

## **PLEASE SUPPORT BILL 972**

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Cassano and Representative McCarthy Vahey, and distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee.

Please support Senate Bill 972. As an adoption social worker with over 20 years experience in Hartford CT working with both adoptees of all ages, as well as, birth parents I feel that it is extremely important that this Bill be supported. I am also an adoptive parent of a beautiful and talented 14 year old girl. She was 6 months old when my husband and I adopted her. Since we had the opportunity to meet her birth parents, we have always been able to share the information we have with our daughter including their names, talents, interests, struggles and the reasons they needed to choose adoption for her.

Adolescence is a trying time and is further complicated by early losses. Since not all adoptions have a level of openness such as ours, it is very important for adoptees to know that they will be able to access information about themselves and their birth parents should they need it. I am grateful that we have the information for our daughter. It is evident that being able to answer her questions has been invaluable to her. Furthermore, I believe that our daughter's feelings around her early losses would be profoundly and negatively impacted if she was unable to access information about her identity.

Through my work as an adoption social worker, I have also spoken with many adult adoptees, birth mothers and birth fathers over the past 20 plus years who have a deep longing to truly know who one another. The "not knowing" is always the most difficult aspect in the search process for adult adoptees. The agency has an established reunion registry, however, this is only helpful if BOTH parties know it exists and in many situations birth parents do not know this is an option.

Truly knowing and feeling grounded by one's identity can only be accomplished by having access to the most basic yet most critical information on oneself.

Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

With gratitude, Theresa Hixson, LCSW

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