

Support for S.B. 972

Dear Committee Members:

I am a lawyer and the founder of the **Adoptee Rights Law Center**, a law firm and national resource for information and advocacy concerning adult adoptee rights.

I urge the committee to pass Senate Bill 972, which will repeal Connecticut's complex and inequitable treatment of adult adoptees whose adoptions were finalized prior to October 1, 1983.

While laws in the 1940s and 1950s sealed adoptees' birth records in many states across the country, the purpose of these laws were never intended to restrict adult adoptees' access to their own personal birth records. Rather, the purpose of such laws have always been two-fold:

1. To assure that adopting parents and natural parents remained unknown to each other, so that the relationship between the adoptive parents and the adoptee can proceed without hindrance; and
2. To assure that children born out-of-wedlock would not be stigmatized by that status. To a lesser extent, the sealing of records prevented adoptive parents and adoptees from being blackmailed through the use of public knowledge of a child's illegitimacy.

The purpose was never to prevent an adoptee from securing a right given to all people: to know their full identity and heritage, particularly as an adult.

Indeed, in 1949, officials from the U.S. Children's Bureau and the National Office of Vital Statistics developed specific guidelines for states to follow to assure responsible treatment of confidential birth records. The resulting publication was unequivocal about an adopted person's record:

The right to inspect or to secure a certified copy of the original birth certificate of an adopted child should be restricted to the registrant, if of legal age; or upon court order.

I urge the committee to restore this right to all Connecticut adoptees, not just those who were "lucky" to be adopted on or after October 1, 1983. I urge you to pass SB972 and move it forward to enactment.

Best regards,

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