

Re: Support for Senate Bill 972

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for your attention to this letter explaining how state laws might affect your adopted constituents.

I love my adoptive family very much and they love me.

I was hurt by closed records laws. In a closed adoption with my records sealed from me by the state, I believed that I was “less than” and did not deserve knowledge of myself, even to know who my biological parents were. They were a secret and my original identity, family history, and genetic ancestry were all hidden. I understood enough to know that secrets that are illegal to know and talk about must be really bad, so I must be really bad. I internalized these messages as I was growing up. Healthy self-esteem or a feeling of self worth is a tall order when one identifies as a shameful secret.

In my late forties, after obtaining my state records, I began to question the truth of those beliefs.

Truth is a positive way to implement adoption laws and practices. The secrecy and shame of decades past are out of date and damaging to individuals like me. Adopted adults deserve the right to full access to all their adoption records and original birth certificate without restrictions. I hope laws will be changed to support adoptees’ rights to access their own records, just like people who enjoy non-adopted status have.

Sincerely,

Erika Ostern