important than how difficult it was for me: my daughter's need to know where she came from, to know why I had relinquished her, and to meet me and get her first look at her ancestors. Having brought her into the world, I owed her at least that much. More than 30 years have passed now, and we are the dearest of friends.

I co-founded a birth parent/adoptee/adoptive parent support group and have done extensive research on birth mothers. Along the way, I learned enough to fill a book: *A Life Let Go, A Memoir and Five Birth Mother Stories of Closed Adoption* (Long Journey Home Press 2015).

When considering how to vote on this issue, it is important for you to know that, without exception, every birth mother I have spoken to has said that, knowing what we now know, she would not have chosen closed (secret) adoption. Most of us made the decision to relinquish in a closed adoption because there were no other choices at the time.

That most birth mothers want their identities kept a secret from the adoptees is a myth. A Harvard University study reported that 96% of birth mothers considered searching for the son or daughter they relinquished, and over 60% actually did search.\*

If as adults, adoptees want a copy of their original birth records, they should have them; it is their birthright. And if they come and find us, we will cope with the embarrassment and we will handle the emotional storm because they are our blood and we want now what we have always wanted—to honor their best interests.

Patricia Florin