

Good Morning. I am a reunited birth(first )mother of a son I surrendered in 1974 through Catholic Charities of St. Paul, Minnesota. I never wanted confidentiality, but was told that it was the law. I said to the social worker then that I would do whatever was in my power to change that law. I have tried to educate and lobby legislators for years in both Massachusetts and New York where I have lived. Forty-five years later I am astounded that I should still be working on this rights issue. The issue of trying to protect the confidentiality of birthmothers is not real, nor a law, but continues to be the smokescreen reason given to deny adult adoptees access to their rightful unamended birth certificates.

When my son was 17 I decided to go to the agency to see if there was any support for a chance of contact. Fortunately, Catholic Charities of Minnesota had a post adoption legal area that would help connect me to his mother, for a price, if he was younger than 18, or I could contact him directly, if he was over 18. I chose to connect with his mother, who interestingly, at the time had gone to the agency to search information about me. My son and I eventually met when he was 18 and we have been in contact since. He is married and has two children, my grandchildren, whom I love dearly.

I have been involved in support groups for over 40 years and have spoken to hundreds of women who surrendered their children for adoption who did not want to be "protected" from the reality of our children. I appeal to you to please listen to mothers like me who want our children to have information about us that can only help, not hurt their growth.

Please support passage of S.D. 972.. It is the right of all persons to have access to their original birth certificate.

Gretchen Hoffman