

Support for S.B. 972

I am an adult adopted woman and I searched and found my birthmom in 1992. We have enjoyed a successful and close relationship over the past 25 years. My mother and I submitted notarized petitions to obtain my original birth certificate, but I was denied because my birth and adoption was prior to 1983. The court declared my request frivolous. Any other citizen born in Connecticut can apply for and receive an accurate birth certificate that lists their parents, doctor, time of birth, place of birth, etc. I have an amended copy of my birth certificate that is a legal lie. My adoptive parents did not give birth to me.

Amended birth certificates were issued and original birth certificates were sealed decades ago to protect adopted children from the stigma of illegitimacy which was often listed on their birth certificate, and to protect adoptive families from the interference of birth parents after an adoption was finalized. Both are moot as the protection of the adoptive family only applies to minor children, not adult adoptees like me. The stigma of being illegitimate is no longer the weighty curse it was decades ago. Furthermore, mother's that signed surrender of parental rights had no guarantee that an adoption would take place. The original birth certificate is only sealed at the finalization of the adoption, not at the surrender of parental rights. I was returned by the first adoptive family with whom I was placed. Because of the times, they were concerned that I was too olive toned -and maybe I was biracial- something they couldn't handle. What would have happened if I was never placed a second time for adoption? I would have been a ward of the state, and I would have retained my original name, identity, family history. Instead, 2 months later I was placed with a second family at 5 months of age, and my adoption was finalized 15 months later, sealing my original identity forever. My mother signed away her parental rights. The form she signed stated that she could not interfere with my adoptive family, it gave her no right to privacy or anonymity from me, her daughter. She signed the surrender when I was 6 weeks old, after her last chance to keep me was closed to her. I was placed in the first adoptive home at 8 weeks old and returned 3 weeks later. I was placed into the final adoptive home at 5 months old, but my adoption took another 15 months. I was nearly 2 yrs old by then, during which time my legal name and birth certificate was still the original name my birthmom gave me. The idea of privacy for birthmoms is not something that was guaranteed to our moms, instead it's something used to scare legislators into denying adopted adults equal access. It has no basis on fact. What of the countless agencies now offering search assistance for fees? Isn't it just as intrusive if a stranger brings back the pain of an adoption loss for a birthmom versus being contacted by their now adult child? A fair compromise are the contact preference forms that gives birthmoms new rights to declare their preference: no contact, contact only through an intermediary and wants contact.

Even the American Adoption Attorney Association agrees, they declared recently through their association resolution that they support open access to original adoption records and birth certificates. Please allow adopted adults born in Connecticut their right to be considered an adult under the law and pass SB 972.

Thank you,

Leigh Grazioso