

Testimony for Senate Bill 972

My name is Gail Silvester Pillarella. I was born in 1947 and I was adopted in 1948 at 10 months old.

I am writing this testimony because I believe all adoptees should have the right to know all the information the State of Connecticut has regarding the details of our birth.

Many years ago I went to the agency that arranged my adoption, Catholic Charities, and requested a copy of my Original Birth Certificate. I explained to the worker that both my adoptive parents had passed away years before and that I would like to know what I was named at birth by my biological mother. My heart dropped when she told me I had no right to this information. I couldn't believe what I just heard and asked her why. She told me that my Original Birth Certificate was a sealed document and I couldn't obtain it or even view it. I asked why she was able to have this information, but I couldn't, and stated to her this was just so wrong. She told me it is a Law within the State of Connecticut and she said she was sorry she couldn't give me what I asked for. This information was just a desk away, sitting on her computer, so close, but so far away. I asked if I could just peek so I could finally know my Birth Name and she said absolutely not.

How do I explain how I felt that day? How can I get you to put yourself in an adopted persons shoes and feel the feelings of a person who just wants to know their true heritage and where they began their lives? Most of us were just innocent babies at the time of our adoption and we had no choice as to where we were being sent and where we were being sent from. We were always different from the other kids we grew up with and we knew it as soon as we were old enough to learn we were adopted. Many of us were ashamed to admit it because it was a secret and no one would talk about it to you and we grew up thinking it was a bad thing to be adopted. Listening to aunts and uncles telling your cousins how much they looked like the family and knowing they weren't talking about you was very hard.

Please don't let us continue to feel that we don't belong, we should be able to know the relatives we do look like as an adult.

Please give us that right and help us obtain our Original Birth Certificates by supporting Senate Bill 972.

Thank you for taking the time to read this request.

Gail Silvester Pillarella