



Adoptions From The Heart®

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Maxine Chalker, MSW/LSW, Executive Director

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To the Members of the Committee:

My name is Susan Myers and I am the District Supervisor for Adoptions from the Heart, a licensed, nonprofit child placing agency located in Glastonbury. Adoptions from the Heart supports Senate Bill 972, An Act Concerning Access to Original Birth Records by Adult Adopted Persons. We strongly encourage you to approve this legislation, which would allow all adopted persons and their adult children or grandchildren to obtain uncertified copies of their original birth certificate from the town where they were born or the state of CT.

Adoptions from the Heart has served birth parents, adoptive parents and adopted children for over 30 years and believes firmly in the principles of open adoption. We recognize, along with the entire adoption community, that secrecy in adoption only increases the feelings of guilt and shame that are carried by many birth mothers who unselfishly made adoption plans knowing that this was in the best interest of their children. Lack of information about one's own identity and medical history sets adopted persons apart from the rest of the population, and can contribute to their feelings of difference, exclusion and loss. Many older birth mothers have expressed that they never wanted their child denied of vital information, but they did want privacy from the *general public* due to the stigma around placing a baby for adoption.

This bill provides equal protection under the law and ends discrimination against adopted persons born in Connecticut before 1983. It is a basic human, and civil, right for every person to know their biological origins. Birth mothers were not universally promised "confidentiality" when they placed their children for adoption. This bill would facilitate adoptees' access to medical history, which they currently cannot readily access. Surveys and data collected in our state show that a clear majority of birth parents, adoptive parents and adult adopted persons support such access. Currently, many adult adoptees utilize consumer DNA testing (23andMe, Ancestry DNA) in an effort to locate any information about their biological family, which does not afford individuals the privacy or control that they receive when they have access to their original birth record.

I strongly urge you to approve SB 972 and restore this right to all adopted persons in the state of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Susan Myers, LMSW
District Supervisor/Social Worker

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